A COMPARISON OF THE VIEWS OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND AMERICAN PHOTOJOURNALISTS TO THE DIGITAL MANIPULATION OF NEWS PHOTOGRAPHS.

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Abstract

Digital technology has now become pervasive at most publications in South Africa and in America. Pictures are routinely digitised by publications for ease of handling in the layout process, and this makes it relatively easy to alter or manipulate the pictures using computer software programmes. This thesis attempts to gauge the views of South African photojournalists about the digital manipulation of news photographs, and compare these to the views of American photojournalists.

It is based on the hypothesis that South African and American photojournalists have different views of what is acceptable manipulation of news photographs, and that their reasons for this will also be different.

This thesis also suggests that the manipulation of news photographs is ethically problematic and can damage the credibility of both the photojournalist and the publication in which the photographs appear.

The study involves a comparison of the results from a questionnaire given to South African photojournalists and a similar questionnaire given to American photojournalists. The questionnaires were then supplemented by interviews with six South African photojournalists.

The thesis then draws conclusions from the responses to the questionnaires and interviews. These conclusions partially support the initial hypothesis, in that there are some differences between the views of South African and American photojournalists, but, on the whole, these are remarkably similar.

Photojournalists do seem to find the manipulation of news photographs to be ethically problematic, but they may find the manipulation of other kinds of images (eg fashion or soft news) to be acceptable. South African photographers also find the manipulation of images by other means (eg different lenses or darkroom techniques) to be more acceptable than Americans do.

Although the underlying reasons for these views may differ, maintaining the credibility of the photographer and the publication does seem to be the major issue for avoiding digital manipulation. South African photographers seemed to think that if the photographer had done his or her job well, there would be no need for manipulation, and both groups (but especially the Americans) felt that manipulation could often be equated to lying to the reader, and that this might damage their reputation, and that of their publications.

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Introduction

The digital technology which is now becoming commonplace at newspapers throughout the world is changing the face of photojournalism. Digital technology can cut out the use of film completely, with the use of digital cameras, or can take an image originally captured on film and digitize it later. Both methods allow images to become available more quickly than traditional chemical methods, as they cut out time used to process and/or print a film image. They also allow images to be more flexible than chemically based techniques, as digital technology means that a picture can be worked with, improved and altered cheaply, easily and without the physical limitations and time requirements of the darkroom.

While most newspapers in South Africa are still using film-based technology to capture the original image, the image is almost always then scanned into the computer, in other words, digitized for ease of handling and layout. When on the computer, the image may be edited using a software programme such as Adobe Photoshop and others. These software packages are immensely powerful, and with them the computer operator can make both simple changes to an image, like cropping or adjusting colour casts, or very complex changes, like moving elements in the picture or combining many pictures into one seamless image. Because of the power of the software, a competent computer operator can make all these changes so easily that it is impossible to tell that the final image is no longer what the photographer originally saw through the viewfinder of his or her camera.

The use of this technology on a daily basis has brought with it an upsurge of interest in ethics from photojournalists who are concerned that the scope for manipulating or changing the original image will render the image, long regarded as an invaluable aid to journalism, flawed or invalid as a means of reporting and recording the news. Images may no longer be seen by readers as a reliable and believable record of what happened. Concerned organisations such as the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) in America and many individual news organisations have issued statements of ethical principles and codes of conduct which lay out very carefully what may and may not be done on computer or manually to manipulate an image, and, in the USA at least, many articles have been written on this subject.

In South Africa the use of digital technology at newspapers has, in the past few years, escalated to become commonplace. The majority of newspapers will scan images and work on them with software programmes like Photoshop, and manipulated news images have appeared in these newspapers (see Appendix C for examples). The main aim of this thesis is to investigate the views of South African photojournalists towards the digital manipulation of news images, and to compare these views to those discovered in studies about American photojournalists.

Because of the lack of written material and public debate about photojournalism in general, and photojournalism ethics in particular in this country, the researcher expected to find that South African photojournalists have unsophisticated, poorly thought-out ideas of the ethical issues surrounding the digital manipulation of news photographs compared to

American photojournalists who have access to much more information on the subject. I also expected to find differences in the South African views and reasons for manipulating or not manipulating images compared to the American ones, even where the end decision is the same, as this should reflect the differences between the countries and cultures of the photojournalists involved.

This thesis looks specifically at the digital manipulation of news as opposed to other types of photographs. American research by Sheila Reaves (1995) has shown that photographic editors are less likely to manipulate news images as opposed to images categorised as features or illustrations. The questionnaire and interviews attempt, in some degree, to find out if South African photojournalists have the same views.

This thesis shares the definition of news in part with the Reaves study, which utilises the NPPA definition of spot news: “Pictures of unscheduled events for which no advance planning was possible” (Reaves, 1995: 708). But it extends this definition to include scheduled newsworthy events (such as a presidential inauguration or a state funeral) where the photographer has no control over the events. This study has also only focused on newspaper photojournalists, and not on photojournalists who shoot for other publications which cover the news. For the purpose of this study, a photojournalist is defined as a person whose main income is derived from producing editorial photographs for publication in newspapers.

Chapter one gives the theoretical background for the study. It explains why ethics are important in photojournalism, taking the view that ethics are vital for maintaining the credibility of the publication, and therefore its readers. The chapter goes on to examine how meaning is constructed in photographs and attempts to explain why digital manipulation has caused such an uproar among photojournalists, relating this to the established debate between realist and constructivist positions in photographic theory. The chapter contends that the digital manipulation of news images is an ethical issue that has an impact on the credibility of news photographs, and, by extension, the newspaper in which they are published.

Chapter two deals with the research methodology for the study. The research was conducted in two parts, utilising a questionnaire which was used in an American study by Kurt Foss and adapted for the South African study in order to directly compare the results, and a series of interviews which gave the researcher an opportunity to probe the views of South African photojournalists in more depth.

Chapter three provides an analysis of the answers to the questionnaire obtained in the South African study, and compares them to the results obtained by Foss in the American study, pointing out areas of similarity and difference between the two groups.

Chapter four gives a review of the interviews with South African photojournalists, highlighting the views displayed by the interviewees towards the digital manipulation of

news images. It includes South African examples of digital manipulation offered by the interviewees, as well as the reasoning behind these examples.

The conclusion ties up the results gleaned in chapters three and four, comparing the information obtained from the questionnaire to that obtained by the interviews. The chapter identifies the major differences between the views of South African photojournalists and those of American photojournalists to the digital manipulation of news photographs, and attempts, using the reasoning put forward by the photojournalists themselves, to explain these differences.

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

Introduction

This chapter is intended to give a background to why ethics are important in photojournalism. It takes the view that ethics are important for maintaining the credibility of the publication, and therefore maintaining its readers. Thus ethics are important for *inter alia* the financial well being of the newspaper.

The chapter then examines how meaning is constructed in photographs, and explains that manipulation of photographs is an old phenomenon. The chapter attempts to explain why digital manipulation has caused such upheaval among photographers, and relates this to the established debate between realism and constructivism in photographic theory.

It is then suggested that the digital manipulation of news images is an ethical issue that has an impact on the credibility of news photographs, and, by extension, the newspaper in which they are published.

Ethics and the need for credibility

Newspapers are the product of an industry which packages and sells news. As defined by the Hutchins Commission in America in 1946, news is “a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context which gives them meaning” (Lester, 1995). In order to maintain their credibility, and thus their sales, newspapers need to build up a reputation for giving accurate accounts of the day’s events. Credibility, in this

context, means that the newspaper is a source of information that abides by the Hutchins Commission's definition of news, that is, as a source that is reliable and believable. As Ben Brink (1988: 21-22) notes:

> "Credibility is the reason newspapers exist. As James Kilpatrick once wrote, 'The newspaper has no intrinsic function. You cannot wear it, drive it, eat it, drink it or live in it.' The value of a newspaper is its ability to provide the public with what it wants and what it needs. If the paper isn't credible, it can do neither of those things very well."

Of course there are publications that do not rely on credibility for their sales. The so-called tabloid press relies on sensationalism to sell their newspapers, but what they are selling is more often entertainment than news. As Barthes (1982:194) pointed out, the meanings of photographs may change when they are used in different publications, and Lester (1995) also emphasizes this point: "Credibility is not an inherent quality of a particular picture, but a concept based on tradition, story choices, design considerations and reader perception of the company or individual that produces the image. Reputation is what separates the difference in picture credibility between The New York Times, the National Enquirer, 'CBS Evening News' or 'Hard Copy'."

Ethics are important for building the credibility of a newspaper, because they define both the limits and essentials of acceptable behaviour for journalists on the job. Ethics has been defined as "…that branch of philosophy that deals with what 'ought' to be done, with what kinds of actions are 'good' (or at least 'better'), and with personal values and individual character. Media ethics is very much a normative field - helping journalists

develop principles and maxims to follow in principles of ethical practice." (Merrill, Lee and Friedlander, quoted in De Beer and Froneman, 1994: 6). Journalists must not only be aware of issues like the right to privacy of members of the public, but must also realise that they have a responsibility to check their sources and report the facts accurately. These ethics of process have an essential impact on the credibility of the product. When a newspaper loses credibility, when the readers no longer trust that the news it prints is a "truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events" (Lester, 1995), then the newspaper is of little value to the people who read it, and they may not buy it as a credible news source. Thus ethics are ultimately important for the financial well being (and, by extension, the life) of the publication, not only the moral well being of the journalists who work there.

There are two sets of ethics (and sometimes more) at work at a news organisation, with two different agendas. The first, and mostly over-riding, set of ethics is that of the newspaper as an organisation. These ethics are primarily hedonistic, and stem from the fact that a newspaper is a business, and, as such, needs to make money to survive. Taking the view that newspapers need to be credible to keep their readership, many newspapers stress their ethical policies or codes in order for their readers to see that they are demonstrably ethical, and therefore a credible news source, and as a guide for their staff to follow[1]. This kind of system only works if the managing editor and/or publisher is willing to promote this kind of behaviour amongst employees (Boeyink 1994: 901), and if they are committed to following the code, even if it were to interfere with certain newsworthy

[1]See Ecquid Novi 1994, 15(1) for a list of South African media codes

stories. The paper might not, for example, print a story if it was obtained by ethically questionable means. There are, of course, ethical issues that impact on the sales of newspapers other than the issue of credibility and the manipulation of images. Issues of honesty and taste may also affect the readership of a newspaper, and publications must take this into consideration with regards to the images or stories they publish.

Where issues of taste and issues of manipulation coincide, the ethical issues may become confused, because manipulation may be used to change an image which was considered tasteless, to one which is acceptable. A good example of this was put forward by Jan Hamman of Die Beeld in an interview for this thesis (see Appendix C). Hamman described an image in which the partially covered body of a child who was killed in an accident was lying in the road. The newspaper did not want to publish the image of the body, which was half covered by a blanket, as they considered it to be tasteless and likely to cause the victim's family and other readers distress. The newspaper decided to use a manipulated version of the image, in which they extended the blanket to cover the body fully. The manipulation was made clear in the caption of the image. Manipulation, then, although it may be used to present an explicitly non-credible image to readers, is not always a threat to the credibility, and thus the sales, of a publication – it can be used in such a way as to become an advantage to the newspaper.

Another set of ethics at work in journalism is the ethics of the individual reporter, which may be different to that of the institution for which he or she works, and may even be in

conflict with the institution's ethical code. The reporter's personal ethics stem from personalised issues such as background, religion and cultural heritage. Boeyink (1994 : 894) says in an article on the effectiveness of codes of ethics in the news room: "That direct link between codes and behaviour is difficult to establish because journalists' values come from sources as diverse as family and day-to-day news room learning."

I would argue that while newspapers have codes of ethics for expedient and hedonistic reasons, the individual journalist reasons by another set of ethical considerations, whether explicit and thought-through, or simply instinctive and reactionary. John Merrill (1995 : 4) outlines the process of moral development in people concerned about ethics:

> A media person concerned with ethics, like anyone else, goes through a process of moral development. It is generally thought there are three main levels in such a moral progress, each one more sophisticated. First, there is the level of instinct, in which right conduct is determined by the person's fundamental needs and instincts. On this primitive level, ethics comes from innate tendencies. On the next higher level, the level of custom, what seems right to the person is conduct that is in accordance with the customs of the various groups to which he or she belongs. On the highest general level of morality, the level of conscience, conduct that appears right is that which is approved by the agent's own personally developed judgment of what is right or wrong. The conscience is developed by the person's own reasoning, building on custom and instinct.

The moral development of photojournalists concerned about ethics will be examined in the final chapter with reference to the interviews with individual photojournalists.

For a newspaper to maintain its credibility, then, all its journalists (be they writers, editors, sub-editors or photographers) need to behave ethically. That is, in terms of 'acceptable' ethics, and all the elements that make up the product need to be handled 'ethically'. In this case 'ethically' would mean that the journalists have thought about and discussed the use of ethically troubling stories or photographs, and, in the case of the manipulation of an image, would have considered the consequences of using such an image. Of course, it is important to remember that journalists from different backgrounds may reach different conclusions, often based on custom and social group, about what is the correct decision in a particular situation. As Benedict (1993: 27) says: "Cultural Relativism warns us, quite rightly, about the danger of assuming that all our preferences are based on some absolute rational standard. They are not. Many (but not all) of our practices are merely peculiar to our society". However, she goes on to say that "there are some moral rules that all societies will have in common, because those rules are necessary for society to exist." From this we can draw the conclusion that there may be some moral rules that all newspapers have in common, because these rules are necessary for preserving the credibility of the paper as a news source.

Because of the differences in the ways that individuals react to ethical dilemmas, no single institutional code of ethics and no personal moral system can provide the answers to every ethical question that may confront the journalist. However, having a code to fall back on, or a conscience which has been made aware of different ethical choices, can help the journalist make a defensible decision. As Klaidman and Beauchamp (1987: 20) warn: "No

system of ethics can provide full, ready-made solutions to all the perplexing moral problems that confront us, in life or in journalism. A reasoned and systematic approach to these issues is all that can be asked."

This thesis explores the attitudes of photojournalists to the specific ethical problem of digital manipulation, both as a group (in the questionnaires) and as individuals (in the interviews), in order to see how they react to some of the ethical questions around this topic. In doing this, the thesis concentrates on the ethics of the individual, setting out to explore and discover those ethics, specifically around the problem of digital manipulation, which are common to the diverse group of people who are practising photojournalists.

The meaning of photographs and the manipulation of meaning.

Photographs are one of the most powerful elements of a newspaper, and add enormously to the content and vibrancy of a publication. Good pictures, used well, are acknowledged to be one of the best sales tools a newspaper has (Garcia, 1991). This power of photography to draw in readers has often been related to the fact that photography is a recording of real life. It is a trace, according to Susan Sontag (quoted in Berger, 1980: 50), directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask. Pictures must have some basis in the real world, it was reasoned, else they could not exist. Although this is to some extent true of photographs made with film-based technology, it is not necessarily at all true of pictures made with digital technology. With digital technology, pictures can be created from nothing, be literally built up pixel by pixel by the computer operator, or elements from many pictures can be used to create a new one. And while film-based

pictures may not look exactly like the original scene, with digital technology there may not even have been an original scene. A computer artist can create an image that looks like a photograph of a purely imaginary subject. As Lister (1995: 3) contends: “For the consumer of photographic images, surely a good part of the world’s population to different degrees, the belief in a meaningful link between the appearance of the world, and the precise configuration of a material image, can no longer be assumed.”

