Photojournalism's ethics in the digital age of" "manipulation

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Introduction:

Historically, photographs have been altered by the tabloid press by cutting and pasting together prints or combining several negatives on a single print. Often the seams were concealed by painting with airbrushes. A trained eye could spot such manipulations, but with the advent of digital photography it became possible to manipulate images so subtly that the changes were undetectable. Content could be added, deleted or moved around inside the image. Several notorious cases of such manipulation occurred, particularly in the magazine industry. Leaders in photojournalism saw this new capability for seamless manipulation as a threat to the credibility of the photographic image and thus to the profession itself and reacted. [1]

The ease of which photographs can be manipulated with software programs such as Photoshop combined with the increasing demand for photographs by clients and media outlets produces a world in which ethical boundaries can be crossed with something as simple as a mouse click. For this reason it is important to examine what those ethical boundaries are and what photographers are doing to ensure that they themselves do not cross those boundaries. Because the area of ethics in photo manipulation is such a grey area, it is up to individual photographers, photo editors and even those that manage media outlets to constantly take a step back and ask themselves if what they are doing is ethical. They should strive to keep the message of the image intact at all costs and work to breakdown the stereotype that photographers and photojournalists often fabricate the truth through the over manipulation of photographs.(2)

Importance of Research

According to Sontag (1977) photographic content of newspapers depict reality more closely than text and therefore help real life understanding of events & issues in a much better way. Research has shown that the first thing news reader look at on a newspaper page is a photograph and that photographs are highly read. Jackson (2011) suggests that visuals create story of an event and public construe the impact & implication of disaster through them. [3]

Manipulated digital image is got interesting in recent years. Digital images can be manipulated more easily with the aid of powerful image editing software. Forensic techniques for authenticating the integrity of digital images and exposing forgeries are urgently needed. With the aid of powerful image editing software such as Adobe Photoshop and some advanced digital cameras, forged images can be created easily by even relatively inexperienced users. Furthermore, the doctored photographs are being generated with growing sophistication. It is even difficult for experts to distinguish authentic images from forgeries relying solely on visual inspection. [4]

Goals of study

1. To specify the way digital manipulation of photographs started.
2. To explore how Photojournalist's work flow were affected by the emergence of this technology
3. To identify the tools used in manipulating and altering photos

4. To examine the ethical guidelines concerning dealing with photos in different international news organization
5. To specify Whether there is a common worldwide code of ethics for photojournalists

Photo Manipulation& Alteration

Digital manipulation of photographs began showing up in newsrooms and magazine offices in the late 1980s while digital cameras slowly began taking the place of film cameras in the early 1990s with such cameras as the 1.5 megapixel Kodak DCS 100, a joint venture between Kodak and Nikon in association with the Associated Press. These two events changed photography and photojournalism drastically. New technology allowed photographers to instantaneously see the result of pressing the shutter button on their cameras instead of needing a darkroom. Photographers would look at the image on a tiny LCD screen on the back of the camera and determine if the photograph was suitable to keep or needed to be taken again. For the first time photographers had an instant proof of their work. This technology has also changed how photos are processed in a post environment. Darkrooms have been replaced by computer terminals and sophisticated software such as Adobe Photoshop. [5]

When digital processes emerged in the 1980s, many photojournalists could not foresee the dramatic technological shift in image capture that would occur in the 1990s. At first, news photographers continued to shoot film, scanning processed film into digital form for distribution

and publication. Prices of early digital cameras and converting entire news operations to new technologies prevented many press photographers from adopting digital media. It was 1997 before such publications as The New York Times would experiment with the new processes by sending 14 digital cameras with its photojournalists to cover US President Bill Clinton's second inauguration.[6]

Although some of the most infamous instances of photo alteration occurred before Photoshop was invented, including *National Geographic* moving Egyptian pyramids to make a horizontal image fit a vertical 1982 cover, the widespread availability of inexpensive, consumer-level image-altering technology raised new concerns. Although there were efforts in the early 1990s to create standards for identifying altered images, within just a few years of Photoshop's 1989 release, slaying suspect O. J.Simpson's face had been digitally darkened in a mugshot on the cover of *Time* magazine, Olympic ice skaters Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan were appearing to skate together in a merged image on the cover of *New York Newsday*, and a newspaper name had being digitally removed from a photograph by its rival. These digital manipulations sparked criticism and analysis in which three discourses were markedly visible: that there is a tension between reality and deceit; that technology is culpable; and that image alteration was, if not normal, certainly prevalent. [7]

