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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Media Studies
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Abstract

LOCAL-GLOBAL TENSIONS: PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, ROLE PERCEPTIONS AND IMAGE PRODUCTION OF AFGHAN PHOTOJOURNALISTS WORKING FOR A GLOBAL AUDIENCE

There is growing academic recognition of the role of local news-makers who produce news for a global audience. Existing research has focused on local journalists and fixers engaged in international news-making, but not local professional photojournalists. This thesis explores the work of local photojournalists in Afghanistan who produce images for a global audience in Afghanistan. Eighteen such Afghan photojournalists were interviewed. Through thematic analysis of the interview data, local-global tensions were located in the perceptions of the photojournalists regarding three aspects of their work – professional experiences, professional roles, and image production. Regarding the first, the Afghan photojournalists perceived that they faced more physical dangers, as well as other material and intangible disadvantages compared to international photojournalists. Regarding the second, the professional role perceptions of the respondents as producers of objective/aesthetic news images was found to be negotiated with their perceptions of being visual interlocutors of Afghanistan to the world. Regarding their image production, the photojournalists' accounts showed both direct and indirect international influences on images they produce as well as local influences – their knowledge and familiarity to Afghanistan and identity as Afghans. In this context, the respondents perceived that international news media's depictions of Afghanistan were biased towards image-subjects which, with one exception, do not match with image-subjects they would prefer to show to international audiences. To match these responses regarding image-subjects to actual images produced by Afghan photojournalists, the respondents' preferences were compared with the image-subjects present in a purposive sample of images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience. The comparison showed that the respondents' preferences largely corresponded with the image-subjects in the chosen sample. Based on all of these different findings, the thesis offers an overall understanding of the interplay of the local and the global in the Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions of their work and images. Finally, the thesis discusses how this research adds to the growing body of academic research on the work of local news staff engaged in international news-making, especially of conflicts, and avenues for future research in this area are outlined.

Keywords

International News, Afghanistan, Photojournalism, Foreign Correspondents, Local Foreign Correspondents, Conflict News, War Photography.

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Preface

Human beings have been telling stories of war to each other probably ever since warfare began. Since war is 'picturesque'– as Susan Sontag noted – to humans, we not only want to *tell* these stories of glory and gore, misery and magnificence, but also *show* them to each other. The rock painting on the cave walls of Bhimbetka in central India to Francisco Goya's etchings to the photographic images of the wars in Iraq and Syria on our smartphones, are all testimonials to the long, continuous human tradition of wars being shown *by people who were there* to other people.

Within the period passed between the Epipaleolithic to the present day, somewhere in the latter half falls the ancient epic from South Asia, *Māhabharātā*. And though this epic, like others, was first orally transmitted and then written down, the *Māhabharātā* contains a curious reference to narrating stories of war based on visual witnessing. In the epic, the story of the climactic war of two clans and their allies, is told not only by the *all-seer* epic narrator, Krishnā Dwāipāyānā Vyasā, but also by a *far-seer*, one Sānjāyā. Blessed with being able to see events happening elsewhere, Sānjāyā is tasked to tell the story of the daily battles to the blind King whose progenies and relatives are at war. But, at the very beginning of the epic, doubt is cast upon the veracity of Sanjāyā's account: Vyasā, the omniscient narrator, says, *āham vedmi, Shūko vetti, Sānjāyo vetti, va nā va* (*Māhabharātā, Adi Parvā,* Book 1). This translates literally to "I know, Shūkā [another sage like Vyasā] knows but whether Sānjāyā knows or not, I do not know." In other words, Sānjāyā may know but he may not understand[1]. My interest in visual representations of wars and *those who represent them* stems from this ancient reference in this epic that I grew up with, about the ambivalent relationship between being a spectator of wars and being a witness of them for others.

My interest in Afghanistan, where this study is based, comes from a different source. Though I am not from Afghanistan, the place was never quite the unheard of, benighted part of the world that it was for most of my peers around the world. I grew up in Calcutta, West Bengal.