But it is not only the creation of a completely new picture that concerns photojournalists. It is also the fact that a photograph specifically made to document a scene can be changed or manipulated so that it no longer bears any resemblance to what actually happened. A picture can now show what could or should have happened, instead of what did, and no one would be able to tell the difference. Of course, this is not a new phenomenon, even if digital manipulation has highlighted the issue. Long before digital technology photographers have made parts on an image lighter or darker in the darkroom, used light to create special effects, cut and pasted images together to form new ones and generally manipulated people and objects to make a photograph say whatever they wanted it to. “Photographs have been manipulated to deceive at least since the time of Hippolyte Bayard, who in 1840 staged his ‘self portrait as a drowned man’, a shocking image meant to redress the lack of attention to his photographic discoveries” (Ritchin 1990: 13). Even such acclaimed documentary photojournalists as W. Eugene Smith have in recent years been condemned for setting up photographs and for darkroom manipulations, although Smith remains a revered figure in photojournalism history (Lacayo and Russell, 1995: 158).

Lister (1995: 9) points out that the current debates (such as those of Martin and Ritchin) about the validity of digital images compared to analogue images, is a continuation of a much older debate about the way photographs are perceived and read. “This is the debate between those who have stressed the photographic image’s privileged status as a trustworthy mechanical analogue (sic) of reality and those who have stressed its constructed, artifactual and ideological character.” Lister divides this debate into a realist argument and a constructivist one. Realist theories give priority to the mechanical origins of the photograph; they speak of photographs as being “perfect analogons”, “stencils off the real” or records of objects or images of objects. What is stressed is the link with the physical world, images that are produced and are passive and what Barthes (1984) called “being thereness”. Realist theories, says Lister (1994:10), “appeal deeply to common sense. They resonate strongly with positivist beliefs about the facts of a situation being transparently clear to us when open to inspection by vision.” These realist theories do not take into account how an image is actually created and the choices made by the photographer, nor how they are read and interpreted by the reader.

The constructivist argument realises that the final reading of an image is a combination of both an interpretation of the scene by the photographer and an interpretation of the photograph by the reader. As Lister (1994: 11) says: “Instead of focusing attention upon the photograph as the product of a specific mechanical and chemical technology, we need to consider its technological, semiotic, and social hybrid-ness; the way in which its meanings and power are the result of a mixture and compound of forces and not a

singular, essential and inherent quality." The photographer makes choices at the scene which is to be photographed. Different materials, lenses, and even viewpoints make the final photograph an interpretation of what was happening (Martin, 1991: 157). Thus even before the photograph reaches the reader it can no longer be seen as a perfect analogon to reality. The photographic meanings may also be changed because of the context they are found in. Critic Mary Price (quoted in Wells 1997: 41) argues that the meaning of a photograph is dependent on the words which are used to describe it and the context in which the image is used, and Barthes (1982: 194) has long maintained that: "a photograph can change its meaning as it passes from the very conservative L'Aurore to the communist L'Humanite". Barthes (1984) also stresses the fact that photographs will mean different things to different people, and, because of the reader's background, likes and dislikes and memories, the photograph will be read differently. Max Kozloff (quoted in Wells 1997: 41) argues for a view of "the photograph as 'witness' with all the possibilities of misunderstanding, partial information or false testament that the term 'witness' may be taken to imply". If pictures have never told all the truth, have always been just an interpretation both by the photographer of the scene and of the photograph by the reader, then what does it matter if photographs in newspapers are manipulated and changed so that they show what the photographer or editor wants them to show?

Ethical Problems With the Digital Manipulation of News Photographs.

Manipulation matters, within the realist ideology, because photographs play an integral and powerful part in selling the news. Readers expect their news to be "truthful" or accurate, they expect reporters to tell us what was said without twisting and changing the

speakers' words, and they expect photographs to show us what this place or that person looked like at the moment the photographer took the picture (people rely on the photographer to choose the "decisive moment" in the same way that they rely on the reporter to choose the most telling quote - after all, the journalist's job is to sift out the news). It also matters because one untruth may lead to another - if the pictures have been changed then maybe the words have too. The credibility of the publication is at stake, and as Kasoma (1994: 3) says: "Journalism ethics is necessary for the media to retain respectability and credibility - both are *conditio sine qua non* for their social and political roles."

The manipulation of news photographs is an important ethical issue because manipulating a news photograph can have negative effects on the credibility of the newspaper, and, by extension, its life. A manipulated news photograph may deceive the readers, in direct contradiction to the purpose of newspapers described earlier in this chapter, and this deception - once discovered - could lead to a decline of their credibility. Organisations such as the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) in America have recognised this possibility. In its code of ethics, the NPPA states: "It is the individual responsibility of every photojournalist at all times to strive for pictures that report truthfully, honestly and objectively. ... As journalists we believe the guiding principle of our profession is accuracy, therefore, we believe it is wrong to alter the content of a photograph in any way that deceives the public" (quoted in Harris, 1991: 171).

Because of the possible negative effects this loss of credibility can have, and the importance of hard news as a staple element of newspapers, this thesis concentrates on the ethics of manipulating "news" photographs, as opposed to other kinds of photographs. In a 1995 study, American researcher Sheila Reaves recorded that newspaper editors were less likely to allow the digital manipulation of a news photograph than they were to allow the manipulation of a photograph they categorised as a feature or soft news image. Reaves (1995: 713) says: "Newspaper editors appear to discriminate between hard news and soft news, and this distinction influences their tolerance toward digital manipulation. If a newspaper editor perceives the photo as a spot-news image, then there will be less tolerance for digital manipulation."

Ethical problems about manipulation in photography are by no means a new phenomenon (Ritchin 1990: 13), but the relative novelty and ease of digital manipulation has simply brought the problem to the attention of photographers and readers again. As Lester (1995) says: "Picture and subject manipulations have been a part of photography since it was first invented. But because of computer technology, digital manipulations are relatively easy to accomplish, hard to detect and perhaps more alarming, alter the original image so that checking the authenticity of the picture is impossible."

To some degree this suspicion of digital technology is probably a symptom of its newness - established professionals are suspicious of the new technology, and digital technology changes many of the established practises of photojournalism (Halestead, 1996). It is also perhaps a symptom of the photographers' reaction to loss of control of their image -

anyone with access to the technology can now change a photograph, whereas before digital technology only people who were experts in the darkroom or with a camera could change an image. As many of the newspaper readers become increasingly aware of this technology as it moves into the popular marketplace and they themselves can manipulate photographs, it becomes increasingly important that news professionals, if they want to present themselves as credible, base their views and practises on a clear understanding of the issues involved.

So, the role of manipulation has come to the fore again. This thesis tries to uncover and clarify photojournalists' views towards the operation and how it ties up with ethics and with credibility, and with the relationship between ethics and credibility.

Conclusion:

This chapter has attempted to explain why ethics are important in newspaper photojournalism. It has maintained that ethics are essential for the credibility of newspapers, and that credibility is a very important quality for newspapers to have, as it can affect the readership and commercial viability, and therefore the life, of the newspaper.

The chapter has also situated the debates around digital photography and manipulation within the historical tradition of manipulation of photographs by manual means, and the theories around photographic meaning. The chapter attempted to explain that the digital manipulation of news photographs is an ethically questionable practice which could lead to the decline of the credibility of the newspaper.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

Introduction

This study aims to establish the views of South African photojournalists towards the digital manipulation of news photographs, and compare them with those of American photojournalists as established by American scholars like Kurt Foss (1990) and Sheila Reeves (1987). The views of South African photojournalists have been established by means of a questionnaire and six in-depth interviews with photojournalists.

The answers to the questionnaires were analysed, and the results compared to the results obtained by Foss in a similar study. The interviews were also analysed and the photographers' philosophical approaches identified according to the six major ethical philosophies as identified by Lester (1991), so as to locate their reactions and predict how they would react to certain ethical problems. Their responses to direct questions about digital technology were also analysed.

The study's two-pronged methodological approach arose from the lower return rate of the questionnaires. Of the approximately 110 questionnaires given out, only 30 were returned, or 27%. The response rate in the original American study was 39%. As there is so little research on South African photojournalism, the researcher felt it necessary to augment the questionnaires with interviews to obtain more data to work with. Six photojournalists were chosen.

The questionnaire and attitude scales.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) used in this study was adapted from the one used by Kurt Foss (1990) for his doctoral thesis. This study was chosen because when Foss did his study in the USA, digital technology was relatively new there, as it is in South Africa now, and the format of the study could be easily adapted to include South African terminology and examples without changing the meaning of the questions. The questionnaire outlines a situation and the decision taken and asks the respondent if he or she agrees, disagrees or is undecided about this decision. In most questions (1, 2, 3, 4, 6b, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14 and 16) the decision is to alter the photograph by means of digital manipulation. However, not all the questions are about news photographs, as the questionnaire attempts to see if the responses alter for different kinds of photographs. Questions 1, 3, 4, 6b and 14 are about 'hard' news photographs being altered on a computer, questions 2, 7, 8, 9, 13 are about 'soft' news photographs (fashion pictures, travel features and portraits) being changed. Questions 12 and 16 also describe soft photographs being digitally manipulated, but in situations where these changes were explained in the captions. The study also contains questions which aim to establish if the respondent is against all picture manipulation or simply against digital picture manipulation, a view which may be the result of the respondent not being comfortable with the technology, rather than having a problem with picture manipulation as such (see questions 5, 6a and 6b,10, 11 and 15).

The questionnaire was given to newspaper photojournalists, that is, people who earn their living from selling editorial photographs to newspapers. This group includes freelancers as well as permanent staff photographers. Answers from six postgraduate photojournalism

students who attended the 1996 South African Photojournalism Conference where the questionnaires were first given out were also included in the analysis, as their responses indicate the views of the younger generation of photojournalists.

The questionnaire is in the form of a three-point Likert Scale, used to give a rough measure of the views of photojournalists to digital manipulation. The Likert scale is only of use to make a rough ordering of people's views and actions - it does not give information about why people do things, only an idea of what they do. Two people can arrive at a decision to take the same action from very different underlying attitudes and world views, and the researcher must be aware of this. As Oppenheim (1966: 141) says: "In practice, if we remember that equal score intervals do not permit us to make assertions about the equality of underlying attitude differences and that identical scores may have very different meanings, the Likert Scales tend to perform very well when it comes to a reliable, rough ordering of people with regard to a particular attitude."

A small pilot study was done with five Rhodes University photojournalism students, to make sure that the questions were understandable and the layout of the questionnaire easy to read and answer. Several minor changes were made to the layout and to the wording of the questions. However, the students did not pick out the major problem in the final questionnaire. The question which attempted to find out the status of the respondents (are you a student? Institution? Degree/diploma? Are you a photojournalist? Freelance? Staffer?) was not clear enough in the final questionnaire, and many respondents failed to

answer it fully.[1] However, because the questionnaires were given, by the researcher, to a tightly controlled group of people who were known to be photojournalists or senior photojournalism students with some practical experience, this problem is not a serious one, as it may have been had the questionnaires been given to a wider group of people. Because the researcher knew who the respondents were, she could amend or fill in this data where needed.

The questionnaire also provides space for brief explanations for why the respondent chose to answer as he/she did, and Foss (1990: 1) explains in his introduction to the questionnaire that "your brief explanations are especially important - your opinions will represent those of many of your colleagues". These explanations should highlight the differences between South African and American respondents, and bring out the differences in the way these photojournalists think about digital manipulation. These explanations are important because Likert Scales do not by themselves reveal the reasons for the attitudes they measure. By allowing respondents to explain their thinking, the study was able to probe somewhat deeper than only using the Likert Scale. The explanations were compared with the interview findings to determine the similarity or differences of views exposed.

From this rough measure of attitudes it should be apparent what the major concerns with and views about digital manipulation are among photojournalists, and how these concerns

[1] Twenty three respondents answered the question fully. Nine were staff photographers, and eight were freelancers. Six of the respondents were senior photojournalism students. Four respondents did not answer the question fully, and three respondents completely ignored the question.

differ in the two countries. Attitudes, says Oppenheim (1966: 111), are "highly emotional, both in the sense of irrational or illogical and in the sense of arousing powerful needs and ego defenses". Attitudes are seldom the result of logical conclusions based on evidence, they are more often the results of absorbing or reacting to the attitudes of other people. This would seem to correspond with Merrill's (1995: 4) first level of moral progress, the level of instinct, as outlined in Chapter One.

Because it is precisely these emotional and illogical attitudes, which lead to spur-of-the-moment decisions and actions, that the questionnaire wanted to bring out, it takes care not to put the respondents on the defensive. The questionnaire wanted to explore photojournalist's first responses – what they think they would do on the spur of the moment, and not what they would do if they were thinking that they had to justify their actions afterwards. "As to careful thought," says Oppenheim (1966: 116) "of course we want respondents to be attentive, but we want them to think and express themselves as they do habitually; we don't want them to think out a new philosophy of life on the spot or to start ruminative doubts with every item." The emotional, illogical reaction is important, because when photojournalists have to make decisions they most often have to make them very quickly, and under a great deal of stress, and therefore these 'instinctive' reactions are very often the basis of their decisions.

In order to keep the comparison between the South African study and the American one as valid as possible, minimal changes were made to the questionnaire used by Foss.

Changes were only made where terms were used which are not common to South Africa, or where situations were used which would not happen in South Africa; for example, in question 3, a baseball example in the American study was changed to a soccer example for the South African study (see Appendix A).

Besides the inherent limitations of using a Likert scale, it soon became apparent that the rate of return of the questionnaires was going to be lower than the researcher hoped for. Approximately 80 questionnaires were given out at the first South African Photojournalism Conference held in 1996, but only 15 were returned. The researcher then tried mailing the questionnaires to photojournalists, but this technique was soon abandoned, both because of lack of response as well as the prohibitive expense of this technique. Approximately 20 photojournalists were mailed copies of the questionnaire with a covering letter explaining the study and asking for their cooperation, and a stamped envelope addressed to the researcher was included for easy return of the questionnaires. No replies were received except from Jan Hamman, chief photographer of Die Beeld newspaper and his team of photographers who replied six weeks after the questionnaires were originally mailed. Follow up of the mailed questionnaires was again not possible because of the expense. The researcher found that requests made in person to specific photojournalists were far more successful, and the rest of the responses to the questionnaire, 10 in all, were gained in this manner.

Phenomenology and the research interview.

Because Likert scales only give a rough indication of the views and actions of the respondents and not of their deeper, and perhaps different, reasons for these attitudes towards the subject in question, the researcher decided to augment the results of the survey with interviews with individual photojournalists, where their views towards the problem could be gauged in more detail. This deeper understanding of South African views also allowed the researcher to use research based on interviews done in the USA such as Sheila Reeves' 1987 study on digital retouching, to inform the comparison between South African and American photojournalists.

