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Photojournalism in Central Europe:
on authenticity and ethics

Abstract: The development of the Internet and digital technology by the end of the twentieth century has raised serious disputes about ethics, authenticity and photo manipulation. These concerns are especially relevant in the field of photojournalism in the news media, where credibility matters the most. In this paper we described the current situation in relation to image authenticity and professional ethics in three countries of Central Europe – the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. We asked research questions regarding photo production, circumstances of photographing, image content, technical improvements, manipulation, ethical standards and responsibility. Our findings reveal a complexity of ethical issues related to working with visual news material. During the fieldwork we conducted 65 in-depth interviews and surveys with full-time and freelance photojournalists and photo editors working for printed and online newspapers and opinion magazines in Central Europe.

Key words: photojournalism, authenticity, ethics, manipulation

Introduction

Ever since photography became an integral and inherent part of news media, the dilemma whether photojournalists should or should not intervene when witnessing certain situations has been hanging in the air. Should photographers in some cases put down their cameras and start to help? What would have happened if Kevin Carter[1] had picked up a helpless, undernourished girl and brought her to a feeding station, instead of photographing her with a vulture in the background? Where are the ethical limits of what can be captured on camera? And who should be in charge of defining such ethical borderlines?

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[1] Photo reporter Kevin Carter won the Pulitzer Prize in 1994 for his photograph of an exhausted and malnourished Sudanese girl that was being followed by a vulture. After winning the prize Carter was criticized in hundreds of letters for not helping the girl to get to safety, instead of taking pictures of her (Ritchin, 2013, p. 22).

The question of the detached, or not detached professional may be followed by yet another serious issue. On the one hand, photographs have usually been blindly accepted as evidence of something "that-has-been" (Barthes, 1981, p. 76), with the photographer making "permanent the truth" (Barthes, 1981, p. 110). On the other hand, the author – photographer – is the one who first mediates the visual information to the recipient. The part of cropped reality he or she is going to show to the viewer merely depends on his personality, point of view, and the decisive moment of freezing time (Cartier-Bresson, 1952). Although objectivity has been a much discussed issue, the photo reporter, as well as the journalist, can hardly ever achieve it. Additionally, with the adoption of digital technology, many alterations and manipulations have become as effortless and natural as pressing the shutter button.

This paper examines the authenticity of news photo production, the ethical standards regarding its content, and the credibility of journalistic photography in the age of easy digital manipulation. Last but not least, we look at the ethical dilemmas photojournalists and photo editors face when mediating events through their cameras, editing images and deciding which part of reality should be presented to the public.

Theoretical framework

Lester (1991) identifies three primary ethical concerns in photojournalism: the rights of victims of violence, privacy and its invasion, and fakery of image content through staging or technical tools (Fahmy et al., 2014). Newton (2009) proposes that photojournalistic ethics be divided into two categories. First, *process* refers to the production of photographs and the way they are used. Second, *meaning* deals with interpretation of the image and its textual framing (Parry, 2010). Although the two usually overlap in everyday practice, for the purpose of our study we will focus on the first category. From this viewpoint photojournalistic ethics might include several concerns, such as actual photo production and the circumstances of photographing (Kim, Kelly, 2010; Kobré, Brill, 2006; Langton, 2009; Patching, Hirst, 2013), image content (Andén-Papadopoulos, 2008; Fahmy, Johnson, 2005; Parry, 2010), and post-production and technical improvements/manipulation (Fahmy, Fodick, Johnson, 2005; Láb, Lábová, 2009; Reaves 1991, 1995).

Actual photo production and the circumstances of photographing raise several ethical dilemmas, which photojournalists face when they try

to create aesthetically outstanding and informationally rich photographs. Langton (2009, p. 144) examines whether, and to what extent, the news photographer should direct subjects to act or pose for the camera. Although, some practices would never be acceptable to many, they are acceptable to some and under certain circumstances (Fahmy, Bock, Wanta, 2014, p. 145). For instance, staging of soft news, magazine or feature photographs is more likely to be tolerated than a similar practice concerning hard and sports news imagery (Langton, 2009, p. 144). Other scholars examine why some news photographers in certain situations choose to act as dispassionate observers/informants, or take the role of rescuer and intervene in the action (Patchin, Hirst, 2014). Kim and Kelly (2010) test readers by asking them to imagine themselves dealing with the photojournalist's decision to take a photograph of a person suffering severe trauma. Their findings show that final decisions are very individual and involve complex analysis of the situation. Based on the discussion outlined, we propose the following research questions:

RQ1: Which procedures, and to what extent, are acceptable to photojournalists during the actual production of news images?