As newspapers completely left the layout tools of wax and paste-up in the 1980s, they moved to the use of page design software and Photoshop as an everyday tool on their computers. Digital cameras seemed to introduce a new dynamic for the interaction between photojournalists and reporters. The immediacy or "instant gratification" of digital cameras changed the field of photojournalism. Photographs no longer took hours to prepare, they could be ready for evaluation in minutes. Additionally, as the technology increased and costs began to drop, digital cameras became the norm for the general population. At small- to medium-sized newspapers, it is still common for the photojournalist to have minimal input as to final photo choice or where a photograph is placed in the layout. At this level, a copy editor who may have little, if any, visual journalism training generally makes that determination. [8]

With the introduction of digital technology, professional photojournalists faced several challenges, having not only to master the new technology, but also to adopt new strategies for taking photos, launching them immediately to the newsroom, as well as coping with new responsibilities formerly performed by news organizations, such as managing personal archives and digitally editing their own photos. Some of the effects of digitization on photojournalism have been undeniably negative, for example, the unprecedented easiness of manipulating photographs. Digitization had much wider ripples than just accelerating the speed and efficiency with which news photos can be taken, transmitted, selected, manipulated, stored, and retrieved. It enabled news organizations to withdraw major outposts which marked their traditional involvement and

commitment to photojournalism, outsourcing them to individual photographers, to invite a massive invasion of less-skilled or unskilled photographers, and it has made the news industry a much less friendly and less rewarding workplace for professional photojournalists.[9]

Photojournalists can sit at computers in the newsroom instead of being separated to work in a darkroom full of chemicals. Photojournalists also are beginning to feel they are regaining control over their work. As early as the 1930s, photographers struggled to be recognized as artists and professionals instead of technicians needing to understand cameras, lenses, lighting, chemistry and equipment to shoot and develop photos while someone else, often an editor in the newsroom, decided on photo content. Now the photojournalist is increasingly acting as a picture editor, judging and deleting photos on location and in the newsroom. For example, photojournalists eliminate images captured at a scene because of undesirable composition, technical problems or limited storage space on the camera's flashcard. As the image reaches the newsroom, photographers, photo editors and designers delete additional images for various reasons. Then more images may be deleted when the visuals are transferred for storage to a digital image library because of legal worries or inadequate space. [10]

Photo cropping refers to the removal of an unwanted subject or irrelevant details from a photo, changing its aspect ratio, or the improvement of its overall composition. Conventional photo cropping has been widely used. For example, in the printing industry, a photo is cropped from a panoramic view to enhance its visual aesthetic effects; in telephoto photography, a photo is cropped to enhance the primary subject. However, photo cropping is challenging due to the following three problems. First, the aesthetic features are not well defined, so it is unclear how to preserve the important visual features in the cropped photo. Second, photo assessment is a subjective task, and thus, it is difficult to develop a computational model that automatically measures the quality of each candidate cropped photo. Third, some existing methods require human-computer interaction to obtain an ideal cropped photo.[11]

Cropping is a widely accepted form of image manipulation. Certain cropping can increase the impact needed for the image to render the desired effect on the reader. For instance, by isolating victims and disregarding a scene of widespread destruction to the left and right of the victims, the photographer has changed the overall scene into a tightly cropped portion of the detection. This isolation does not tell the entire story.[12]Moreover, Cropping is eliminating elected outer edges of an image to increase impact of the item or subject that is thereafter displayed more prominently in the image. But ethical cropping is contingent upon maintaining photographic value. Careful cropping, then, will enhance the virtues of accuracy and integrity when its potential can be safely realized. [13]

Dodging and burning is another darkroom technique transformed to digital photography. When creating an artificial lightening or darkening of an image, the situation brings a false attitude of a photograph. Burning portions

of the image with light longer than the over-all image directs the viewers' attention to a specific area of the photo the photographer deemed important. Dodging infers the opposite by not allowing as much information in a section of the image for more detail to show through. [14]