The research interviews were based on a phenomenological methodology, which is concerned with "the world of conscious experience … phenomenology focuses on the social construction of reality by conscious beings" (Jansen 1989: 48). The purpose of the interviews was to seek for patterns behind the taken-for-granted meanings, and the reasons for the attitudes expressed by interviewees towards ethically challenging situations and towards digital manipulation in particular. Unlike the more quantitative questionnaires, the research interviews do not use numbers to measure the attitudes of photojournalists. They are more useful in investigating these attitudes and how they are expressed by photojournalists (Kvale 1994: 167). This study thus supplemented the questionnaires with interviews, in some cases with the same individual.

Phenomenology relies heavily of the ideas of Edmund Husserl, one of the founders of phenomenological research, who propagated the idea of the life-world, in which the processes of consciousness operate to give us a sense of reality. According to Husserl, a

human's sense of reality is limited to those experiences which he or she is conscious of, and has interpreted and attached significance to (Jansen, 1989). The scholar Alfred Schultz later argued that because each human has a different history, no two humans have precisely the same life-world, but that there are some areas where we do have shared knowledge: "Our orientation to the life-world is dependent upon a shared stock of knowledge. We all learn common recipes for action, rules of conduct, conceptions of appropriate courses of action and other similar information" (Jansen 1989: 52). This idea of a shared stock of knowledge is important for the interpretation of photojournalists' attitudes towards ethics, as the theme of the 'unwritten rules' in the news room came through strongly in the research interviews. As Jan Hamman, chief photographer of Die Beeld and a veteran photojournalist, said in his interview: "I think all the newspapers have got a code of ethics. It's not written down anywhere, it's something you pick up in the workplace."

The qualitative research interview is defined as "an interview the purpose of which is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with the intention of interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale 1994: 149). The research interviews enable the researcher to question the life-world of the interviewee, compare it to the life-worlds of the other interviewees and question the concept of a shared stock of knowledge.

The research interview, according to Kvale (1994: 159), is "flexible, context-sensitive, and dependent on the personal interaction of the interviewer and interviewee". The interview relies on the researcher's ability to get the interviewee to talk comfortably and honestly

about his or her views towards the subject, in this case the ethics of photojournalism. It also creates space for the interviewer to ask leading questions and counter questions in order to check the reliability of the interviewees' answers, and also to test the researcher's hypothesis. Because the interviews rely so heavily on the interviewer, it is important that he or she is aware of the potential for unintentional bias, both because of the possible expectations of the subjects, and the possibility of the interviewer's hypotheses biasing both the questions and the interpretations of the answers. The researcher must therefore make an effort to explicate his or her presuppositions and prejudices in order for them not to adversely influence the study (Kvale 1994), and I have attempted to do so where appropriate in this thesis.

Selection of interviewees

The six interviewees were chosen because they all practice slightly different forms of photojournalism, and might therefore be expected to have differing attitudes to the manipulation of news photographs. Although all six make their living from selling mainly editorial photographs to newspapers, their backgrounds are different, and they work in different areas of the media. Although three of the people are chief photographers at their newspapers, the newspapers they work for are very different, and target different markets and sections of the South African public, and their chief photographers may differ from one another in their attitudes towards digital manipulation of news photographs. Another consideration was the willingness of the photojournalists to be interviewed, and their accessibility to the researcher. For this reason, only Johannesburg-based photojournalists were interviewed. However, there is no reason to believe that there would be differences

between this sample and photojournalists from other cities in South Africa. A list of the photojournalists and a brief biographical note follows:

Henner Frankenfeld is now a freelance photographer, but he was the chief photographer at the Mail and Guardian newspaper for several years. He does not consider himself to be a full-time photojournalist now, although he still does take editorial photographs. He is well know for his portraits of leading political and social figures, as well as for covering the violence during the last yeas of Apartheid.

Naashon Zalk is a freelance photojournalist working primarily for The Star newspaper. Originally a computer scientist, Zalk has been practising photojournalism for approximately four years, mainly for The Star and the Mail and Guardian. Zalk covers many of the everyday assignments at The Star, which can include photographing criminals at court and portraits as well as covering news events.

Joao Silva is a photographer for the Associated Press news agency. He is primarily known as a war photographer, a reputation he gained in the South African townships during the late 1980's. Silva has photographed most of the major conflicts around the world in the last ten years, including the wars in Afghanistan and Bosnia as well providing extensive coverage of Angola. The Associated Press (AP) supply photographs and copy to most of the newspapers in South Africa and abroad. They specialise in news of international importance, as well as conflict photography.

Jan Hamman is the chief photographer of Die Beeld newspaper, a large Afrikaans daily newspaper aimed at mainly white, middle class, older readers. Hamman is a veteran photographer with more than twenty years experience, and has won many awards for his general news photography.

Robert Magwaza is the chief photographer of The Sowetan, South Africa's largest daily newspaper, aimed at a mainly black, urban readership. Magwaza is also a veteran photojournalist with more than twenty years experience in newspaper photography.

Ruth Motau is the chief photographer at the Mail and Guardian newspaper, a weekly paper appearing on Fridays and aimed at a multi-racial readership which is well educated and wealthy. Motau has been chief photographer at the Mail and Guardian for two years, and specialises in documentary photojournalism.

Of the six interviewees, Jan Hamman, Henner Frankenfeld and Naashon Zalk had filled in the questionnaires before the interview.

Research interview procedure

The interviews aimed to investigate the views of photographers about ethics in photojournalism, and to then compare them to the more formal results gained in the questionnaire. The questions asked in the interviews stemmed from issues arising from the questionnaire itself, and from conversations with photojournalists about the questionnaire. However, as Kvale maintains; "the interview is carried through following an interview-

guide, which rather than containing exact questions focuses on certain themes" (Kvale 1983, quoted in O'Dowd, 1996: 37). The questions were very open ended and intended more to get the interviewee talking about what ethical problems he or she was specifically interested in than to get answers to direct questions. The researcher did have a list of questions which were put to each interviewee (see Appendix B), but the interviews often included more questions that stemmed from the interview itself, where the researcher wanted more information. Leading questions were also used to guide the interviews. As Kvale (1994: 156) says: "the qualitative research interview is particularly well suited for using leading questions for checking the reliability of the interviewees' answers. Thus, contrary to popular opinion, leading questions do not have to reduce the reliability of interviews, but may enhance it."

The interview is a continual process of hypothesis testing, as will be made clear in the analysis of the interviews, and the researcher often used leading questions and real examples to draw out an interviewee to state his or her thoughts more clearly. Where interesting examples were given by the interviewees' themselves, these were often used by the researcher as questions in subsequent interviews, in order to see where the views of the interviewees tallied or differed. One example is Die Beeld's use of manipulation of a photograph of an accident scene in order not to offend readers (see Appendix C) which was raised by Jan Hamman in his interview, and which was then used as an example when interviewing both Robert Magwaza and Ruth Motau.

Interview interpretation

The interpretation of interviews is problematic because it can very easily be influenced by the preconceptions or prejudices of the interpreter. As mentioned earlier, this can be overcome somewhat by the researcher making clear his or her own presuppositions (Kvale, 1994), and I have attempted to do this when interpreting the interviews. For example, when interviewing Robert Magwaza from the Sowetan, it became clear that he has very different views about what manipulations are permissible with digital technology than I do. Because I felt I might be misunderstanding him or might bring some bias to the questions, I tried to make sure that the questions about which kinds of digital manipulations are acceptable was asked several times in different ways, and I have tried to make my preconceptions clear when analysing the interview (see chapter 4).

Interviews can be interpreted in many different ways, but what is important for the legitimacy of the study is that the approach of the interpreter and the research questions asked of a text are made very clear, as well as the evidence and arguments which have been applied to the interpretation. This is because other readers, adopting the same view point, should be able to see how the researcher came to the conclusions he or she did, although they might not agree with them.

I transcribed and carefully read the interviews to gain a general idea of their meanings, and the kinds of ethical problems which were raised by the photojournalists, paying particular attention to their comments about digital manipulation. I made notes of the important points and summarised each interview to be able to compare the data easily. The

results of the interview interpretations were then compared to the results of the questionnaires, and the comments made in the questionnaires by the respondents.

Areas of methodological concern

As already mentioned, the possibility of interviewer bias is a major concern, but the researcher has attempted to overcome this by stating her positions and presuppositions clearly when interpreting the results.

The absence of standardisation of interviews is also of concern, because the personal interaction between the interviewer and interviewee is a factor that may influence the content of the interview. According to Kvale (1994: 159), however, we may "regard the person of the interviewer as the primary methodological tool, with the relevant data constituted by the unique interaction created by the interviewer and the interviewee". This places a heavy burden on the researcher who must have a good knowledge of both methods and the subject under discussion, as well as being sensitive to the needs of the interview, and to attempt to cover at least some common ground in each interview.

All the photojournalists interviewed were known to the researcher prior to the interviews, but this is not necessarily a disadvantage. The photojournalists knew that the researcher was empathetic to the problems they face in their job, and thus could speak freely about the kinds of ethical problems they encounter, and the researcher could draw on her own experience for specific examples where necessary to explain a problem. Some problems occurred where the interviewees expected the researcher to understand what they were

talking about, but when this occurred the researcher would ask them to explain more clearly.

An area of methodological concern with the questionnaires is the fact that fewer questionnaires were returned in comparison to the American study. A total of 300 questionnaires were given out to American photojournalists, and 117 returned, a response rate of 39% (Foss, 1990). In the South African study, 110 questionnaires were given out, and 30 (or 27%) returned. However, a telephone poll by the researcher discovered that there are only approximately 164 working photojournalists in newspapers or news agencies in South Africa (see Appendix D). Therefore, although the response rate was not as high as in the American study, the South African research is studying a far smaller group of people, and has in fact reached proportionally more of the sample group than the American study.

Another possible problem could be a concern that some of the respondents do not speak English as a first language, and this might have had an effect on their understanding of the questions. Because the responses were anonymous, the racial and linguistic make up of the sample is not known, but the questionnaire was given to as wide a sample of photojournalists as possible, and there would certainly have been a percentage of non-mother-tongue English speakers. However, most of the respondents do not seem to have had a problem with the language of the questionnaire, and four of the photojournalists interviewed were not mother-tongue English speakers.

Results

The results of the study are meant to provide a basis for comparison with the results of studies done in the United States of America by Kurt Foss and Sheila Reeves. The study should therefore first give a clear indication of the views of South African photojournalists towards the digital manipulation of news photographs, and the areas of ethical concern for South African photojournalists.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the methodology used to gather information as to the attitudes of South African photojournalists to ethical problems, and particularly the ethical issues surrounding the digital manipulation of news photographs. The limitations of the study, and areas of methodological concern in the study have been discussed. The next chapter will examine the results of the questionnaires from the South African study, and compare these to those obtained from the American study.

Chapter Three: Analysis of the Questionnaire

Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the answers to the questionnaires obtained in the South African study, and compare them to the results obtained by Kurt Foss in the USA. First, the results from each study are compiled in a table for easy comparison, and then each question is examined for its relevance to the research problems; i.e. what are the views of South African photojournalists about the digital manipulation of news photographs, and how do these compare with the views of American photojournalists about the digital manipulation of news photographs.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A for the full questionnaire) describes situations at a publication where photographs have been digitally manipulated, and asks if the respondent agrees or disagrees with the decisions made in each case. There is also space for the respondents to give brief explanations of their views. Although the questionnaire focuses on news photographs in a newspaper context, it does include questions about fashion and illustrative photographs, and photographs used by magazines, in order to see if the respondents view these pictures differently to news.

The completed questionnaires in both studies have been numbered so that the brief explanations the respondents were asked to provide can be attributed. The South African papers are numbered with the initials SA and the number of the respondent, e.g. SA-1. The American papers are numbered in the same way, but with the initials USA, e.g. USA-

1. It may become important to the study that these short explanations are identified, as there may be one or more respondents whose remarks are constantly contrary to the majority decisions, and may be influencing the results of the research. All USA papers quoted are attributed to Kurt Foss (1990).

The numbers of respondents who agree or disagree or are undecided have been converted into a percentage figure in both studies for ease of comparison, and the figures have been rounded off to the nearest percent.

A tabular analysis of the questionnaire.
Significant differences are highlighted in bold text.

	Agree		**Disagree**		**Undecided**	
question 1	SA:	3%	SA:	97%		
	USA:	1%	USA:	99%		
question 2	SA:	67%	SA:	27%	SA:	7%
	USA:	63%	USA:	25%	USA:	12%
question 3	SA:	0%	SA:	93%	SA:	7%
	USA:	0%	USA:	98%	USA:	2%
question 4	**SA:**	**30%**	**SA:**	**50%**	**SA:**	**20%**
	USA:	**18%**	**USA:**	**64%**	**USA:**	**18%**
question 5	**SA:**	**83%**	**SA:**	**7%**	**SA:**	**10%**
	USA:	**56%**	**USA:**	**25%**	**USA:**	**19%**
question 6a	**SA:**	**73%**	**SA:**	**10%**	**SA:**	**17%**
	USA:	**49%**	**USA:**	**41%**	**USA:**	**10%**
question 6b	**SA:**	**40%**	**SA:**	**30%**	**SA:**	**30%**
	USA:	**9%**	**USA:**	**82%**	**USA:**	**9%**
question 7	**SA:**	**20%**	**SA:**	**67%**	**SA:**	**13%**
	USA:	**8%**	**USA:**	**85%**	**USA:**	**7%**
question 8	SA:	43%	SA:	37%	SA:	20%
	USA:	32%	USA:	38%	USA:	30%
question 9	SA:	10%	SA:	87%	SA:	3%
	USA:	1%	USA:	98%	USA:	1%
question 10	**SA:**	**73%**	**SA:**	**20%**	**SA:**	**7%**
	USA:	**21%**	**USA:**	**67%**	**USA:**	**12%**
question 11	**SA:**	**57%**	**SA:**	**30%**	**SA:**	**13%**
	USA:	**70%**	**USA:**	**18%**	**USA:**	**12%**
question 12	SA:	70%	SA:	13%	SA:	17%
	USA:	70%	USA:	19%	USA:	11%
question 13	SA:	60%	SA:	33%	SA:	7%
	USA:	59%	USA:	30%	USA:	11%
question 14	SA:	--	SA:	100%	SA:	--
	USA:	2%	USA:	96%	USA:	2%
question 15	**SA:**	**43%**	**SA:**	**33%**	**SA:**	**23%**
	USA:	**10%**	**USA:**	**69%**	**USA:**	**21%**
question 16	SA:	90%	SA:	7%	SA:	3%
	USA:	91%	USA:	3%	USA:	6%

A comparison of the results of each question

As can be seen from the above table, the figures do not differ as much as might have been expected from the lack of photojournalism publications, seminars, discussion and ethical codes in South Africa and the proliferation of these in America. While in most of the questions the majority of South Africans agreed with the majority of Americans, the Americans as a group had higher figures in agreement, mostly over 63%. In four of the questions, however, the figures were almost exactly the same for both groups, and in only one question, (question 10) were they significantly different, with minor differences also notable in questions 5, 6a, 6b, 7, 10 and 15, and the similarity is evident in the remaining ten questions. The extent of the similarity may be because the photojournalists in both countries are equally familiar with the technology, techniques and issues involved. Equal familiarity with the issues would not necessarily lead to similar views, however. I would speculate that the similar views stem from certain shared values in western culture, as well as from international media debates. When asked "have you heard or read much about 'electronic manipulation' of photographs", 96% of American photojournalists replied yes, as did 93% of South African photojournalists. As most of the literature about photography (magazines, books, even internet-based discussions) available in South Africa is imported from America, the similarity of views is perhaps not surprising.