---

[1] See Singh, A. K. (2008). Mythical Narrative as a mode of constituting knowledge: Theory of Creative Process in the Narratives about the Creation of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. *Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature 45,* 129-141

People from what came to be known as Afghanistan have been coming to what came to be known as Bengal for centuries. These movements only increased once the British Empire in South Asia (for better and mostly worse) stretched from Bengal to the North-West Frontier Province on the borders of Afghanistan by the early 20th century. It was a now-gone age when travelling by train directly from Calcutta to the southern border of Afghanistan was possible. Written at this time, perhaps the most famous travel book in Bengali, *Deshebideshe* by Syed Mujtaba Ali, is based in Afghanistan. Ali's inimitable narrative unfolds in the background of the political turmoil and conflict in Afghanistan in the early half of the twentieth century, but tells vivid stories full of the lives, sorrows, and joys of ordinary Afghans. Afghans were generous and lived for poetry and picnics, I had thought growing up and Afghanistan was a place of wondrous beauty where rugged, stark mountains and green valleys existed side by side.

In my adolescence, the news images from Afghanistan jarred with these images etched by Ali. The photograph of the deposed President Dr. Najibullah lynched from a lamppost on the front page of the newspaper or the video of the Taliban dynamiting the statues of the Bamiyan Buddhas on the 9 o'clock news, are still seared into my mind because it was my first realization of Afghanistan as a place outside the pages of Ali's book. But these images of political turmoil and destruction of beauty failed to take away entirely those childhood images of Afghanistan that Ali had gifted. My personal motivation behind undertaking this research in Afghanistan was to re-discover for myself the beauty of Afghanistan and the generosity of Afghans I had learnt through Ali's eyes and words. I am glad to say that I found both.

Finally, the other journey I embarked on after my visit to Afghanistan, the research I present in this thesis, led me from questions regarding the ambivalences of spectators/witnesses of the war in Afghanistan to questions regarding my own claim to know and to understand the modern day Sānjāyās of the country through only their words and images. In the end, I am left not as confident as Vyasā was in his sagacity. It is with *my* ambivalence regarding *my* claim to know and to understand, that I must begin the thesis that follows. I haven't learnt, or can claim to know, *everything*. But this does not mean I know and understand *nothing*. Those who know this, truly know.

Epigraph

नाहं मन्ये सुवेदेति नो न वेदेति वेद च
यो नस्तद्वेद तद्वेद नो न वेदेति वेद च[2]

As I belong to worship and affect
In honour honesty, the tract of every thing
Would by a good discourser lose some life,
Which action's self was tongue to.[3]

The intellectual runs away,
afraid of drowning;
The whole business of love
is to drown in the sea.[4]

---

[2] Part II. Verse 2. Kenā Upānishād. *Samāvedā.*

Transliteration:

Nahāng mānye sūvedeti no nā vedeti vedā chā yo nāstadvedā tātvedā no nā vedeti vedā chā.

Free translation by the author:

It's not that I know everything. It's that I know yet/what/and I do not know. Those who know this, truly know.

[3] Part of speech by Duke of Norfolk. Act I, Scene 1, Line 79-82. *History of Henry VIII*. William Shakespeare.

[4] Excerpt from Verse no. 21. *Kulliyat-e-Shams*. Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī. Translation by Kabir Helminsky.

Chapter 1

1 Introduction

Academic studies of international news have recently started taking notice of the role that local news-staff play in producing news, especially of conflicts, from their own countries for a global audience. Increased attention on local news-staff marks a shift in academic studies of international news that have long focused on the work of, and news produced by, outsider, 'foreign' – mostly Western – correspondents in different locales around the world, especially those beset by wars and disasters. In this thesis, I call this form of news-work, *local-global journalism*, as a short-hand term for local news-staff – both local journalists as well as logistical and linguistic aides to foreign journalists known as 'fixers' – who are part of the production of news and news images for a global audience (Hamilton, 2012; Bunce, 2015; Murrell, 2015; Palmer, 2017)[5]. Existing research from different parts of the world show that local-global journalism is marked by different forms of local-global tensions (Khan, 2011; Bunce, 2015; Seo, 2016; Palmer, 2016, 2017). However, though it is acknowledged (Allan, 2011: 147-67; Paterson, 2011; Kennedy & Patrick, 2014: 1-14; Allan & Sreedharan, 2016; Seo, 2016) that local professional photojournalists play a role in producing international news-images meant for global audiences, there have been no studies to date specifically focused on understanding the work of local-global photojournalists or the local-global tensions present in their work.