Dodge and Burn – Using imaging tools to brighten or darken selected parts of a photograph. Essentially, the photographer knows this manipulation technique is used to give artificial prominence to a subject, or a particular section of the photograph, although a common justification for the alteration is that it will help an audience better understand an image. And there is a list of commonly accepted manipulation practices which are: "Color balance" commonly involves consistently correcting technical flaws and making aesthetic improvements. The most widely used digital camera in the photojournalism industry. This brings us to two underlying requirements for manipulation in an ideal practice: **(1)** the manipulation must make the photo more accurate and **(2)** the manipulation must be formulaic in which the change must be objective and not subject to human recall for fear of inviting errors. [15]

Ethics of photojournalism

Ethics can be defined as "a matter of deciding what to do given a certain situation" or described as values or "the traffic lights of our lives that guide what we think, feel and do". However a person chooses to understand the principles of ethics is up to them so long as they realize that their understanding and beliefs are what

define them as a person. photographers and photo editors, may choose to use photographs as a means to persuade viewers on a specific topic. They can do this in either artistic or inartistic ways. Presenting the photograph in an artistic way would mean only slightly editing the photo to enhance features such as contrast, brightness, saturation, sharpness, etc. so long as it does not alter the truth the image is meant to provide. Any editing of the image beyond what was previously described results in an inartistic representation of the image or one that was not originally created by the photographer. [16]

The digitalization of the photographic process has called for some regulatory principles, written and unwritten codes of conduct and norms, which help journalists to keep up their roles as professionals who produce images that "do not lie" 'One of the earliest empirical researchers of digital photo editing in newsrooms was Shiela Reaves. In 1992, Reaves conducted a survey of over 500 visual editors in the United States. The respondents received 15 pairs of images with different examples of alterations, by which she measured the acceptance of the media professionals. She found that the photographic editors were largely intolerant of any computer alterations, except for the traditional practices of printing, such as burning and dodging. Editors who were familiar with computer editing techniques were less tolerant of digital manipulation than those who were unfamiliar with computers. In addition, editors who had backgrounds as working photojournalists were less tolerant toward digital manipulation than those who had never worked as photojournalists.

(17)

Although the media are required to reflect all sides of a story, retaining values and beliefs of the target audience is not only expected, but also is indispensable. That's why Photojournalists and photo editors often face questions about where to draw the line whether a news professional would ethically agree on which content should or should not be communicated. This lack of strict guidelines has led to controversial images appearing in the media and criticisms of decisions to run graphic images. Sometimes an image could violate principles of compassion and taste but still be run based on other dimensions of social or news value. Regarding ethical decisions of publishing graphic imagery, there is no clear-cut rule. When dealing with graphic photographs, the context of the news, self-censorship, personal ethics, and audience expectations are active ingredients in the selection process. (18)

The credibility of photojournalists is damaged every time a reputable news organization is caught lying to the public and some of the most blatant and widely recognized situations include photo manipulation. The lack of credibility threatens the profession of photojournalists across the country because the public is losing faith in what they view because they no longer believe everything they see. And the Associated Press for example abides by a strict code of ethics, stating the content of a photograph should not be altered using any photo editing software or by any other means. Elements should not be digitally added to or subtracted

from any photograph. While retouching an image to eliminate dust on camera sensors and scratches on scanned negatives or a scanned print is considered acceptable. (19)

There are 3 main ethical reasoning approaches which are: Deontology, Teleology, and Personality. *"Deontological ethics"* sets definite rules, maxims, or principles that journalists can follow in order to be ethical. Following the rules is ethical, and breaking the rules is unethical. "Teleological ethicists", however, pay attention to the end (*telos*). They consider the consequences, and speculate about the results of their actions. Teleologists may weigh results based on the aggregated happiness, love, good, or other concepts. While "Personalitism" bases its ethical decision making model on subjective matters, such as intuitive, spiritual, or emotive actions, or what we call conscience. Merrill (1997) considers Aristotle as a representative of personalitism theorists, whose ethical theory is often summarized as the golden mean. (20)

Different Codes addressed the specific use of Adobe Photoshop for altering or correcting photographs. Each case centered on not manipulating images and correctly identifying of altered photographs. For example: The *Los Angeles Times* code requires photographs to be used to inform not mislead. Digital photographs are not to confuse the reader. Minor adjustments on color and those photos falling into the artistic category are labeled as photo illustrations. While the National Union of Journalists London Freelance Branch proposed a motion in February 1998, stating: "No journalist shall

cause or allow the publication of a photograph which has been manipulated, unless that photograph been clearly labeled". This means unless the image is marked as an illustration when manipulated then the image should not be altered in any way to deceive the reader. Most newspapers, organizations and publishing groups emphasize editorial photos should never mislead the reader. [21]