Question 1 describes a situation where two photographs are combined to create one realistic photographic image to illustrate an international crisis (see Appendix A for the full questionnaire). In both countries the respondents were overwhelmingly against this kind of photographic manipulation, with 97% in South Africa and 99% in the USA disagreeing

with the editor's decision to combine the photographs. However, a small number of both South African and American respondents said they would agree if an explanation of the manipulation was given to the reader. This negative response to the digital manipulation of hard news photographs seems to be substantiated by the responses to similar questions in the questionnaire (see questions 3, 9 and 14).

In the short explanations after the question, the bulk of the comments from both groups reflect the same kind of concerns with the manipulation -- that it would be deceiving the reader, and that it would affect the credibility of the magazine and photographs as a whole. Some of the responses were: USA-80: "We don't make up stories. We should not make up photos, whether we explain it or not.", and USA-93: "The editor is trying to show something that may not have looked the way he put it together. It is faked, with no admission of that fact. The news magazine's credibility will suffer greatly if the public discovers the image was faked." In the South African responses, SA-1 said: "If the two images were combined graphically, this would be acceptable because a graphic is, obviously, an artist's impression, but photography is realistic and the combination would be intentionally deceitful.", and SA-16 said: "The informative value of a news photograph is based principally on an understanding that the contents are 'real' - creating a photograph undermines that credibility in the same manner as a made-up quote."

Question 2 concerns a studio fashion photograph, in which the background is digitally altered after the photograph is taken. Again the results are close here, with 67% of South African respondents and 63% of American respondents agreeing with this action, 27% SA

and 25% USA respondents disagreed. Photojournalists who agreed with the manipulation did so mostly on the basis that the image was not of a news situation, but a fashion image which they view to be an illustration created by the photographer. As USA-46 said: "Fashion photography is not news. Reality is not being shown. It is fantasy. Manipulation often enhances this type of work.", and USA-107 agreed: "When it comes to illustration, which I believe this situation is, I think a reasonable amount of alteration is acceptable. If altering electronically better expresses the illustration, I don't see how that's any different than how we sometimes use special effects in the camera." South Africans also agreed with these views. SA-5 said: "It is illustrative rather than news photography and is an artificial creation of the photographer anyway," and SA-14 said: "This was a model in a set up situation. The photographer can manipulate the shot any way he/she wants. It isn't a real life event where the photographer records what he/she sees."

Many of the respondents in both cases who disagreed or were undecided were concerned that the photographer's vision was altered, rather than with the manipulation itself. As USA-1 said: "The editor is changing what the photographer has created. The photographer may have wanted it that way or he wouldn't have shot it like that. Was the photographer consulted?" SA-10 agreed: "The photographer visualised it (the photograph) in a certain way or style - it should be discussed beforehand."

The results for Question 3 are very similar in both studies and overwhelmingly against (SA 93% and USA 98%) digitally altering a sports photograph so that the ball is in a slightly different position to where it was in the original image. This was an event that did in fact

occur, but which the photographer missed. This question is one of the few which has been altered from Foss's original, in which the sport was baseball, to a similar situation in a sport more familiar to South African photojournalists, soccer.

Respondents in both studies felt that the caption (or cutline in the USA) would explain what had happened, and that it is more important to uphold the photographic integrity of the moment. USA-47 responded strongly, saying: "Sacrilege. Never. It's not reality. That's what cutlines are for", and USA-81 agreed: "If the camera didn't see something happen - the actual moment - the computer should not create that moment. To change photos to tell a story the camera did not find is to create a lie. Would reporters or editors start quoting people as saying things which the source didn't say but would fit the story better?" SA-12 was also against the manipulation, saying: "No, no, no. Once again, the reader should be able to trust that the picture is real. Also, couldn't you just as well send anyone to shoot the basics, then later manipulate it into a winner?", and SA-14 added: "That's absurd. The story and/or the cutline will tell that the ball was caught. It is photographically better to have the ball in motion anyway."

In question 4 the results differ somewhat between the two studies, but the majority (SA 50% and USA 64%) disagreed with the editor's decision to change the colour of sky in a wire photograph to match the colour it was on television. The photojournalists who agreed with changing the colour of the sky saw this as an unimportant alteration, and explained that different films record colours differently anyway. USA-46 said: "Wire colour often has muted colours. Enhancing the blue would give better definition and

colour saturation without distorting the news content of the photo. However, if the sky was the main element of news value in the shot I wouldn't change it." USA-93 added: "Any action by the editor to represent the situation more accurately will be applauded by me. Since even the best colour films do not reproduce colour as the eye sees it, the computer should be used to help out." SA-4 agreed: "In this case there is no falsification of the picture as such; the colour of the sky can easily vary due to variations in the reproduction, and changing it digitally is unimportant.", and SA-24 said: "TV and photos are different things, but I agree, if it looks better, why not?"

Respondents who disagreed with the alteration explained that it seemed unnecessary, using the technology simply because it was available and said they did not want this to become commonplace. USA-47 stated: "It's bad for journalism. It sets a precedent for even more bold manipulations - like removing unwanted Coke cans from coffee tables. It's evil.", and USA-81 added: "Although I don't see the deepness of blue in the sky as a major piece of information in the photo, I am afraid of the impulse to change an image without a very major and compelling reason to do so." SA-14 said: "I think if a newspaper has a policy of no computer manipulation, it should never be done, even if the change is so unimportant.", and SA-21 added: "Trust should be given to the photographer to reflect the sky correctly - TV is not as accurate as film."

Question 5 shows the first major difference between the two studies, with 83% of South African photojournalists as opposed to only 56% of American photojournalists agreeing with the decision to use a long lens to make a shopping centre seem more crowded than it

was when the picture was taken, in order to illustrate a story by a reporter who was at the centre earlier in the day when it was full. Although in both studies the majority of photojournalists agreed, it would seem that South Africans question the use of lenses to change the perspective of a scene less than their American counterparts. Those who agreed consider the use of the long lens to be an accepted and creative technique used to overcome a problem, as USA-77 said: “That’s what the photographer is trained to do, to use the right lens or technique to produce the effect, otherwise we would only be using a 50mm lens.” USA-106 agreed: “The photographer hasn’t altered the reality of the scene, he has used a reasonable technique for telling the story. Just as a writer picks the important, story-telling quotes from an interview, the photographer has picked the best story-telling technique for the photograph.” SA-1 said: “The telephoto lens compresses the space occupied by the shoppers, it does not increase their numbers. Telephoto lenses are an accepted part of a photographer’s equipment and so is the lens’ foreshortening effect,” and SA-17 added: “More illustrative than news picture. A lens always adds a certain subjective element.”

Those who disagreed felt that the photographer should have arrived at the scene earlier, when the reporter was there and the shopping centre was full, and were worried about the possibility of misleading their readers with this technique. As USA-2 said: “As technology makes long lenses more the norm, violations of ‘use of extremes’ needs to be reviewed. Photographers should accurately portray the moment, thus arrive earlier”, and SA-7 agreed, saying: “You would be misinforming/misleading your readers.”

Question 6 is in two parts, structured to see if photojournalists object as much to changing a scene manually when they are taking a photograph (in this case removing a cold drink can from the image) as they will if the same change is made to the photograph later, using the computer. The differences between the two studies are again apparent in these two questions. Asked in question 6a if they would remove the can while taking the photographs, 73% of South Africans as opposed to only 49% of Americans said that they would. Question 6b, however, is not as clear cut. Asked if the same change could be made to the photograph electronically, 40% of South Africans said this was acceptable, 30% said it was unacceptable, and 30% were undecided, as opposed to 82% of Americans who found the computer changes unacceptable. A total of 43 (of 117) American photojournalists agreed with 6a but disagreed with 6b, while 4 (of 30) South Africans did. However, 6 South Africans agreed with 6a but were undecided about 6b, and 2 were undecided about 6a but disagreed with 6b. These responses seem to indicate that (particularly for the American respondents) removing something physically is less objectionable to doing it electronically, and that the South African respondents are not yet fully comfortable with the ability to move elements of an image electronically.

American photojournalists seem to believe that altering the scene in either case is wrong, but are more against doing it digitally than they are against doing it manually. USA-15 responded: “The photographer has every right to move small distracting elements that take away from the subject. Electronically removing them seems like something the photographer should have done himself”, and USA-51 said: “Removing the can electronically alters the content of the original image, albeit in a slight way. Removing the

can before shooting is the same kind of alteration. My concern with these small adjustments of reality are the ease that they can be justified and how easily that can turn into a real breach of integrity." USA-94 added: "I have no problem with the photographer altering the scene to this relatively minor degree. Perhaps it's because the electronic technology is relatively new, and an ethic is evolving, that I tend to be more conservative in its use."

The majority of South African photojournalists do not seem to have a problem with the photographer moving the can manually, but many of the respondents seem to think that the photographer should have seen and removed the can when taking the picture, and that the photographer has not done his job properly if he has to remove it electronically. SA-4 said: "6a. Agree. The can is a distracting element with little or no relevance to the meaning of the pictures. Also there is the problem of 'free' advertising in an editorial picture. 6b. Acceptable. Provided the caption makes clear that the picture has been digitally retouched". SA-6 said: "6a. Agree. Composition is the photographer's decision. 6b. Undecided. The removal does not alter the content drastically, but once you start electronically manipulating an image you may be unable to stop", and SA-7 said: "6a. agree. If the photographer regarded it as a distraction and chose to move it, that's fine. 6b. Unacceptable. If the photographer failed to see that it was a distraction at the time, he must live with his oversight." SA-16 said: "6a. Agree. Assuming that by doing so the photographer has not substantially altered the content or meaning of the scene - it is part of the photographer's mandate to judge when a manipulation of the environment is going

to provide better photos vs. changing meaning. 6b. Unacceptable. One shot, an image cannot be manipulated and still be considered 'honest'."

Question 7 once more establishes a difference in the studies. While the majority in both countries disagree with removing telephone poles from a travel photograph to make it more scenic, South Africans are again somewhat less likely to disagree than the Americans. Thus, 67% of South Africans disagreed as opposed to 85% of Americans. Americans seem to worry that the credibility of their images is at stake, that readers will assume that if they alter one image they will alter them all. USA-106 said: "It's another lie. If we want readers to believe our news pictures are true then we have to play it straight all the time. If we cheat on this one, why shouldn't every reader think we've cheated on the rest of them?", and USA-116 agreed: "We should not remove items that would naturally appear in a photograph. In doing so we lead the reader to believe that manipulation of photos is commonplace."

South African photojournalists again seem to think that the photographer should have noticed and dealt with the phone lines, if they are distracting, when he or she shot the picture, and that removing them later would be misrepresenting the scene. SA-7 commented: "The photographer should have looked for a different angle - if not possible to remove wires in this way, tough. Again you are in the 'slippery slope' scenario, where does it end if you manipulate?", and SA-29 added: "The photographs should represent what the traveler is going to see."

The results in question 8 are close for both countries, but there seems to be some doubt as to what action would be the correct one. Questioned about changing the effect the photographer achieved in the camera with the computer (by the photographer, in this case, not the editor) to give a more flattering portrait, 20% of South Africans and 30% of Americans were undecided, 43% SA and 32% USA agreed and 37% SA and 38% USA disagreed with the changes. Again it seems that South Africans are slightly more likely to make changes with the computer than their American counterparts, but the difference is only 11%. American respondents seem to think that the situation was already manipulated in the original photograph, and therefore it is less of a problem to change it with the computer. As USA-97 said: "What's the difference doing it with lenses and lighting or electronically?" USA-107 said: "We have a responsibility to present our subjects in a reasonably accurate way. Computer enhancing, just like the use of different filters in printing, can greatly benefit our journalism."

South African respondents again mostly blame the photographer for not realising what he or she was doing in the first place, as SA-7 says: "Again the photographer must shoulder the blame for not using a better lighting technique in the first place." Many of the respondents who agreed with the changes used the argument that SA-26 does: "It's his photograph - he can do what he wants with it."

The results to question 9 are close, with 87% of South Africans and 98% of Americans disagreeing with the editor's decision to remove piles of elephant droppings from a photograph of a circus parade. American respondents felt that the decision should be of

whether or not to run the photograph, but that it should not be manipulated. USA-37 said: “Either run the photo, or don’t use the computer on news photos to make editorial decisions for the reader. Our readers don’t need this much protection from the world.” USA-47 agreed: “Ridiculous. If a photo is objectionable to your readers, editors must decide whether to run it or not, not how to manipulate it.” The South African responses agree that the editors should choose another picture that will not be offensive to the readers, and many of them also state that this is a news photograph, and should therefore not be altered. SA-4 said: “Elephant droppings, like phone poles, are a fact of life. If the editor is worried about reader reaction, he/she must use another picture.” Another factor that worried both groups of respondents is that the manipulation will lessen the effect of the picture. As SA-22 says: “The photographer took pictures that tell a story. Handlers cleaning up behind the elephants. Without the droppings you kill the story telling picture.”

As in question 5, the results in question 10 are notably different for the two groups. 73% of South African photojournalists as opposed to only 21% of Americans agreed that a photographer could use a wide angle lens to exaggerate the size of a pumpkin for a food page story. Most American respondents said that this was still misleading to the reader, and shouldn’t be done. USA-95 said: “If no explanation is given, readers will expect to be able to go out and see 6 feet tall, 300 pound pumpkins. A simple explanation in the cutline will eliminate confusion and preserve credibility of future feature and news photographs.”, and USA-111 added: “Lenses and angles can misrepresent as well as computer alterations.”

South African respondents mainly thought that this was a well known creative technique, and that the readers would be intelligent enough to realise that it is a visual trick. However, many said that the actual size and weight of the pumpkin should be mentioned in the caption. SA-1 said: “Wide angle distortion is an accepted and understood fact, used for emphasis. The caption, presumably, would give the true weight and size of the pumpkin.”, and SA-4 agreed: “Nowadays, through picture magazines and TV, most

the way when taking the picture, and should have taken this into account in his or her original composition. Some respondents said that the bystanders were part of the story and should be included in the picture. SA-1 said: “They have been darkened, not removed. The picture, after all, is about the paramedics and the patient, not the identity of the bystanders”, and SA-16 said: “Adding emphasis to the focal point of a scene by conventional darkroom methods, or by computer to the extent that it could be done in the darkroom, does not alter the content of an image or qualify as manipulating a moment.” SA-22 disagreed: “Being in a public place, the bystanders are part of the story telling picture. The photographer should when taking pictures observe the surroundings and select the best possible angle to tell the story.”