RQ2: How do news photographers perceive critical situations, would they continue shooting or would they rather intervene (e.g. give aid, etc.)?

A second range of discussions on ethics regards the content of news photographs, such as victims and survivors, shooting intimate and nude scenes, children, etc. Yet, one concern – showing graphic images – seems to be the most dominant and studied issue. In their influential seminal work, Galtung and Ruge (1965) list negativity as one of several news values. Graphic imagery certainly possesses negative news value. Potter and Smith (2000, p. 302) identify two kinds of graphic photographs, (1) close-up versus long shot, with the first being more graphic than the other, and (2) the degree of physical alteration to the victim. Although graphic content might bring viewers closer to the action and make the action more real or more shocking, highly graphic portrayals of violence are more likely to arouse fear in the short term, and lead to desensitization over the long term (Potter, Smith, 2000). Thus, scenes of extreme violence might on the one hand seem appealing to a large part of journalists and audiences, and might be profitable for news media. However, on the other hand, such scenes also suggest questions about their necessity, saturation, as well as ethical concerns (Sontag, 2003).

Scholars examine the attitude of news media with distinct cultural, social and political backgrounds to publishing graphic imagery (Langton,

2009). According to Parry (2010, p. 79), the salience of photographs with a graphic nature is influenced by several factors, such as "media access, perceived audience empathy (based on geographical and cultural distance or 'otherness') and national involvement in the conflict." Similarly, Fahmy's (2005, p. 159) research based on a survey of photojournalists and photo editors suggests that the "framing of human suffering occurs in a dichotomy of valuing the lives of one's own people more than the lives of the other." Discussion on whether or not to publish graphic photographs is also influenced by additional aspects, including political sensitivity, readers' criticisms and taste, and self-censorship in the visual gate keeping process. Also, according to Robertson (2004), news media might be affected by public opinion, readers' political sensitivity, criticisms and taste when publishing graphic content. With this theoretical framework in mind, we put forward the following research questions:

RQ3: Regarding the content of visual material, what kind of imagery is acceptable to news photographers, and to what extent?

RQ4: How do photographers and photo editors deal with graphic images, nudity, pictures of minors, survivors, etc.?

Our research suggests that all photojournalistic material in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia is now produced digitally. The advent of digital technology and sophisticated photo-editing software has increased a possibility to manipulate photographs without leaving apparent trace (Brennen, 2010, p. 75; Wheeler, 2002). The "photographic proof," previously guaranteed thanks to the original negative that proved the origin of the photo shot, has disappeared (Láb, Turek, 2009, p. 51). Greer and Gosen (2002) conclude that the increased level of digital alteration negatively affects credibility and public attitudes toward news photos, photography in general, and news media.

Yet photojournalistic ethics remains an open issue. What is digital image manipulation and where does it begin? Or, what kind of digital alteration is a common technical practice? Scholars usually agree that unethical manipulation happens when one or more elements of photographed reality – that seen in the camera viewfinder – are changed, deleted, added, or when more images are combined and subsequently published as if they were true, without indicating the alterations that were made (Láb, Lábová, 2009; Wheeler, Gleason, 2009). Reaves (1995) suggests that the tolerance of digitally manipulated images depends on the category of photographs. For example, significant digital adjustments are more likely to be accepted when concerning feature and photo illustration, whereas

computer alterations of spot news photos are the least tolerated. According to Gladney and Ehrlich (1994), media professionals are comfortable with a certain level of manipulation, such as color enhancement, cropping, etc. Other, more recent studies are in line with past literature. For example, the results of research conducted by Fahmy, Fodick, and Johnson (2005, p. 12) suggest that photo editors only favor changing photos to alter color. Handland, Campbell and Lambert (2015, p. 7): state that "some of the practices reported by photographers suggest current ethical guidelines are not adhered to in some circumstances." Given the previous discussion, we formulate the following research question:

RQ5: For photojournalists and photo editors, what counts as standard post-production practice (editing practice) and what is considered photo manipulation?

Methodology

The dataset considered in this paper represents a subset of large research on the state of photojournalism in Central European countries. The main source of data is based on a survey of photojournalists and photo editors from the Czech Republic, Poland and the Slovak Republic. The data collected in the survey is supported by responses from in-depth semi-structured interviews we conducted either separately or together with the survey.