Authenticity and sensitivity are often in play as journalists seek effective storytelling. They sometimes become opposing forces journalism's ethical dance of greater good.[22] For example, The Vietnam war presented many tough ethical situations. Nick Ut's "Napalm Girl" photograph, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1972, is not only a shocking indictment of America's war effort, it contains full frontal nudity of a minor. The ultimate decision to print the photo on the front page of *The New York Times* must not have been easy. Editors at *The Times* chose to sacrifice the girl's privacy, and perhaps to offend their readers in order to present an unflinching picture of the conflict and ultimately to serve the greater good. [23]

Authentic photos truthfully and accurately reflect the scene being depicted. In photojournalistic terms, accuracy refers to the integrity of a photograph free of manipulation and truthful in meaning as seen through formal reading of its elements. Moreover, authentic photos provide complete context in which photographs that are accurate to the scene do not depict the outliers at news events or tell only half of a story. Authentic photos are not manipulated, it cautions the photographer to avoid being

manipulated by staged photo ops or "pseudo" news events. Additionally photographers should not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events being covered. Finally, Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images content and context. So, it is forbidden for any photojournalist to manipulate images in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects. [24]

"Tara" claims in her study that professional photojournalist's ethical values differ from the ones of citizen photojournalist's. In which professionals are workers who have a public-service orientation in performing their work and provide an essential service to society. And as journalism and photojournalism were professionalizing at the turn of the 20th century, they developed ethical guidelines to distinguish their work from that of nonprofessionals. The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) was founded in 1909, and its code of ethics was established in 1973Photojournalists developed the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) in 1946 [25].An example for these associations' codes is the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) in which it suggests a code of ethics for photojournalists to guide their work ethically and this code states that each should strive to ensure that the public's business is conducted in public, to defend the rights of access for all journalists, to work with a voracious appetite for current events and contemporary visual media, to respect the integrity of the photographic moment, to seek a diversity of viewpoints, and work to show unpopular or unnoticed points of view, and to

avoid political, civic and business involvements or other employment that compromise or give the appearance of compromising one's own journalistic independence.[26]

While citizen journalists are defined as "amateurs as opposed to professionals" who produce news. They are not bound by educational guidelines, social organizations, newsroom pressure, or codes of ethics. Some blogging codes of ethics have been proposed. And a few bloggers claim to subscribe to codes of ethics and embrace accuracy, credibility, and etiquette. But without any social organization, there is no way to enforce them. Citizen photojournalists' notions of truth are different from those of professional photojournalists. Rather than viewing truth as coming from an official institution, they share a postmodern belief that truth is elusive, emerging from the network society's collective knowledge. [27]

Some professional journalists voice their concern about the faltering quality and compromised ethics of professional journalism exacerbated by, among other tendencies, the extensive use of citizens' reports and pictures, while others see a process of embracing attachment and emotions into the journalistic war reporting culture. Major mainstream media institutions' collaboration with citizen journalists may produce a form of trust between public and journalism. However, it is a trust that can be easily broken; journalistic practices and organizations need to engage with citizen journalism on the grounds of, on the one hand, acknowledging that 'someone out there always knows more about a story than you do.' [28]

Not including available and newsworthy visuals would seriously undercut the credibility of any news organization, while including them in effect often means risking violating editorial control and credibility. Journalists negotiate this dilemma by employing various discursive strategies for incorporation that seek to 'normalize' citizen imagery to suit existing norms and practices .Under such pressures, recent studies indicate that the 'professional logic of control' may be slowly shifting towards a revised logic of 'adaptability and openness', which breaks away from the professional understandings of objectivity and truth . At the same time Kari's study has distinguished three main principles that variously serve to construct citizen footage's claim to reality and morality which are: subjectivity, affectivity (which means that the rhetorical power of citizen video comes in large measure from the way it concentrates and directs raw feelings and partisanship (which means they are characterized by the fact that they typically report as both observers and parties to a contested circumstance). [29]