In question 12 the results of the studies were remarkably similar, with 70% of both groups agreeing with the decision to combine two studio portraits of different people into one photograph with an explanation of how this was done on an inside page. American respondents felt that this is the best way to use digitally manipulated images - of a previously set up scene, with an explanation, but many said they still did not want this to become a common practice. As USA-96 said: “I think readers are smart enough to differentiate such studio shots with a seamless background from news photos. They don’t expect this to be real. As for the explanation of the technique, I favor this, but don’t think we should rely on explanations to allow us free reign for manipulating photos.”, and USA-106 agreed: “If it is going to be done, this is the best way to do it - where everyone is told about it. But maybe it’s better not to do it and not to give readers the idea that we can and do construct pictures that are fakes.”

South Africans also felt that this was a legitimate use of a computer manipulated image, but many commented that the explanation should be placed under the image, and not on an inside page. As SA-14 said: “Manipulating the set-up shots are OK. However, the editor must put an explanation under the photo, not in the inside column.”, and SA-16 agreed: “As long as the manipulation is labeled as such, and is employed as an illustration, much like an artist’s graphic, and not as a ‘real’ news picture.”

In question 13 the results are again very close, with 60% of South African respondents and 50% of Americans agreeing, and 33% of South Africans and 30% of Americans disagreeing with the use of the computer to create an obviously composite image of a sportsman. American respondents thought the technique was obvious enough to be clear to the readers, but many stated that the manipulation should be explained to the readers, or the image should be labeled as a photo illustration. USA-47 said: “The photo is fine. It’s obviously manipulated. But you have to explain manipulations to the readers”, and USA-68 added: “It’s an illustration. I think we should think of a computer as we think of a long lens, or wide angle lens. It’s a tool.”

Most South Africans also said that manipulation was so obvious that it was acceptable, but 30% said an explanation of the technique was desirable. SA-3 said: “It is an interesting technique. If the editor had explained how the image was created, the image would be acceptable”, and SA-16 said: “If the manipulation is so obvious as to convey the manipulation in the same way a caption explanation would, there is no undermining of the

credibility of the image." SA-29 agreed: "I think it is so obviously manipulated that it makes for an interesting and unusual look at what sports he does."

In question 14 the results are once again very close, with an overwhelming 100% of South Africans and 96% of Americans disagreeing with an editor's decision to remove excess space between two political rivals. American respondents said that this manipulation would be changing the story to fit a preconceived idea, and it should not happen. As USA-81 said: "It's changing the event. Maybe the story is that these guys don't get close. Why are journalists trying so hard to change events to fit their preconceived stories?", and USA-111 added: " An alteration of a candid situation is not permissible. Anyone who was there would know it's false, and the publication's credibility would be in doubt."

South African respondents also said that changing an actual news event should not happen, but some respondents said the photographer should have used different skills/ lenses to make it seem as if the rivals were closer together, and one respondent suggested that the photographer could have asked the two men to stand closer together. There was less emphasis about the idea of fitting stories around a preconceived emphasis, and some respondents suggested using separate pictures instead of the one showing the space between the rivals. SA-4 said: "Not only is it a falsification, but the fact that they stand apart is a graphic illustration of their rivalry, so moving them closer not only falsifies but reduces the graphic impact.", and SA-12 added: "The picture should be an unedited record of the event, and the reader should be able to trust us."

Question 15 divided the South African respondents across the board. A total of 43% agreed with the photographer asking a subject to re-enact a situation in better light, 33% said they disagreed, and 23% were undecided, against 69% of American respondents who disagreed with the photographer's actions. USA-51 said: "Having subjects recreate actions in better light is just as false as creating the entire document from the imagination.", and USA-106 agreed: "Picture stories aren't about getting 'perfect pictures', they are about documenting the truth."

South African respondents seem to have mixed reactions to this situation. Many of them say the photographer should still be able to make pictures in bad light, and add that the quality of the light might enhance the images. Others say the photographer should not interfere, and still others say that it is not a problem, and that it is a technique they have used in the past. SA-3 said: "Agree. The act had happened, and was recorded in good light. I don't think the public has been misled." SA-4 felt differently: "Disagree. Since the story purports to be a representation of reality, staged pictures are actually lies. If they have to be staged, it should say so in the caption."

In question 16 the results of the study are again remarkably close, with 90% of South Africans and 91% of Americans agreeing with the use of the computer to create a composite portrait. The American respondents found the use of the composite image with an explanation to be perfectly acceptable, but some mentioned that the image should be labeled a computer illustration in the caption. USA-25 said: "It was explained and should be labeled 'computer photo illustration'," and USA-63 added: "Again, an editorial

illustration is quite different from pure photojournalism - properly read and properly explained, manipulation is permissible."

South African respondents also found the use of the image with an explanation to be acceptable, but many mentioned that permission should be obtained from the photographers of the original pictures, and some said that is was an acceptable technique for magazines, but not necessarily for newspapers. SA-11 said: "This is an occasion where the image is purely illustrative - the explanation of the image, and the fact that it is a generic article, not a pointed story about one person, mitigates the use of the illustration. An artist could have sketched a similar image, why not a computer 'artist'?", and SA-29 added: "Very interesting. If clearly explained, would add to a feature article's appeal. Permission from geniuses (the people who's images were used for this picture) should be asked first."

Areas of similarity and difference in the studies

Taken at the face value of the figures, the results of the South African study do not differ widely from the results of the American study. The results were only very different in 6 questions. The differences here seem to have to do with what photographers think will confuse or mislead their readers, as in questions 5 and 10, where photographers use different lenses to create visual illusions. South African photojournalists seem far more likely than the Americans to use these visual illusions, and South Africans seem to believe that their readers will not be deceived by these images, where Americans are afraid they will. Questions 6a and 6b also bring out the differences between the two groups, South

Africans are more likely to remove something from the scene before they photograph it, but are more ambivalent about using the computer to do so afterwards, Americans are less likely to change the scene manually, but are very much (82%) against using the computer to change the image later. Although South Africans will change an image after it has been taken, in the comments about the questions they repeatedly state that the photographer should have dealt with the problems when the photograph was made, and should not have to deal with it later.

Although the results in the other questions are much closer, this does not necessarily mean that the reasoning behind these views is the same in each country. In fact the short explanations would seem to indicate that there are different areas of emphasis for each country. In the South African responses the issue of whether or not a photographer is consulted about the manipulation of his or her image is mentioned, as is the fact that a photographer should not make mistakes when taking a photograph, and therefore there should be less need for an image to manipulated with the computer later. There is also much more emphasis placed on the importance of explaining or acknowledging any manipulation in the caption that goes with a picture, rather than doing so on an inside page or not at all.

Conclusion

In this chapter the responses to the questionnaires have been analysed and the similarities and differences between the American and the South African responses have been pointed out and discussed. In the next chapter the analysis of the interviews should substantiate

and confirm the reasons for the South African responses, and give the researcher a clearer insight into the views of South African photojournalists towards the digital manipulation of news photographs. The combined results of the questionnaires and the interviews will be analysed in the conclusion to this thesis.

Chapter Four: An analysis of the interviews of six photojournalists

Introduction

The interviews with South African photojournalists, as mentioned in chapter 3, were undertaken to supplement the results obtained from the questionnaires, which, although giving an indication of what the attitudes of South African photojournalists are to the digital manipulation of news photographs, do not necessarily explain the reasons for these attitudes. This chapter presents the attitudes of those interviewed towards the digital manipulation of news photographs, and outlines the reasoning behind these as supplied by the interviewees. Comparisons between the results from the questionnaires and the interviews will be made in the concluding chapter.

The interviews, although confronting the issue of digital manipulation, did not necessarily concentrate on it. The interviews generally began with a discussion about general ethical issues, because the general ethical outlook and practices of a photojournalist while shooting the photographs or when producing a print in the darkroom, may well be carried over into the area of digital imaging. As Hodges (1991: 7) quoting National Press Photographers Association past president John Long, says: "the principles which have guided us for 150 years in the practice of setting up photos, dodging and burning, cropping and lens selection are the same as those we now face in the electronic New World". Reaves (1987: 46) quotes: "'The bottom line is we've always been able to use airbrush and scissors,' says Rich Clarkson (from National Geographic Magazine). 'It's the degree of honesty. There's never been a clear-cut answer. The rules are not clear cut at

all.’” The researcher also found that many photojournalists became defensive and uncooperative if immediately asked about digital manipulation, and a general discussion of ethics at the beginning of the interview made this issue less problematic.

The principal object of the interviews was to discover what these individual photojournalists considered to be the major ethical problems of photojournalism, and to find out what they thought about the digital manipulation of news photographs. The structure of the interviews did change and the questions asked were modified from the original list (see Appendix B) as different and more photojournalists were interviewed. It was immediately apparent after the first interview, with Henner Frankenfeld, that it was necessary to record the interviews in order to be able to quote them fully, and that rigid adherence to the list of questions did not necessarily get the responses the researcher expected. Thereafter the list of questions was amended (see Appendix B) and very often additional or leading questions were asked when necessary during an interview. The sequence of questions was also not fixed, although because of the resistance the researcher perceived among most photojournalists towards ethical codes, the questions about them were generally asked towards the end of the interview.

Interviewees were first asked a very general question about ethics, in order to see what they considered to be the most important ethical concerns in photojournalism. After a general discussion about ethical problems, the interviewer, when necessary, introduced the subject of digital manipulation, and the ethical problems surrounding this issue. The interviewees were asked what kinds of manipulations are acceptable with digital

technology, and if they had manipulated, or would ever manipulate, an image. They were also asked if there is a difference in manipulating an image when taking the picture and manipulating it on a computer afterwards. Lastly, they were asked about how their institution's code of ethics, if any, related to photographs and digital technology, and if they considered such codes to be useful.

Kvale (1994) recommends that a researcher should attempt to make his or her preconceptions and prejudices clear when analysing interviews, and the researcher has attempted to do so throughout this chapter. A influential preconception which became clear after the first few interviews, was that the researcher did not expect photojournalists to have very strong feelings about ethics. It became clear that this was not true, and although the interviewees did not always agree on what was ethical, most felt very strongly about ethics and what should or should not be done to news pictures. It was also surprising how resistant the interviewees were to the suggestion of a written code of ethics, and how strongly the theme of an unwritten code of ethics for each publication was reiterated by each photojournalist. This question of researcher bias will be examined where necessary throughout this chapter.

Interview with Henner Frankenfeld

This was the only interview which was not taped, although copious notes were taken.

The most important ethical problem for Frankenfeld in photojournalism is the potential for photojournalists to cause harm by taking pictures. "You can take advantage of people in

photography, you can be very abusive with the camera. There are situations where I would not take a picture; where people are hurting, where people have lost someone, where you stick your camera into the face of a woman who is crying because her husband has died," he said. "There is a fine line between having to take the picture and having respect for the person you are photographing."

As far as digital manipulation is concerned, Frankenfeld drew a distinction between 'news' pictures and 'illustrative' pictures. He said: "For illustrative pictures you can [change things] quite a bit. I think news pictures shouldn't be manipulated at all, beyond what can be done in the darkroom - technical details like dodging and burning and taking out scratches, but apart from that you shouldn't manipulate." Frankenfeld also remarked that illustrative images created using the computer should be clearly marked as such, adding: "…if a picture looks digitally manipulated the issue of marking the photograph is not so strong, because you aren't pretending it is reality. I would generally prefer if digitally manipulated pictures look digitally manipulated, or you very quickly come to a different issue." Frankenfeld said he had not manipulated a news photograph, but has "manipulated illustrative pictures that didn't look real anymore" (see Appendix C fig. 1 for an example).

Asked if there was a difference between moving or changing a situation manually and doing the same thing with the computer, Frankenfeld said: "There is not much of a difference, but for a news picture you shouldn't do it anyway". He was also concerned with the practicality of making significant changes with the computer that require a lot of work to accomplish.

Frankenfeld has primarily been a freelance photojournalist, apart from a stint as chief photographer on the Mail and Guardian newspaper, so the question of complying with a company policy or code of ethics applies in effect only to the time he spent there. He said: "I'm not aware of the Mail and Guardian having a code of conduct written out. Without having to write it up people have a general aim and you stick to it as close as possible. It's an unwritten code. I don't think [a code of ethics]would have helped [at the Mail and Guardian]. In a big organisation there might be a need to pinpoint people, but for me not - I am in touch with my personal ethics. I follow my own code of conduct." Asked what he would include in a code of ethics if he was to draw one up, Frankenfeld said: "Not changing the context of a photo, not creating photographs and new situations, and not abusing people on jobs."

Interview with Naashon Zalk.

For Zalk, the ideal of ethical photojournalism is for the photographer to do more good than harm while doing his or her job well. He said: "I think there is an ideal of ethical photojournalism where you would go about your job practising photojournalism, which primarily deals with…the nasty side of people's experience. War, poverty, disaster. So the ideal is to depict the horribleness of many of those situations without exploiting or adding to the physical or psychological suffering of those people you are documenting. In reality that's often very difficult, because often enough simply your presence in a situation can have a lot of negative effects, in a volatile situation where the presence of the media might actually spark off an incident which wouldn't have necessarily happened, we may

traumatize a person or people." However, he said: "By exposing certain things you might be saving other people from the same fate, you might be exposing things which haven't [been] seen before."

However, Zalk went on to say that this ideal was often not reached when photographing a story: "You can't weigh all of those things up in a kind of split second situation. I think there is also a lot of hypocrisy that goes on in the media. I mean, you simply want the best picture, and the best picture might be the most hectic picture." He added, however, that in situations where he has taken the 'best picture' but that picture misrepresented the situation he has gone to the editors and said "I really don't believe that this picture should be used."

Zalk considered the term 'digital manipulation' to be a loaded one, considering how a photographer can manipulate an image in the darkroom, and indeed the potential for manipulation when he or she is taking the image. "If you take [digital manipulation] and put it in the vicinity of the selection of the elements that you put into your photograph, the lenses you use, what you choose to emphasize [and] what you choose to leave out, it's already so subjective. That's what makes photography… digital manipulation or any kind of manipulation of an image after it's taken, I think should firstly be seen within the broader context of what photography is really about, which is presenting something in your own subjective way. Or presenting your perception of reality. The danger with digital manipulation is that the tools are much more powerful for you to misuse it. You definitely

can do a hell of a lot more with Photoshop than you can in a darkroom. You can take things out, you can change a picture. That's what I would term digital manipulation."

Zalk stated that the computer was "a valid photographic tool, and I try not to misuse it", but said the temptation was that it is much easier to change an image with the computer than in the darkroom. However he added that he has not yet seen "an image that has been changed to the extent that it has changed its meaning." Asked if moving an element in an image before taking the photograph is as negative as moving it on the computer later, Zalk said that when the photographer was taking the image he or she had all her senses operating to tell him or her what the situation was about, whereas "after the photograph is taken it in a sense becomes an abstraction from the reality". He also said that the manipulation of an image after it has been taken is "about practising your profession, you should have thought about that before you took the photograph, and not afterwards."