Interviewees

Following Johnstone's et al. (1976) definition, journalists are media professionals that have some level of editorial responsibility for the content they produce. The photojournalists and photo editors considered in our research are therefore news professionals with at least five years experience working as photojournalists or photo editors, whose main source of income is from the production of visual news content.

We conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews and a survey[2] of 63 photojournalists and 15 photo editors from 28 different Czech, Polish and Slovak national print daily newspapers, online daily newspapers, and

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[2] The estimated number of photojournalists and photo editors working in the Czech, Polish and Slovak news media (based on our interviews and official information provided by news organizations) is approximately 650 persons.

weekly news and current affairs magazines. Additionally, we conducted semi-structured interviews (no survey included) with four photojournalists and one photo editor from the Czech Republic. A maximum of four journalists from the same newsroom were interviewed (see Table 1).

Table 1

Sampling

	Semi-structured interviews plus survey			Semi-structured interviews
	Czech Republic	**Poland**	**Slovakia**	**Czech Republic**
Photojournalists	40	8	15	4
Photo editors	8	7	–	1
Total	**48**	**15**	**15**	**5**

Source: Filip Láb, Sandra Štefaniková, Martina Topinková.

Media outlets selection

The Czech, Polish and Slovak media landscape is comprised of public (national TV, radio, and news agency) and private profit oriented news organizations. For the purpose of this study, news organizations were selected with several aspects in mind. First, we included print and online media that have a regular photo department and represent the leading photojournalistic standards in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. Second, we distinguished types of media (dailies, weeklies, opinion, etc.). Finally, the selection of leading print media was based on circulation. Interviews dealt with practices at print media ranging in circulation from 33,000 to 320,000, half of them with a circulation of at least 100,000. Local dailies and weeklies with circulations of less than 20,000 copies and without regular photo departments were excluded from the research.

In-depth interviews and survey

The field research was divided into two periods: (1) from February to June 2014[3] and (2) from September 2014 to May 2015.[4] Interviews and a survey were conducted face to face or by telephone/Skype and lasted

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[3] 30 interviews with photojournalists and photo editors from the Czech Republic were conducted during this period.

[4] During this period, interviews with photojournalists and photo editors from the Czech Republic (18 persons), Poland (15 persons) and Slovakia (15 persons) were conducted.

between 60 to 90 minutes. Interviewees were notified they could refuse to answer any question and were assured participation was voluntary and responses would remain anonymous.

The semi-structured interview contained open-ended questions covering all stages of photojournalistic production, ethics, credibility, and the transition from the analog to digital medium. The survey contained 86 questions that regarded personal information, the size and condition of photo departments, photo and editorial process, equipment, photographic material, ethics, authenticity, photo captions and accompanying texts, job satisfaction and working abroad.

Data analysis

To analyze the data, we used mixed techniques. Open-ended responses were recorded and transcribed to allow in-depth content analysis (Gaskell, 2000; Saldaña, 2013) and provide valuable contextual information. Survey data was analyzed using statistical software (SPSS).

Findings

The findings of our research are divided into four themes in correspondence with our theoretical framework and research questions.

Photo-production and the circumstances of photographing

The first research question dealt with the acceptance of several procedures – the possibility of paying for information, paying people for taking pictures of them, and paying for access to restricted areas (see Table 2). For 53 per cent of photographers and photo editors it is never acceptable to pay for confidential information, whereas for 45 per cent it is sometimes acceptable. There is a similar situation with paying somebody for taking their picture: 52 per cent of photographers would never do it, but it is always acceptable for 17 per cent. Paying for access to restricted areas is never acceptable for 42 per cent of respondents and sometimes acceptable for 50 per cent.

In accordance with the literature (Langton, 2009; Reaves, 1995), respondents often claim their decision to offer payment would depend on the context. Also, ten photojournalists agreed that payment is never acceptable when concerning hard news. However, they consider such prac-

tices less questionable when related to lifestyle, illustration and photo banks.