In addition, local-global journalism has been noted as increasing in importance, particularly in the context of the post-2001 'wars on terror' in Afghanistan and Iraq (Palmer, 2016). Previous research on local-global journalistic practice and production has been done in Iraq (Palmer & Fontan, 2007; Murrell, 2010, 2015) but not in Afghanistan. Afghanistan and the Afghan war became the focus of attention in international news when the foreign intervention in the country by the United States (US) and NATO[6] forces began in 2001. A large number of international journalists and photojournalists arrived in the country to report on the war for a global audience (Campbell, 2011). However, as the conflict has continued to wax and wane since 2001, news and news images from Afghanistan meant for a global audience are no longer being produced only by international journalists (Eide, 2016b). A growing number of Afghan photojournalists are also producing news images that are meant for and seen by a global audience (Murray, 2012). It is this group of Afghan local-global photojournalists who I focus on in this thesis, with the purpose of exploring the local-global tensions in their perceptions of their professional experiences, their professional roles, and their processes of image production. In the following sections, I review the prior research that informs this thesis in general and particularly the research goals I pursue in this thesis.

---

[5] I explain the reasons behind the coinage and usage of this term in more detail further below.

1.1 International news flows: West-dominated or increasingly globalized?

Within the larger context of global flows of information and cultural goods (Schiller, 1976, 1992 [1971]; MacBride, 2004 [1980]; Tomlinson, 2001 [1991]; Thussu, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2013), international news has historically been criticized by scholars as dominated by global news agencies and organizations based in Western countries, making international news reflective of political and socio-cultural views emanating from the West (Rampal, 1995; Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998, 2004; Paterson & Sreberny, 2004). This understanding has been problematized in recent academic discussions. Scholars have argued that contemporary international news should be seen as 'hybrid' – neither centered solely on, nor only produced in and for Western countries (Bromley and Clarke, 2012: 1-16; Waisbord, 2013: 222-33). The view that international news production for global audiences is “*a transnational and collaborative process”* has gained some currency within the academy (Palmer, 2016: 3; original emphasis). But the dust has not yet settled on this debate[7]. Theorists of the political economy of news media point out continuing patterns of Western dominance in the global flows of news[8] (Thussu & Freedman, 2003: 1-12, 117-132; Thussu, 2006: 10-29; Jun & Ha, 2010 cited in Bromley & Clarke, 2012: 12; Boyd-Barrett, 2015: 92-106). Other scholars have argued that a more cosmopolitan 'international space' (Murrell, 2015: 7), undergirded by the forces of globalization, has created a "messier" (Palmer, 2017: 3) reality in international news flows, especially within the context of conflicts.

---

[6] North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Within this larger academic debate regarding the *structures underlying* and patterns in the *flow of* international news (as well as information and cultural goods), there has been one particular shift in academic understanding about international news – *who produces international news meant for global audiences* – which has been noted as having potential implications for the West-dominated views that underpin international news (Tumber & Webster, 2006; Paterson, 2011; Murrell, 2015; Palmer, 2017). The tacit understanding that international news meant for global audiences (that is, for audiences both in the West and in the global South) is produced *solely* by Western journalists has been and is being problematized as scholars have started taking notice of the role played by local news-staff from non-Western countries in producing news of those countries for a global audience (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004; Hannerz, 2004; Tumber & Webster, 2006; Hamilton & Erickson, 2006; Paterson, 2011; Hamilton, 2012). The term I use in this thesis to describe this particular form and practice of international news-making is *local-global journalism*. The term local-global journalism is meant as a shorthand to refer to *local* news staff who produce news for a *global* audience.

---

[7] See Cottle (2009: 26-42), Waisbord (2013), Murrell (2015: 1-22) for balanced overviews and discussions of this debate.