The code of ethics of his newspaper (The Star) has never really helped or affected him, Zalk said. He thought that within newspapers there are unwritten laws, but these are so broad that "…it boils down to your personal ethics. I never really thought in terms of working within the ethical code [of] my newspaper, it is like my own ethical code." Zalk did, however, admit to discussing ethical issues with other photojournalists and to being influenced by them. He said that ethical codes are difficult because "you can have a broad ethical code, but you can't define ethics for every situation because you have a split second to decide what to do and what decision to make."

Interview with Joao Silva

"The clear cut ones are easy," said Silva about ethical problems in photojournalism. "Don't screw with the technology, don't set up things that aren't real, and don't fabricate, because you are a journalist, therefore you can only record and recover and photograph factual things, the things that you actually see happening in front of your face".

Silva mentioned a number of questionable ethical practices. Setting up images in the field (that is, changing a scene to make a better picture when taking a photograph) is something he strongly believes a photojournalist should not do, but deciding when to photograph scenes of violence and when not to and reacting to scenes of violence was the issue most important to him, and the one he seemed to feel needed the most discussion and explanation. On the question of whether photojournalism is an ethical profession he said: "It depends on what kind of photojournalism you do, it depends what kind of incidents and scenes you are confronted with, and at that level is it ethical or not? Do you photograph an execution or do you not? Do you cover a massacre or do you not? Do you stop something happening in front of you or do you not? And that depends on the individual."

Silva was adamant that setting up a news photograph was unethical and unprofessional. He said: "Ethics play a big part. It's easy when you are the only person in a massacre site, and you're with a couple of soldiers, to tell a soldier to go stand somewhere or to go move a corpse a certain way, or that kind of thing. That is totally unethical. And there's a

lot of people who do that. My rule on this is generally that I can't photograph what is not in front of me, what is not seen. So if I don't see it, I can't do it."

Renowned as a war photographer who often photographs scenes of bloodshed and violence, Silva was very aware of the ethical problems with this kind of photography, and discussed them freely. He said: "The real question is, 'when do you photograph and when do you not photograph?' and I've been confronted with it on several levels, from watching people getting killed and executed in front of me, to my own friends getting killed in front of me, and in many of those occasions I've been forced to take pictures. In fact with Ken's[1] death, I forced myself to take pictures…" Asked why he did this he replied, "It was important to photograph it. It was important that it be recorded. There has to be evidence. The way images have been published around the world of Ken being carried by Gary [Bernard, a fellow photographer] brought it home to everybody. Those are the important things." Later in the interview Silva said: "Is it ethical to watch somebody die? I don't know. It's not even natural to watch somebody die, so how can you ask me [if] it is ethical? It's not even natural to stand there and photograph somebody being killed."

Discussing how he reacted in other situations of this kind, Silva summed it up: "No matter how you react at the time, one thing is for certain, you're always going to live with those things. You know you are always going to live with those memories. So basically the bottom line is, no matter how you react, just make sure you are happy with it."

As far as digital technology goes, Silva said that it should only be used as a tool to make transmission of images easier, and not to change them. "In terms of the new technology, Photoshop and that kind of thing, it's a fantastic programme, it's the best thing in the world. I'm probably never going to walk into a darkroom again as long as I live, or I shouldn't have to, anyway. Again ethics play a big role. Are you going to manipulate, how much are you going to manipulate? Like anything else there's also an extent to how much you can manipulate without it becoming obvious. You know, are you going to burn down highlights … that's fine, you'd do that in the darkroom anyway…but if you've got a pole going out of Mandela's head, are you going to airbrush that pole out[2]? Absolutely not. …I don't know anybody who does it. Everybody in the wire agencies from AFP to Reuters to Associated Press, everybody now works with Photoshop, and we have yet to come across an instance where somebody has been caught. … If you're going to set something up, it's easier to set it up in the field when you are on your own, in that massacre site with the soldier and nobody else around."

The statement that "I don't know anybody who does it" seemed a little naive to the researcher, who then challenged Silva with the South African example of the newspaper (Die Burger) that manipulated a photograph of President Nelson Mandela and a dove so that the bird was closer to the man (Malan, 1996:35). Silva, who was not aware of the example, said: "That is totally unacceptable and totally unprofessional", although he

[1] Ken Oosterbroek, chief photographer at The Star newspaper and a close personal friend of Silva's, was killed in crossfire during a gun battle in a South African township in 1994.
[2]In another interview (see later in this chapter), Robert Magwaza of the Sowetan said, in direct contrast to Silva's statement: "I would always remove the pole if it is extending from the head in terms of composition."

conceded that he would make an exception for artistic uses of photographs, such as book covers, where artistic license comes into play.

Silva claimed that there was not enough time to digitally change images in the field, because of the slowness of the computers and satellite phones and the many deadlines an agency photographer has to meet, and summed up his attitude to digital manipulation by saying: “Photoshop should be there to scan your pictures and to facilitate the transmission. Sure you are going to have to burn in highlights [and] lighten shadows, that’s what you do when you are printing anyway. But no manipulation of images.”

Moving things manually to make an image when shooting and moving them later with the computer are both unacceptable to Silva. If you can’t move the frame of the image to eliminate the distracting element, he said, then “you photograph it and you leave it there. That’s it. You don’t move it manually. There’s no difference, you are still moving something that is there. …But to simplify matters, digitally don’t manipulate pictures, physically don’t manipulate pictures.”

Asked if there is an ethical code at the institution he works for, said Silva: “Yes, there is, but I’ve never bothered to read it.” He said ethics were personal, and every photojournalist had to decide for him or herself what they could and could not do, although he mentioned that there were “unspoken rules” about what you shouldn’t be doing. “I don’t think you can tell somebody when to photograph and when not to photograph. It’s up to him, it’s up to his conscience, it’s up to the circumstances, it’s up

to the situation. But one thing you have to be adamant about; don't falsify information, don't create things that are not there, and as far as digital goes, just scan the picture and transmit the damn thing. Don't touch it in any other way with the exception of auto levels[3]. That's the bottom line, and that's where I come from, and also that's the wire background. You start fucking around with it and nothing gets through. And you never work again. So be very careful the way you play it."

Interview with Jan Hamman

Hamman had strong views on the computer manipulation of news photographs. He said: "I think photojournalism must be the truth. It must be what you saw and what you experienced. It can't be anything else." He went on to say that set up pictures were perfectly acceptable, and were often utilized by Beeld photographers, but "when it comes to changing an image after you have taken it, then it gets serious. Then you start playing around with things that I feel you shouldn't do."

Asked what the difference is between moving something on the computer and moving it manually before you take the picture, Hamman said that arranging something the way you want it to be - he gave an example of photojournalists arranging for a group of topless dancers to be in a certain place so that Prince Charles' predetermined path led past them - was different from creating an event that never happened. If the Prince had seen the set up and deviated from his predetermined path, for example, it would be wrong to move him closer to the women with the computer.

[3] Auto levels is a tool in the Photoshop program used to improve the image quality of a scanned

Although he said that the concept of ethics was not really important to him as a photojournalist, he did think that established photojournalists do have an established mode of behaviour. “As far as I’m concerned when you are a photojournalist and you go out there you’re doing a job; to portray whatever is happening, and then at that point to give it to your newspaper or publication to show the world what is happening. You can manipulate that, if you want to, but if you’re a true photojournalist you won’t manipulate. But you can manipulate. It is there for the taking.” He said that ‘true’ photojournalists did not manipulate because they “grow up in the environment of being a good journalist.”

Hamman was against digitally changing the content of an image, but not against computers per se: “I don’t have a problem with changing colour casts to get good quality out of your picture that you have taken. Correcting certain things, the same as you would in the darkroom. You can lighten a photograph, you can darken it, take colour casts out, that sort of thing.”

However, there are situations where Hamman would go further and use the computer to change an image more radically. He gave an example of a young child who was killed when he was run over by a taxi. Die Beeld felt that it was important to use the picture of the covered body lying in front of the taxi, but part of the child’s body was uncovered (see Appendix C example 2a). To protect the sensibilities of the readers, the blanket covering the body was extended to cover the entire body, and the picture was run on an inside page

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photograph.

(see Appendix C example 2b). The manipulation was acknowledged in the caption, which read: "….Beeld het die deel van die foto waar die lyk le digitaal gemanipuleer sodat die lyk heeltemal bedek is."[4] Hamman, who argued in favour of using the photograph, said: "I felt that we should publish that picture with manipulation, under the circumstances….We had an argument about using the picture, and I suggested to them, if you do use the picture, if you don't want to use it on your front page, use the picture, but cover the arm with Photoshop, we can do that. And they did that. They used the picture inside."

The creative manner in which Die Beeld used digital manipulation in order to make a news picture more acceptable to its readers came as a surprise to the researcher, who realised that she might be biased towards the view that any and all manipulations of news photographs are ethically unacceptable. In this instance, however, Beeld was using digital manipulation in a way which to them was ethically acceptable, by making a small change to an image in order that it should not upset their readers, and by being careful to explain this change in the caption. The researcher was also surprised that Die Beeld took such a sophisticated and considered approach to this problem, which again shows a research bias.

It was standard practice at Beeld to mention in the caption if an image has been changed, in order, said Hamman, to keep the trust of their readers. "You are not allowed to change the image, or the structure, or anything in the image, without telling your readers what you have done. Because they will get a perception of what they see, and they will carry that with them, until they find out the truth. Now the whole thing will change. Then they

[4] Translation: "Beeld has digitally manipulated the part of the photograph where the body is lying so that

will start thinking, there was another picture, what did they do to that? So you must never put that false image over to people, you must trust them, and tell them that you've changed it. Otherwise they will never trust in what you publish, because they will say, these guys are so clever, they can do anything. They can put FW (de Klerk) and (Nelson) Mandela together while the two guys were 1 000 kilometers apart from each other….I think there is a silent rule or unwritten rule that whatever is presented as such will be published. Unless we change it, and we will mention it if we change it."

The silent rule also presides over codes of ethics, it seems: "I think all the newspapers have got a code of ethics. It's not written down anywhere, it's something you just pick up in the work place. This is how we do it. Now it might differ from Beeld to the Star to the Citizen, the ethics, but I think as a rule the ethics about publishing something that will offend somebody is over the world the same." However, Hamman did admit that ethical guidelines could be useful: "Guidelines, yes. We can't make the rules, and tell the guys 'you are not allowed to break this rule'. I think it can't stand on its own. But guidelines, yes. Guide people to a better working method. Especially when it comes to manipulation, now with the new electronics business that we are in. I feel there should be guidelines, there should be rules, as far as manipulation is concerned. Because there are people out there than can manipulate and do manipulate, and we don't know about it. And it's wrong because people believe what they say, so when they see an image, they believe it, but that's not the truth, because it was manipulated. It was changed from the original to this new image. That shouldn't happen. And if it does happen, it should say so in the caption."

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the body is completely covered."

Interview with Robert Magwaza

Magwaza had a very firm understanding of what photojournalism is about: “To me photojournalism means recording events as they have been taken and as they happen with one aim: to deliver to the reader. That’s why it is a newspaper, so it’s a product that you deliver to the consumer. Except that you have to take into consideration what the consumer appreciates, and what their demands are. And then it brings the element of sensitivity into the whole thing. In some instances you can give the consumers what they do not expect, simply because you are driving a certain message or a point home”.

“An unethical thing to do as a photographer is pushing your own personal beliefs, politically and religiously and otherwise, and taking now modern technology into consideration, pictures can be manipulated to a certain extent, but they should not distort the information, or the original picture. So that should also be taken into consideration.” Other ethical issues that concerned Magwaza were: sensitivity to cultural practices, respecting the privacy of people, in particular mourners at funerals, and pictures of children which may adversely affect that child in later life.

It was very important for Sowetan photojournalists to be ethical, said Magwaza, “because we are serving a largely black readership, and we being the African people, there are a lot of things, do’s and don’ts in terms of culture, so culture comes first, before any other thing. And we always take that into consideration, where certain things are not done, certain things are not photographed…what we consider first is the comeback from the

readers, because in our case, readers identify themselves with the newspaper. That is why, when they call in the next day, they will say 'We do not want this in our newspaper.' So in most cases we are influenced by the reader, and the cultural background."

Magwaza had a more open view of what was ethically acceptable in digital manipulation than the other interviewees in this group. He said: "I think most of what is acceptable can be governed by the layout of the papers, and then, secondly, by the creative editor or arts editor, because sometimes when the arts editors would like to use a collage of pictures and they have to eliminate certain things out of pictures in order to fit another picture…and at times there will be people in the picture who you cannot identify, the very person who is right in the middle of the picture, you can always clone[5] him off. That doesn't matter, that doesn't say anything. The rule of journalism is that people should be identified. If you can't identify that person, you can always remove that person. I think that is the advantage of the modern technology… As long as we are not passing a certain point, …it shouldn't be like when we say the person wasn't there when the person was there, then you are not telling the truth, but only when you can identify three people out of four…" Magwaza went on to give an example where the Sowetan removed an unidentified person some years ago: "I can't remember what the meeting was all about, but it was held in Harare. And it was Sam Nujoma and Pik Botha and Robert Mugabe together and there was a fourth man in the picture and no one knew the name, it came through the AP leafdesk, and the caption said the fourth man was unidentified. We phoned AP, they came back after an hour and they just said they don't have a name, so we just had to clone him out."

In a more recent case of digital manipulation, the newspaper, as an April fool's joke, swapped the heads on a photograph to make it look as if a prominent soccer player was being sold to a rival team. The paper printed an explanation the following day (see Appendix C. fig.3).

The researcher was amazed and a little shocked by Magwaza's view that it is justifiable to simply clone out an insignificant, unidentifiable figure in a news picture. This statement is contrary to the feelings expressed by all the other photojournalists interviewed, as well as to the results around questions about news photographs in the questionnaires (questions 1 and 14, see chapter 3). I realised this bias while conducting the interview, and tried to make sure of Magwaza's feelings towards digital manipulation by approaching the subject in different ways throughout the interview. It became clear that although Magwaza felt that cloning an unidentified person out of a picture was not unethical, he would draw the line at using manipulated or constructed pictures to deliberately lie to the readers.

Although he was not against manipulations that improve the composition of a picture, there were cases where he would not condone digital imaging, said Magwaza. "Here is this person, and we put the background in and we say this person was in London or France, and then that person was not in fact there. .. I would not do that because it's a lie. I don't think any newspaper would like to be known for publishing lies. ..we should not lead ourselves to a place where people would start considering whenever they read a story

[5] Cloning is a technique used in Photoshop to copy a part of the image over another part. For example, the

or look at a picture if it is true or false, or are looking for a correction the next day. It really damages the image of the publication and the image of photojournalism and photojournalists themselves. People will always look more on the bad side, and it stays in the person's mind. …So once you have a bad record it takes years to correct that again and to change that mode. So I would not take any risk of saying things that are not in the picture or manipulating the picture in such a way that it is no longer what it was supposed to be." He would only state in the caption that the picture was manipulated "if it really matters to the reader", but not for changes to composition.