For 57 per cent of photographers it is never acceptable to put pressure on someone who refuses to be photographed and for 37 per cent it is sometimes acceptable. According to them, it repeatedly depends on the situation. Acceptable situations might include taking a picture of a public person (such as a politician) in a public space. Five respondents mentioned common acceptable practice includes persuading with words, but without insulting or blackmailing anybody. Publishing photographs of somebody who refuses it is never acceptable for 48 per cent and sometimes acceptable for 45 per cent of photographers and photo editors. Six respondents were comfortable with publishing such photographs when the identity is not recognizable, such as pixelating, unfocused fuzzy face, placing a black stripe over the eyes, etc. A photojournalist from an opinion magazine comments:

> "A photographer should always discuss publishing such photographs with the photo editor. If it is an important, relevant event that cannot be shown in any other way, then the publishing of it is acceptable."

Staging photographs of any kind is not acceptable for only 13 per cent of our respondents. Out of the 58 per cent who answered that it is sometime acceptable, or always acceptable (29 per cent), at least 25 respondents think such practices should concern only lifestyle content, magazine portraits, illustration or features, but never hard news or sports photography. Three respondents said they accepted such practice as long as it does not change the meaning of the event. Again, these findings are in line with other studies (Langton, 2010; Reaves, 1995). The majority of respondents (77 per cent) refuse to use actors to remake or dramatize events.

Table 2

Acceptance of certain procedures concerning photo-production and the circumstances of photographing (per cent)

	Always acceptable	Sometimes acceptable	Never acceptable
1	2	3	4
Paying for confidential information	2	45	53
Paying somebody for taking pictures of them	17	31	52
Paying for access into restricted areas	8	50	42
Pressure on somebody that does not want to be photographed	6	37	57

1	2	3	4
Publishing photographs of somebody who refused to be photographed	7	45	48
Working undercover (incognito) to obtain exclusive photos	13	42	45
Staging photographs (consciously influencing composition, content, events, etc.)	13	58	29
Using actors to remake or dramatize events	6	17	77

Source: Štefaniková S., Láb F. (2016), *Changing structure and content. Photojournalism practice in Central Europe in the age of digital and network media*, "Research final report".

When asked whether they would continue shooting when witnessing a critical situation, the majority of photojournalists (64 per cent) answered they would intervene (see Table 3). It is important to point out that the majority of respondents claimed they have never experienced such a situation. Similar to Kim's and Kelly's (2010) test on readers, the photojournalists' decisions whether to intervene or not was also based on a complex analysis of the situation, asking what kind of critical situation it would be, if somebody else who could give help is present, etc. None of the respondents chose the answer, "*I would continue shooting*," while three photojournalists said they would probably continue shooting, explaining it was their job to do so.

Table 3

Critical situation – continue shooting vs. intervene

	Photojournalists (%)
I would intervene	64
I would probably intervene	31
I would probably continue shooting	5
I would continue shooting	0

Source: Štefaniková S., Láb F. (2016), *Changing structure and content. Photojournalism practice in Central Europe in the age of digital and network media*, "Research final report".

Image content

Important ethical issues of visual journalism concern explicit images showing dead or wounded people, grief, accidents, disasters, the aftermath of terror, victims, as well as nudity, photographs of minors and other

similar cases. In general, our respondents[5] expressed a professional, responsible and also humane approach to these extreme examples (see Table 4). The most frequent answer on the acceptance of problematic visual material was *"sometimes acceptable."* Of all the questions we asked, less than 10% of our respondents answered it was *"always acceptable"* to shoot and publish explicit imagery. The photojournalists often justified their answer, explaining that their responsibility is to photograph, while it is the photo editors' task to decide whether such images should be published. A photojournalist working for a print daily elaborates:

> "I think there are no situations for me in which it would be unacceptable to photograph. When on assignment, I must do my work, and that is to photograph. However, this doesn't mean everything has to be published. There are no boundaries when taking pictures. Publishing is another thing – the decision belongs to the editor."

Another five photographers and photo editors held a similar opinion. Referring to the photo editors' gate keeping authority, photojournalists were often less concerned about ethics than about their professional obligation to photograph in any situation disregarding the circumstances.

Concerning images of nudity, they are sometimes acceptable for 68.2 per cent of respondents. Six photographers conditioned such imagery upon the consent of the photographed persons. Nudity is never acceptable for 22 per cent of respondents.

Very similar answers appeared in the question dealing with disturbing imagery of disasters, violent acts and their consequences. They are sometimes acceptable for 66% of photographers and photo editors. Photographing and publishing disturbing imagery of disasters was never acceptable for 24 per cent of respondents and always acceptable for 10 per cent.