[8] Some of the recent arguments put forward by these scholars are more nuanced than others, pointing to a complex picture beyond simple dependency on the West or dominance of Western paradigms in their critique: for example, Thussu (2006: 10-29) argues that 'contra-flows' and 'subaltern flows' co-exist with Western dominated flows. Jun & Ha's (2010) study found the increasing importance of a semi-peripheral center of global flows of news in addition to the continued importance of the traditional Western 'centers' (Bromley & Clarke, 2012: 12).

The term is adapted from the term *local-foreign correspondent* (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004; Hamilton, 2012), with the aim to be inclusive of other local news-staff such as fixers and photojournalists beyond print and broadcast journalists (i.e. 'correspondents'). I opted to use 'global' rather than 'foreign' in my descriptor because retaining 'foreign' within this descriptor runs the risk of confusing potential readers as the news staff being referred to are most definitely not 'foreign' to their own countries. In addition, Murrell (2015), in her study on fixers, problematizes the sense of 'local' and 'foreign' among 'local-foreign' news workers by suggesting that the local news-workers tend to be defined and described by their Western colleagues as 'PLU' (people like us) i.e. acculturated in Western norms, therefore rendering the local/foreign dichotomy a matter of some doubt (Murrell, 2015: 150-1). Replacing 'foreign' with 'global' thus serves a dual purpose. It does not carry any presupposition of *cross-cultural* affiliations and affinities of such journalists, photojournalists, and fixers and instead reflects the situation of their professional work and practice *between* their affiliations and affinities to the places and peoples on which and on whom they report *and* the diverse audiences across the world (both in the West and in the global South, thus 'global') *to whom* they report.

The term 'local-global journalism' is inspired by Palmer's (2017: 3-5, based on Wasserman, 2011; Rao, 2011) discussion of the importance of understanding 'local-global exchanges' in contemporary global news production without assuming what constitutes 'local' or 'global' within it. Her argument may be summed up as the following: the experiences and elements of the 'local' should not be 'essentialized' (Durham, 1998) and defining and understanding what is 'global' should critically engage with the preponderances on the 'west' and the 'western' within the historical and contemporary geo-political structures we live in. Keeping this argument in view, I have used the descriptor 'western' on the one hand and 'global' or 'international' on the other in the rest of this thesis with much care and without uncritically assuming these to be interchangeable. I have used the word 'western' only *where warranted* – that is only in such cases where countries and societies in the west and people from the west are being referred to – and 'global' or 'international' to refer to a broader conception of the world we live in, encompassing both the west and the global south.

Finally, I opt for *journalism* in my descriptor in spite of the inclusion of the work of aides to foreign journalists, known as ‘fixers’, within this category because while early literature regarding fixers’ role in news production tended to see their role as limited to being logistical and linguistic aides (Hannerz, 2004; Tumber and Webster, 2006; Palmer and Fontan, 2007), the growing consensus is that fixers do play journalistic roles within news production (Murrell, 2015; Palmer, 2016, 2017).

To return to the discussion at hand, the growing academic research on local news-staff who are part of international news production – or local-global journalism – can be broadly divided as following. Some have focused on understanding the work of local journalists employed by global news organizations (Bunce, 2010, 2011, 2015; Khan, 2011; Seo, 2016) while some others have focused on *fixers* – logistical and linguistic aides (who are sometimes journalists themselves and may play journalistic roles) – who collaborate with foreign journalists for news-gathering (Palmer & Fontan, 2007; Murrell, 2010; 2015; Palmer, 2016, 2017). To understand the implications of the increasing acknowledgement and investigation of the work, experiences, and practices of local news-staff engaged in international news-making, it is necessary to have an overview of previous academic research on international news, particularly from conflict-zones where the practice of local-global journalism has been most important (Palmer, 2016).