The Sowetan does not have an explicit code of ethics, but some issues are covered in their style book, "mainly to protect the subject, like children. You can't show the face of an abused child or even a relative, because that will lead to identifying the child. Rape victims we do not identify." Magwaza did not think it was necessary to have a list of guidelines. If he had to write a set of guidelines for digital imaging, he would say: "…if you do manipulate the image you should not distort the image or change the reality of the situation. Sometimes creative artists or creative editors would manipulate the picture to their kind of design or layout, but if they do that they should not add things or move things that will affect the original picture itself, because that is distortion. If that happens they should mention that the picture has been manipulated and this has been taken out, and they must say what they have taken out, because if they just say that the picture has been manipulated, what is it that you did? Did you add something, did you take away something or what?"

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background of an image can be cloned over a figure.

Interview with Ruth Motau

The ethical issues that most concern Motau are when to publish controversial pictures, for example a child who has been raped, and respecting people's privacy when they do not want their photographs taken. Asked if she considered herself to be an ethical photojournalist, Motau said: "When I do my own work, 100% I do. But if I do newspaper work, I have to come back with the story, I have to come back with something else. And there's a page waiting, things have to be done. So it's two different things." When she was working for the newspaper, said Motau, she had no time to let a situation unfold, and often had to impose herself on the situation to get an image, whereas when she was doing her own documentary work she could take the time to be part of the situation, and photograph things unobtrusively as they happen.

On the subject of digital manipulation, Motau said: "I think cleaning off the dust is acceptable, and then, probably flipping the image on its side is fine…when you print [in the darkroom] you can face the picture the other way. I think that's acceptable, and then cleaning it up, not putting extra things, because I think that's also a part of ethics…I wouldn't put whatever is not there. Let's say it's a picture of me, I wouldn't put big ear rings or whatever, nice hair - that I wouldn't do."[6]

[6] Flipping the image is a practice that many American photojournalists do not approve of. Reaves (1987: 42) says: "Most editors and photographers agree to never flip a photograph which switches the left side to the right side. Critics say that in addition to reversing words that may be in the photo, it reverses reality and the symmetry of people's faces."

Motau is opposed to fixing on the computer later what she feels she should do when taking the image. “I’ve learnt from the old school, from (renowned photographer David) Goldblatt …that rather cropping something, rather go tight and do whatever you want. Don’t take like a very basic picture and then try to clean it up. Why don’t you clean it up in your frame? That’s how I learned. Whatever you want to crop, crop it in the camera. That’s basic. [Digital manipulation] makes you lazy. That’s why I’m saying, I can go out, do all this shit and whatever, knowing that I’ll sit on the computer, I’ll clean it up, I’ll do all these things. So by being strict with my camera, thinking properly; I don’t want this, I want it this way, gives me more time, it makes me responsible.”

Asked if she would manipulate the image in the Beeld example of the child who had died in a taxi accident, Motau said: “I think if I would take the picture, I would take it as it is … if I go on the computer I don’t want other things to do. I would rather not do it. I would rather do it with my camera, with the film or whatever. I wouldn’t do something I don’t want. If I prefer not to have the child, maybe the face or whatever, I will do it on the other side, maybe the face won’t be visible. I think I would do that, but I would never do it on the computer, including something that wasn’t there.”

Asked about the Sowetan example of removing an unidentified person from a photograph Motau drew a distinction between cropping the person off, which she says is acceptable, and taking him out with the computer; “if it’s croppable then I would just take him out. .. I don’t know, maybe there’s a difference between rubbing off a person [with the computer] and cropping a person. Is there a difference? I don’t know. I’d rather crop.”

Although her newspaper (the Mail and Guardian) does sometimes use computer manipulated photographs as illustrations, Motau sais they don't manipulate news photographs. "As far as I can remember we haven't done that. I would oppose that. Maybe they will do it with other people's pictures, with mine I will say definitely no. But as far as I know we've never done it."

Motau said that she didn't think her newspaper had a code of ethics which they follow, because in the end it was the editor's decision on what to publish or not to publish, but she did feel that these decisions could benefit from discussion among the journalists involved. She did not see a need for written ethical guidelines, but did think that proper briefings could ward off many of the ethical problems the reporters and photojournalists face.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the individual interviews with photojournalists and set out their opinions on the important ethical issues in photojournalism, as well as their attitudes to the digital manipulation of news photographs.

The photojournalists interviewed have many different concerns uppermost in their minds regarding ethical photojournalism, but most agree that there are problems with the use of digital manipulation in news pictures. Some, like Frankenfeld, believe that it takes too much time and effort to make it worth the photojournalists' while to change an image on the computer, others, like Zalk believe that the computer is a powerful tool which can

easily be misused. Motau thinks that it makes photojournalists lazy, because they know that they can fix or change an image on the computer later, and therefore do not take as much care when taking the original image. Jan Hamman and Robert Magwaza, however, think that digital manipulation of an image can be used to make pictures more acceptable, either to their readers or to their editors.

The photojournalists interviewed disagreed about the extent to which the manipulation of an image is acceptable, from Robert Magwaza's view that any manipulation short of out-and-out deception is acceptable to Joao Silva's insistence that any change at all other than making the image printable is unacceptable. Opinions also differed as to whether or not the manipulation should be mentioned in the caption, with Frankenfeld, and Hamman insisting that any change should be mentioned, and Magwaza being reluctant to mention it except for severe cases. The interviews also brought up examples of where the digital manipulation of news photographs could be used ethically and effectively, as in Jan Hamman's example from Die Beeld.

Mostly the photojournalists agree that the computer is a wonderful tool for photojournalism. Although as a group they do not seem to feel a need for ethical codes as a guide for the use of this tool or for decision making in other areas of photojournalism, most agree that guidelines on what is acceptable use of the computer would be helpful. These guidelines would include not falsifying information in an image, and, where substantial changes have been made to an image using the computer this should be mentioned in the caption. Most of the photojournalists spoke of the 'unwritten rules' of

photojournalism, what seems to be an expected way of behaving learnt on the job from other photojournalists, and which seemed to affect their behaviour far more than any overt rules or codes.

In the next chapter, the conclusion, the results obtained from the questionnaire and from the interviews will be compared with each other and with the results from American studies. The conclusion will also assess whether the interviews were successful in supplementing the results obtained from the questionnaires.

Chapter Five: a comparison of the results from the questionnaire and the interviews

Introduction

This chapter draws conclusions from the data gathered in chapters three and four, to discover if the views uncovered by the questionnaire were confirmed and explained in the views of the individual photojournalists interviewed. It also compares the views of South African photojournalists and those of American photojournalists. The chapter has been roughly divided into the main issues around manipulation as drawn from the research.

Manipulating news pictures

The photojournalists who completed the questionnaire seemed to be more likely to object to the computer manipulation of a news image (see questions 1,3, 9 and 14) than to the computer manipulation of a soft news image or an illustration (see questions 2, 13 and 16). This was true for both South African and American respondents, as the figures from the questionnaire are almost identical in each of these questions.

Similarly, but in more depth, during the interviews, Henner Frankenfeld also drew a clear distinction between news and feature pictures, saying: “For illustrative pictures you can [change things] quite a bit. I think news pictures shouldn’t be manipulated at all, beyond what can be done in the darkroom.” Joao Silva also made a distinction between news images, which he believes should in no way be manipulated, and illustrative images used, for example, as book covers, which he believes can be changed by artistic license.

The exception to this view was Robert Magwaza, who said that unimportant, unidentifiable figures in news photographs could be removed with the computer.

This greater resistance to changing news images than to changing feature images or illustrations perceived among South African photojournalists closely mirrors the attitudes of American photographic editors as recorded by Sheila Reaves (1995). According to Reaves (1995: 711), during her study on which images were most prone to being changed on a computer, "…a continuum emerges showing editors being the least tolerant of a particular computer alteration in a 'spot news photo,' more tolerant of the same alteration in a 'feature photo,' and the most tolerant of the same alteration in a 'photo illustration" (see Chapter One).

Manipulation of images using lenses and special effects.

South African photojournalists seem more likely than Americans to use lenses for visual effects in their photographs (see questions 5 and 10), and do not seem to be as concerned as American photojournalists about misleading their readers with these techniques. As respondent SA-4 said: "Nowadays, through picture magazines and TV, most people are visually literate enough to know this is an optical effect." The validity of this statement in a country like South Africa where a large portion of the population is media poor is questionable, but the South African respondents seem to think of their readers as more intelligent and less likely to be fooled by images than the American respondents do.

South Africans, then, seem to be to be open to the possibility of using special techniques, in this case caused by lenses, to create visual effects in their images. This could indicate that they might be more open to other kinds of manipulation. However, in other questions South African respondents seemed hesitant to use computers to change an image.

Digital manipulation vs. manual manipulation

Questions 6a and 6b of the questionnaire were most revealing of the attitudes of both groups of respondents towards both manual and digital manipulation. While most South African respondents (73%) would remove a can of cold drink from a scene they were photographing before making the photograph, the American respondents were fairly evenly divided on the issue: 49% said they would remove the can, 41% said they would not. However, when asked if they would remove the can digitally after the picture was taken, an overwhelming 82% of American respondents said they would not. South Africans were less convinced: 40% said they would, 30% said they would not and 30% were undecided.

A total of 37% (43 of 117) American respondents and 13% (4 of 30) South African photojournalists agreed with 6a (moving the can by hand) but disagreed with 6b (moving the can with the computer), suggesting that removing something physically is preferable to doing it electronically. American photojournalists appear to object more strongly than South Africans to both kinds of manipulation.

During the interviews this question was also addressed, and half the interviewees agreed that moving something physically is less objectionable to doing it electronically. Henner Frankenfeld said there was very little difference between changing something with the computer or manually, but disapproved of both. Naashon Zalk felt that if the scene had to be changed it was better to do so while taking the picture rather than later. He also said that the computer should not have to be used to change a picture, as it is the photographer's job to get it right, a point that comes up later in this chapter. Joao Silva stated that both the manual and the digital alteration of a picture were unacceptable, but said it was easier to change the content of a photograph when making it. Jan Hamman was of the opinion that a photographer could manipulate an event, but should not manipulate an image once it was captured on film. He did, however, make exceptions in cases where publishing a photograph un-manipulated might harm the reader's sensibility. Ruth Motau agreed with Zalk's view, and said the photographer should make sure, when taking the picture, that everything was just the way she or he wanted it to be, so that the picture should not need to be changed later.

Robert Magwaza was of a different opinion than the rest of the photojournalists interviewed. He said that acceptable changes to an image are governed by the layout, and by such practical considerations as being able to identify all the people in a photograph. Magwaza would seem to condone almost any changes to an image short of out-and-out deception, for example, placing a person against an incongruous background. He says: "If you can't identify that person, you can always remove that person. I think that is the advantage of modern technology … As long as we are not passing a certain point, …it

shouldn't be like when we say a person wasn't there when the person was there, then you are not telling the truth…"

Digital Manipulation vs. Darkroom Manipulation

In question 15, where the changes were not made on computer but a picture was recreated for the camera in better light, the majority (69%) of American photographers were against the manipulation, but 43% of South Africans said they would do this, while 33% disagreed. Again this seems to indicate that Americans are less likely to change an image manually than South Africans. However, in question 11, it seems that Americans are more likely (70%) to manipulate an image in the darkroom than South African photojournalists (57%). Again South African photojournalists emphasised - both in the questionnaires and in the interviews - that the photographer should have realised when making the image that elements of it could be distracting, and should have taken this into account when composing the image - the photographer should have made an image that didn't need to be manipulated in any way, be it with the computer or in the darkroom.

This shows a major difference of underlying attitudes in the two groups. The majority of American photojournalists were against the digital manipulation of these photographs, but not against the darkroom manipulation of the images. The reasons they gave for this in the first instance were mostly that changing an image amounted to lying to the readers and could lead to a loss of the credibility of the publication. Darkroom manipulations seem to be regarded as traditional, and therefore acceptable, because many readers know that images can be changed in the darkroom. Only once did an American respondent conclude

that the picture only had to be changed if the photographer did not do the job well enough, which was the primary argument of the South African photojournalists against both the digital and the darkroom manipulation, although they did occasionally mention issues of reader trust as well.

This issue also came up repeatedly in the interviews, with Naashon Zalk, Joao Silva and Ruth Motau in particular taking the view that the photographer should be aware of distracting elements in the frame when taking the picture, and should take action then to prevent them occurring in the final photograph.

Shooting it right

Relating to the above issue, throughout the questionnaire, particularly in questions 6, 7, 8 and 14, it became obvious that South African photojournalists were slightly more likely than their American counterparts to either make changes to images with the computer themselves, or not to object to these changes being made. However, the questionnaire respondents often objected to images being changed on the computer when they felt that the photographer should have identified and remedied any problems with an image when they were taking the picture, by shooting from a different angle, or with a different lens or using a particular technique. In the responses to question 14, although 100% of South Africans would not have removed space between the political rivals, some of the respondents did suggest ways of getting around the problem, for example using long lenses that would compress the space between them and make them seem closer, or even asking them to move closer for the photographer to take a picture.

In the interviews, Zalk, Silva and Motau agreed with the strongly-held attitude which was clear in the responses to the questionnaires, and also stated that images should be thought through and shot clean, so that computer manipulation to make the image look better (removing poles from people's heads, for example) should not be necessary. Zalk said that this was about "practising your profession" and Motau said she had been taught not to "take like a very basic picture and then try to clean it up. Why don't you clean it up in your frame?". Silva, although he called Photoshop "the best thing in the world" and said he would use it to do basic darkroom alterations like burning and dodging, was very definitely against using the technology to change the content of an image. He said: "… if you've got a pole going out of Mandela's head, are you going to airbrush that pole out? Absolutely not. …I don't know anybody who does it." However, Robert Magwaza, the Sowetan's Chief photographer said, in direct contradiction to Silva: "I would always remove the pole if it is extending from the head in terms of composition." He seems to regard this as a cosmetic change to make the image look better, and feels that it is not important that the reader should be aware of it.

Unwritten Rules

The mixed response by South African respondents to question 6b, which asked if the can could be removed digitally, may be a result of the lack of guidelines about digital technology in this country. During the interviews not one interviewee mentioned useful codes or guidelines which could help them make decisions. Most of them either did not know if their organisation had such a code, or if it did, they tended to ignore it. However,

four of the six interviewees spoke about the ‘unwritten rules’ of journalism, the practices which photojournalists learn simply by working for an organisation, or what Jan Hamman referred to as “growing up in the environment of being a good journalist”.

It may be that because digital technology is still so new, there are as yet no ‘unwritten rules’ governing its use, and therefore photojournalists are unsure of how to use it. In America, codes of ethics are far more prevalent, and many of them have either been drawn up specially to deal with issues surrounding digital technology, or have been amended to take it into account, and this may be one reason why American respondents were so against the use of digital manipulation.