Our results report a significant shift in acceptance when regarding explicit, graphic images of dead bodies, extreme violence, disasters, and deadly accidents. Publishing such content is never acceptable for 42 per cent of respondents. About 49 per cent of respondents think it is sometimes acceptable under certain conditions, such as war reporting. Two photographers distinguish the level of graphicness, with close-ups being more graphic than a medium or long shot. These findings are consistent with previous literature (Potter, Smith 2000; Parry, 2010; Robertson, 2004).

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[5] None of the interviewees works for tabloid media.

Another sensitive and ethically problematic issue concerns images of victims of accidents, violent acts, survivors of disasters, etc. In this case, the value "always acceptable" was the least frequent among all cases, only 6 per cent. About 73 per cent of respondents said it is sometimes acceptable, and for 22 per cent it is never acceptable to shoot or publish such photographs. Eight respondents said that the identity of victims should remain anonymous in regards to a dead person, survivors and relatives.

The final question concerned taking and publishing photographs of minors without parental or legal guardian consent. More than half of respondents (59 per cent) answered it was never acceptable and for 33 per cent it was sometimes acceptable. Eleven photojournalists stressed they would approve such images if they were photographed in a public space, because sometimes it is not avoidable.

Table 4

Acceptance of certain image content (per cent)

	Always acceptable	Sometimes acceptable	Never acceptable
Nudity in daily newspapers and weekly magazines	9	68	23
Disturbing imagery of disaster, violent acts, accidents, etc. and their consequences in general	10	66	24
Graphic imagery of dead bodies, extreme violent acts, accidents, etc.	9	49	42
Pictures of victims and survivors of disaster, violent acts, accidents, etc. (in general, not graphic imagery)	6	72	22
Imagery of minors without their parents'/ legal guardians' consent	8	33	59

Source: Štefaniková S., Láb F. (2016), *Changing structure and content. Photojournalism practice in Central Europe in the age of digital and network media*, "Research final report".

Post-production and technical improvements/manipulation

All images taken by the Czech, Polish and Slovak photojournalists in our research undergo post-production editing. The majority of news photographers (94 per cent) stated they edited images on their own. The rest of the photographers delegate this task to somebody else from the newsroom (e.g. photo editor or graphic designer).

The majority of news photographers (70 per cent) spend less than one minute editing a single photograph in image editing software, doing only

basic digital image editing, which is considered common practice. This editing includes: color enhancement, cropping, levels, curves, sharpness, white balance, saturation, contrast and correction of exposition. According to a photojournalist working for a weekly magazine, these computer alterations are fully acceptable and standard. Contrary to the past literature (Fahmy, Fosdick, Johnson, 2005), he supposes that using them is even an unavoidable approach:

> "It is an auxiliary tool which highlights and underlines the visuality of the image. It is similar to adjustments in the darkroom. The image is just being cleaned."

Local adjustments of contrast, tone, color and white balance (underexposed, overexposed, cause of backlight, e.g. dark face of the main object) are then acceptable for the majority of respondents, but only if they do not change the meaning of the photograph.

Cropping is considered to be acceptable by the majority (60 per cent) and sometimes acceptable by 34 per cent respondents. A few photojournalists report they prefer to photograph on full frame without any cropping because they were trained to do so due to analog equipment. Surprisingly, the majority (68 per cent) considers lightening and darkening specific objects or parts of the image as an always acceptable adjustment.

According to respondents, the original meaning of the photography and its basic information has to be preserved, especially in the case of news photography, where credibility matters the most. This finding is again in line with previous studies (Reaves, 1994; Gladney, Ehrlich, 1994). Anything that could possibly lead to misrepresentation is strictly forbidden. Therefore, the following digital adjustments should not be allowed: removal of disruptive objects and use of cloning tools. When concerning hard news photography, any change (altering, removing, adding of elements, highlighting aspects) or action that would change the meaning of the photograph is not acceptable.

Nevertheless, removal of small interfering objects in a photograph using retouching is acceptable for 85 per cent of respondents. Minor retouching of the image (e.g. dust on the chip, scratches, and noise) does not change the meaning of a photograph. It is also necessary to distinguish between different genres of photographs. For the use of retouching and cloning tools in general, nine respondents stated they would abolish them completely from news photography, but they still might allow them in lifestyle photography. Once again, it always depends on the context. This

is valid also for applying effect filters and using HDR techniques, which are shunned by the majority, but not in the case of landscape photography (according to four respondents).