In elective democracies, the ideology of journalism has historically been based on the public service ideal. For photojournalists this means, for example, transmitting honest and ethical news images for their audiences. In addition, new practices such as digital photo editing, fast online publication of photographs and videos and the use of amateur images are often justified by better public service. Photojournalism ethics are closely linked to the value of objectivity, which in the context

of news photography is often synonymous with the credibility and evidential value of news images. The value of autonomy, which usually refers to free and independent work by journalists, is faced with external pressures, as in the context of amateur news photography. Amateurs step into the field of professionals and challenge their monopoly over photojournalism. For professionals, one solution for maintaining autonomy has been to strengthen their gatekeeping role. Furthermore, internal pressures, such as the above-mentioned increased self-regulation, in visual decisions may lessen the control that individual photojournalists have over their own work. The notion of immediacy, referring to the need to publish photographs and videos immediately after something newsworthy happens, has revolutionized the concept of time within photojournalism. [30]

By analyzing code of ethics in a number of Arab and English news organization which are: Arab Information Charter of Honour, Federation of Arab Journalists (FAJ), Al-Jazeera News Network, National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), and The New York Times Company. Jenni (2014) found that the Arab and American media codes of ethics have common ethical principles and standards in order to ensure fairness in journalism and photojournalism. The prevalent principles are: independence, truth, accuracy, fairness, integrity and serving the public interest. And they clarified what they mean by each of the principle as follows: "Independence" means that journalists should be transparent in dealing with news and images and their sources. [31]

"El sayed bahnassi's" study about the criteria for selecting photos to be published in the Egyptian newspapers has shown that there is no big difference in the factors affecting both the decision of photojournalists and newspaper's editor in selection. And from the main factors affecting their decision is the degree of importance of current events and their own personal and professional values. Others studies have proved that selection of photos is affected by the gate keeper's expectation of what will fit more the audience's taste. Also the editorial policy, editor in chief, time and technical issues all affect the decision of publishing photos in any of the newspapers. Another study for elsayed bahnassi about the role of photos in supporting the editorial policy of the party newspapers, and results proved that the editorial policy of the newspaper affect the kind of topics discussed in the published photos. [32]

Conclusion

This paper aimed at exploring the emergence of new digital technology and how it affected the industry of photojournalism. The digital age affected journalism like it affected every aspect in our lives; it dramatically changed how photos were taken by the traditional cameras. Digital cameras made it much easier to capture a photo and to see it instantly on the camera once taken and it allow the photojournalist to have much more space to capture a lot of photos in any event he/she covering.

At the same time it made them face new challenges in coping and dealing with this new technology and to master how to use it quickly through computers and digital cameras. New tools appeared made it easy to edit and change the details of photos taken by photojournalists. As a result editing photos became easier than before by launching new software like Adobe Photoshop, it introduced a lot of tools that can be easily used to enhance the quality of photos. Dodging and cropping was the most used techniques by photo editors and were the main tools used in manipulation of images. And different opinions appeared about how they should be used and what is acceptable to be done by them or not raised a lot of question concerning the ethics of capturing and editing photos.

Moreover, with the appearance of the phenomenon of Citizen Photojournalists, they were seen as amateurs by the media people and that they don't have any educational guidelines for their work. And concerns were raised more than before to limit their work within some codes to ensure the credibility of their photos. Especially when a lot of newspapers began to depend on the work of citizen photojournalist' beside their own professional photojournalist' photos.

This drove the researcher into examining the code of ethics used by news organizations to guide their professional and citizen photojournalists and photo editors on their work flow. The study found that after the digitalization of the photographic process, media organization began to put some rules to guide how the photos will be taken and edited. As the credibility of the photojournalists and the photos published were the main concerns in any medium so that they don't lose their audience by publishing fake or severely manipulated photo.

Different codes of ethics appeared by different organizations but all were centered around taking photo that reflect the real details of the event and concerning editing , it should be edited using the new tools but without altering or manipulating it. The code of ethics of Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) was established in 1973 Photojournalists developed the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) in 1946. And most importantly a number of studies have found that found that the Arab and American media codes of ethics have common ethical principles and standards in order to ensure fairness in journalism and photojournalism. The prevalent principles are: independence, truth, accuracy, fairness, integrity and serving the public interest.

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