Labelling manipulation

Most respondents from both groups said that clear labelling of an image as a computer manipulation was very important, particularly where the manipulation was not immediately apparent (e.g. question 12). The respondents also seemed to think that obvious manipulation (as in question 13) is better, but many respondents said that even this obvious manipulation should be labelled as such. Frankenfeld and Hamman also made a strong case during their interviews for clear labelling of images when they have been digitally manipulated beyond basic darkroom techniques. The calls made in America (Lester 1995) for the clear labelling of digitally manipulated photographs would seem to indicate that this is a solution favoured by both groups. Frankenfeld also commented: “I would generally prefer if digitally manipulated pictures look digitally manipulated”, which would prevent the reader from being mislead in any way.

Credibility

American respondents, particularly in question 7, seemed to be more worried about the credibility of the image than South African respondents. The South African interviewees also did not seem particularly worried about the credibility of their organisations with the public, although Hamman did insist that any digital manipulation was noted in the caption, so that the readers could always believe what they read. He says: "You are not allowed to change the image, or the structure, or anything in the image, without telling your readers what you have done." Magwaza, although he would manipulate certain images, also worries about the credibility of his institution, and says that when a manipulated image becomes a lie it is damaging to the reputation of the publication. He says: "We should not lead ourselves to a place where people start considering whenever they read a story or look at a picture if it is true or false." However, only these two interviewees specifically brought up the question of credibility with regard to digital manipulation. Joao Silva took a broader view of journalistic credibility when he said: "Don't screw with the technology, don't set up things that aren't real, and don't fabricate, because you are a journalist, therefore you can only record and recover and photograph factual things, the things that you actually see happening in front of your face."

Telling your readers when you do manipulate an image also creates the impression that the other images in the publication are unmanipulated, and fosters reader trust. American photojournalists seem far more fearful that they might lose credibility with their readers by digitally manipulating an image. As Harris (1991: 168) says: "If editors play with the

visual imagery, is not the next question ‘what words did you play with?’ Credibility is not maintained when one aspect of journalism is considered fair game for manipulation.”

Manipulation as a positive tool.

While most of the interviewees did not favour manipulation where it could be avoided by cropping (Motau) or shooting the image in a different way (Silva, Zalk), there was one example of using the digital manipulation of a news photograph as a positive tool, showing the readers an image that is important, and yet might cause them distress if used unmanipulated. Jan Hamman’s example of the child killed by a taxi shows how acknowledged use of manipulation (the caption explained what the newspaper had done) could let the newspaper run a powerful photograph that they would not have used unaltered, because it might have caused their readers, and the family of the victim, distress. Manipulation, then, can be used in an ethical manner, and be a useful technique for protecting the sensibilities of the reader. The credibility of the image, Hamman feels, is not be damaged if manipulation is used carefully, and the public is informed of the usage.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified and discussed the views of photojournalists about the digital manipulation of news photographs as extrapolated from the questionnaire and interviews. It has used the results of the interviews to confirm and explain the results obtained by the questionnaires, and drawn comparisons between the South African responses and the American responses.

The final chapter will explain the significance of these results.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter considers the significance of the findings based on the conclusions presented in Chapter Five, and will draw final comparisons between the views of South African and American photojournalists with regard to the digital manipulation of news photographs. It will also examine the weaknesses in the research and pose further research questions.

Significance of findings

The results of this study do not differ as much as might have been expected from the lack of photojournalism publications, seminars, discussions and ethical codes in South Africa and the proliferation of these in America[1]. One difference is that the Americans do seem to agree with each other more than the South Africans do, a fact that can perhaps be attributed to the pervasiveness of societies like the National Press Photographers Association, to which a large number of American photojournalists belong.

South African photojournalists did not have the comparatively unsophisticated ideas that the researcher expected at the beginning of the study. Many of the reasons given by photojournalists for their reactions to questions about digital manipulation were similar or the same as the Americans, and indicated a similar level of knowledge and awareness of the issues.

[1] For a collection of codes of ethics on the World Wide Web, go to http://commfaculty.fullerton.edu/lester/ethics/codes.html or see the NPPA Code of Ethics at http://sunsite.unc.edu/nppa/nppa_app.html

Photojournalists, then, both American and South African, are mostly against the digital manipulation of news photographs, with the possible exception of where manipulation is used as a technique to protect the reader from potential distress. Most photojournalists favour the explicit labelling of photographs that have been digitally manipulated, but consider that when a photographer does his or her job well, many of the reasons for manipulating an image can be avoided. Most photojournalists consider Photoshop and similar programmes to be extremely useful tools of their craft, but are wary of using them in such a way that the credibility of the image is undermined.

On the whole, the South African photojournalists surveyed by this study were mostly against the manipulation of hard news photographs, and the reasons they gave for this restriction often centered around the issue of credibility. For example, questionnaire respondent SA-16 said: “The informative value of a news photograph is based principally on an understanding that the contents are ‘real’ - creating a photograph undermines that credibility in the same manner as a made-up quote.”

This reluctance on the part of photographers to manipulate hard news photographs correlates with Sheila Reaves’ 1995 study, in which she found that American newspaper editors were less likely to allow the digital manipulation of hard news images than they were to allow the manipulation of a photograph categorised as a feature or soft news picture. Photographers in this study also drew this distinction between different kinds of photographs, and there was less resistance to manipulating images not perceived to be

'news' photographs. It seems that photojournalists do not think that manipulating these 'soft' news pictures harms their credibility.

The credibility of the image is a problematic term, however, as the lack of audience research around images means that there is no way of really knowing how readers perceive photographs. In spite of the rationalisations of theorists such as Barthes and Sontag on how people read photographs and perceive them as real or believable, there is little or no wider research to substantiate these theories. However, if we accept the theory discussed in Chapter One that newspapers rely on credibility to be useful to their readers, and that readers buy 'serious' publications because they are credible, then we can extrapolate that the images in these publications are also seen to be credible. The question then is: how does the digital manipulation of images affect this credibility, if at all? Again, it is impossible to definitively answer this question without extensive audience research.

A great deal of the discussion around the digital manipulation of photographs in America stemmed from the fact that the technology was new and it was assumed the public would not realise that it was possible to change images in this way, and therefore would expect all images (in 'credible' publications) to be 'real'. This, however, is no longer true. Digital manipulation of pictures has been widely publicised, and digital cameras and computer image manipulation packages are now readily available to the public at relatively low cost. What effect does this knowledge have on the readers? Again, it is impossible to tell without further research, but it might mean that while journalists think that credibility is a crucial factor for the survival of newspapers, the public may be more tolerant, and may

still buy media in the face of this diminished credibility. In other words, photojournalists may be needlessly worried about credibility. More research is needed to confirm or dismiss this theory.

This study has concerned itself mainly with the individual moral development of photojournalists, as discussed in Chapter One. On Merrill's scale (1995 : 4), most of the results would seem to fall on the second level, that of custom, or conduct, in accordance with the customs of the group to which the photojournalist belongs. This would explain the recurrence of the theme of the 'unwritten rules' which most of the interviewees said governed much of their conduct as photojournalists. Reference was also made to the next highest level, that of conscience, when interviewees, particularly Frankenfeld, Silva and Zalk, stressed that each photographer has to decide for him or herself what the ethical action is, and has to make a decision that he or she can live with, based on his or her own personally developed judgement and reasoning.

Merrill's scale is useful here because it identifies the 'unwritten rules' as the customs of the group which influence the ethical decisions made by members of that group. Ethical codes would also fall on this level, but the resistance of photojournalists to these written codes makes the 'unwritten rules' far more effective. It is difficult to judge from the questionnaires on which of Merrill's levels (instinct, custom or morality) the decisions of the respondents were made. In the interviews, however, most of the common decisions seemed to be based on the 'unwritten rules' or level of custom, although decisions in extreme conditions, for example war situations, seem to be based on the highest level,

morality. The interviewees said that photojournalists had to make their own decisions, because they had to live with the consequences of those decisions. This need for photojournalists to make their own decisions might account for the resistance of interviewees' towards accepting written codes of ethics, but just why there is so much resistance from photojournalists towards written codes of ethics is another question that needs more research.

Weaknesses in the research

As the field of media research and photojournalism research in particular is almost non-existent in South Africa, it is very difficult to find work on which to base one's research questions and hypotheses as to how journalists and the media work in this country. I have attempted to overcome this problem by using my own experience of photojournalists as well as research done in other countries, particularly in the United States, as a starting point for this thesis. This means that my assumptions may be a weakness. However, as far as possible I have attempted to check my assumptions by asking questions which would confirm or dismiss them. For example, I was aware that few South African newspapers have codes of ethics which include specific sections on photojournalism, and in the interviews when I asked about codes of ethics I found that most of the interviewees did not think these were important. My assumptions about the comparative sophistication level of South African photojournalists proved unfounded.

It is very difficult to generalize the findings of my research to all photojournalists in South Africa, because there is no real way of assessing how representative the survey was.

Although numerically, the survey covered an estimated 15% of photographers at newspapers or news agencies in South Africa (see Appendix D)[2] there is in fact no definitive way of knowing how many working photojournalists there are in this country. This is because there is no governing body or association of photojournalists in South Africa, unlike in America, where besides the National Press Photographers Association, there are also regional and special-interest bodies who look out for the interests of photojournalists, and instigate and disseminate research about them. The numbers of working photojournalists in South Africa obtained for this study (see Appendix D) only covered the major newspapers, but many people working on smaller community or rural publications may also be justified in classifying themselves as photojournalists, as may photographers working for magazines, and freelancers. Because there are no associations, more exact figures about the numbers of working photojournalists here were impossible to find. It is also difficult to gauge how representative the study was demographically and geographically, and in terms of the practical experience of the photographer.

Future research questions

There are many areas of photojournalism in South Africa that still need to be researched, some of which have been touched on above, but in this section I have limited the questions to those that seem to relate most importantly to questions around manipulation and credibility.

[2] In the American study, 300 questionnaires were sent out to photojournalists. According to my figures, there are only 164 photojournalists at work on the major newspapers in South Africa.

While this study examined the attitudes of the photojournalists themselves towards the digital manipulation of images, it would, as stated earlier in this chapter, be very valuable to have research about how the readers view the digital manipulation of news and other photographs used in newspapers. At the moment very little research is being done on reader perceptions in America or in South Africa, but until such research is done, issues around the credibility of photographs with readers can only be based on tenuous indications such as letters to the editor or other reader responses. Only such studies can examine the damage, if any, that digital manipulation causes to the credibility of news photographs. How important is the credibility of the image really?

Related to the above issue, the photojournalists researched in this study would seem to find manual or darkroom manipulation more acceptable than digital manipulation, and it would also be valuable to know if readers distinguish between manual and digital manipulation of images, and, if so, which they find more acceptable and why.

During some of the interviews there was discussion around the use of manipulation as a tool to make some photographs more acceptable to readers, that is, using manipulation as an aid to maintaining credibility and protecting the readers' sensibilities. This is an interesting aspect of the manipulation vs. credibility debate, and deserves more attention. This use of manipulation as an aid to reporting also gives rise to questions around the labelling of images once they have been manipulated – should the images carry a label or a symbol saying that they have been changed or not? Is it necessary to do this in all cases, or just in special circumstances? Again, a reader survey again seems to be required.

Although not directly related to issues of manipulation, issues of cultural differences did come up in the interviews, and would be important for further study, particularly with the changing face of media ownership and readership in South Africa. The differences of opinion between photojournalists who have worked mainly for the white, mainstream media (Hamman, Zalk,) or even alternative media (Motau and Frankenfeld) and those such as Robert Magwaza who works for a publication aimed at the African reader, were often considerable and should be addressed.

The significance, relevance and effectiveness of codes of ethics for photojournalism also need to be researched. In the interviews there seemed to be a great deal of resistance from South African photojournalists towards developing codes of ethics, and a lack of interest in existing codes that were not applicable to photographers. Some newspapers in South Africa, however, do have functioning codes for photojournalists (eg Die Burger) and it would be valuable to attempt to gauge how effective these are.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to draw together the most important points made in this thesis, and to analyze some of the results of the research findings. It has also addressed issues of the significance and the weaknesses of the research, as well as proposing questions for further study.

Appendix B

Interview questions

There were three main questions in the interviews:

1. What are the ethical problems uppermost in the photojournalists mind?
2. What are the photojournalist's opinions on the digital manipulation of news photographs?
3. Does the photojournalist rely on codes of ethics to help him or her, and if not, would he or she find them useful, and what would they include in one.

To begin with, the researcher used a list of 10 questions, some of which were asked to elicit the same information from a different angle.

1. Do you consider yourself to be an "Ethical" photographer? What does "Ethical photojournalism" mean to you? Is it important?
2. What is acceptable where digital manipulation is concerned? Where do you draw the line? Is there a line?
3. Digitally manipulating an image is sometimes compared to a writer changing a quote, and therefore changing reality, changing the way things really happened. Is this a fair comparison?
4. Have you ever digitally manipulated a picture?
5. Is there a difference between moving or changing a situation manually and doing the same thing with the computer?

6. What is your understanding of the product of a newspaper? What do newspapers sell? How does this apply to photographs?
7. Do or did the newspapers you worked for have a code of ethics/conduct? Did it serve your needs as a photographer? Was it necessary?
8. If you were to write a code of ethics for photographers what would it include? (not only digital - anything)
9. How much does the photographer's individual ethics influence his or her work?
10. Who should take the decision about what happens to the picture? Should the photographer have a say in what happens to his/her image?

After the first few interviews questions six and ten were dropped, as they were not eliciting any useful information. Where the photojournalist interviewed was a chief photographer, an additional question was asked: What do you tell or how do you guide the photographers under you to ethical behavior? What is important to you in the way they take images?

Appendix C

Examples of photographs which have been digitally manipulated in South Africa.

Example 1: The Mail and Guardian. Illustration by Henner Frankenfeld.

Example 2: Die Beeld. Picture of child killed in a car accident.

a. The original picture

b. How the picture was used in the newspaper.

Example 3: The Sowetan. April Fools picture.

a. The way the manipulated picture ran on April 1.

b. The explanation on April 2.

Appendix D

Numbers of photojournalists in South Africa

These numbers were acquired in a telephone poll of the major newspapers and news agencies in South Africa, during February, 1998.

Newspaper	**Staff Photographers**	**Free-lancers**
Beeld	8	
Sowetan	9	3
Mail and Guardian	2	1
Argus	7	2
Burger	15	2
Business Day	2	1
Cape Times	5	1
City Press	5	1
Pretoria News	5	
Rapport	12	
Sunday Times	7	4
Financial Mail	2	1
Citizen	5	
Daily Dispatch	4	1
Daily News	5	
D.F.A.	1	1
E.P. Herald / Evening Post	5	7
Mercury	4	
Natal Witness	6	
The Star	5	6
Sunday Independent	2	
Sunday Tribune	2	
Post	1	
The Saturday Paper	1	
Saturday Star	2	
TOTAL:	122	31
GRAND TOTAL (newspapers)	**153**	

News Agencies	**Staff Photographers**	
Associated Press	2	
AFP	3	
Reuters	6 (Southern Africa)	
TOTAL:	**11**	

Grand Total SA Photojournalists: 164

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