Another issue is the combination of two or more photographs into a single image. Such practice is not acceptable for half (51 per cent) and sometimes acceptable for 44 per cent of respondents. However, some photographers (12 respondents) would not be that strict when it comes to panoramas and illustrations. Moreover, it is always necessary to indicate such a combination, as confirmed by 19 respondents. A photo editor working for an online news website claims that when using a montage, it is necessary to admit it:

> "When manipulating something, it must be mentioned with the photo that it is a montage. We do it that way. For example, when we combine two people in one photo or when we add something to the background, we always do it in a way it is recognizable and we have to clearly indicate that the image is not authentic."

Table 5

Acceptance of certain digital image editing (per cent)

	Always acceptable	Sometimes acceptable	Never acceptable
Global adjustment of contrast, tone, color/white balance	94	6	0
Local adjustment of contrast, tone, color/white balance	75	23	2
Lightening/darkening specific objects/parts of the image	68	30	2
Minor retouching of the image (dust on the chip, scratches, noise)	85	14	1
Removal of small interfering objects in photograph using retouching but without changing overall meaning of photograph	15	42	43
Combination of two or more photographs into a single image	5	44	51
Applying effect filters	9	38	53
Using HDR techniques	10	40	50
Using cloning tools in general (in addition to basic retouching)	4	43	53
Cropping photos to change the original format and composition	60	34	6

Source: Štefaniková S., Láb F. (2016), *Changing structure and content. Photojournalism practice in Central Europe in the age of digital and network media*, "Research final report".

Conclusion

Our paper focused on several ethical issues connected to the production, content, editing and responsibility for published visual news material. Although our respondents showed a high sense of professionalism and ethical awareness, among many findings one result is the most evident. That is, any photojournalist's and photo editor's decision always depends on the context and the evaluation of each case independently. Thus, even the most questionable practice might be acceptable under certain conditions. But what about legal limitations?

Respondents often distinguished between hard news and soft news, lifestyle, feature or illustration photography, with alteration and manipulation being the least tolerated in the case of hard news imagery. Ethically questionable practices might include staging of photographs, paying for exclusive photographs, information or access, taking and publishing pictures of somebody who refused to be photographed.

Ethical concern also relates to the depiction of critical situations and human suffering. Deciding whether to "take the picture" of a newsworthy event or "save the victim" is not only an ethical, but also humanistic and legal issue. Respondents claimed that every situation requires careful consideration and agreed there are certain limits when the newsworthiness should not overshadow an obligation to provide aid.

Also, when regarding the content of photographed and published images, respondents expressed a high level of professionalism and most were serious in their approach to visual content. Our respondents were quite conservative regarding the ongoing debate on tabloidization of the media and the presumed rise of infotainment. For example, the majority of respondents do not approve of photographing or publishing any kind of graphic imagery or photographs of children taken without the consent of their parents. In other cases, like images of victims, disturbing images of disasters and violence, or nudity, the answers of our respondents also expressed quite a high level of responsibility.

We suggested that digital alterations might lower the credibility of news photographs. The results of our study show all photographs published in news media today have been edited in digital imaging software. However, some changes are considered to be common practice, such as color enhancement, color balance, contrast, cropping, etc. Other digital alterations are accepted by photojournalists and photo editors only in some contexts and under specific conditions. Again, there is a different

tolerance level when concerning hard news photography and lifestyle, soft news, illustration or feature visual content. Regarding hard news, the majority of respondents do not approve of any digital image editing other than common practices that do not change or manipulate the overall meaning of the photograph. A few oppose even these changes (especially cropping). On the other hand, benevolence toward digital alteration of lifestyle, soft news and illustration photography is considerably wider – starting with simple esthetic retouching and ending with photomontage. Several respondents mention they do not have a problem with any alteration as long as the label "photo illustration" appears next to the photograph. In other words, it is possible to manipulate anything, but the recipients have to be aware of it.

Future research might address ethical concerns connected to the meaning of photographs and visual framing needs further consideration, or specific ethical issues, such as the use of visual material from social networks. The question here is how the news media should deal with content that is controversial primarily because of the (1) user's privacy and (2) difficulty of finding the original source. Visual news material produced by citizen journalists/citizen witnesses and other non-professionals without journalistic training and minimal awareness of professional standards, routines and ethics also has the potential to engage an entirely new set of ethical issues.

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