1.2 Shifting understanding of who produces international news from conflict zones

Within research on journalistic work and practice in producing international news, research on journalists’ professional practices in conflict reporting forms a distinct area of study[9]. The tradition in research on journalists reporting on war has been to focus on the work and practices of Western foreign correspondents who report from areas affected by crises and conflicts for an 'audience back home'. The role of these foreign war correspondents – or "professional, specialized tourists" as Sontag called them (2003: 17) – has been studied and discussed in different contexts and conflicts (Hallin, 1984; Pedelty, 1995[10]; Thussu & Freedman, 2003; Knightley, 2004; Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Tumber & Webster, 2006)[11]. It is within this entrenched and long-standing understanding[12], within academia as well as beyond it, of who produces international news, especially of conflicts, that the significance of the recent academic cognizance of 'local foreign correspondents' has to be understood. In his description of the changing nature of international news reporting and especially changes in *who produces* international news for global audiences, Hamilton (2012: 216-220) described several different types of actors within international news-making who have not always been acknowledged. Among these different types of actors, he noted the role of "*local foreign correspondents*, who cover the world from their hometowns" (p. 218; emphasis in original).

---

[9] It is important to mention here that studies of international news, especially of conflicts, are often based on analysis of news-texts (mostly based on theoretical frameworks of Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; and Entman, 2004). Such journalistic text-based studies sometimes seek to understand journalistic work and practice through their textual objects of study. The same is largely true for studies of international news of conflicts and news images of conflicts. An important exception is Fahmy’s (2005b) study based on US photojournalists’ and photo-editors’ perceptions as well as the images they produced of the conflict in Afghanistan. To the best of my knowledge, there is only one study (Bunce,

Though not entirely *new* (Seo, 2016), local foreign correspondence, or 'local-global journalism' as I term it in this thesis to be more precise and inclusive of different journalistic practices, is a phenomenon that is growing in importance. As Bunce notes, "one of the most striking trends in foreign news production over the last 20 years is the *increased centrality and importance* of local 'foreign correspondents': journalists who report on their home country for global news outlets" (2015: 46-7; emphasis added). This

---

2011) which is based on texts produced by local-global journalists as well as interviews conducted with them, thus combining the study of their perceptions *and* the news they produce.

[10] Though like most other researchers, Pedelty (1995) also concentrated on Western journalists in his study on foreign correspondents reporting on the conflict in El Salvador, he did also offer observations of the Salvadorian journalists working alongside and with the Western foreign correspondents.

[11] See also Paterson (1997); Cottle (2006).

[12] It is only recently that this bias towards Western news personnel within studies of conflict journalism is being pointed out. Research focused on local journalists in the global south reporting on conflict in their home countries – as a conscious effort to decentralize journalism studies – is now being conducted (Zárate-Valderrama, 2016).

increase in centrality and importance is fueled by factors affecting international news in general, such as falling revenues in the news industry due to the growth of digital media which has meant reductions in foreign news bureaus and the need to hire cheaper (and more ad hoc) journalistic labour as a result (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004: 301-321; Hamilton, 2012: 211-222; Murrell, 2015: 1-22). It is particularly important in international news about conflicts because recent conflicts have tended to be more dangerous for foreign journalists (Palmer, 2016: 3). The research I present in this thesis is situated within this shifting understanding in the discipline of journalism studies regarding international news-making, particularly of conflicts.

1.3 Local-global journalism: ‘a site of struggle’

In his seminal study on foreign correspondents reporting on the Salvadorian conflict, Pedelty (1995) was the first to observe and describe the role played by local journalists who worked alongside and with Western foreign correspondents. He mentioned that there were “many indicators that Salvadorian and foreign journalists work within very different social and psychological contexts” (1995: 208). Apart from his – albeit relatively brief compared to his exploration of the world of foreign correspondents – discussion of the differences in the work and role perceptions of the local Salvadorian journalists compared to the Western journalists they worked alongside and with, studies on local news-staff engaged within international news production (in conflict reporting or otherwise), have continued to be scarce. As Palmer (2016: 2) has noted, “it is only in the age of the so-called ‘war on terror’, when conflict zones have become increasingly dangerous and the dependence on local news staff more pronounced,” that the acknowledgement of the role of local news-staff has grown both within journalistic circles (Murrell, 2015; Palmer, 2017) and in academia. This growing academic acknowledgement and investigation has focused on two related[13] types of news-work – fixers and local journalists engaged in producing international news for a global audience.

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[13] See Palmer & Fontan (2007); Murell (2015) and Palmer (2016, 2017) for journalistic roles played by fixers.

While Hannerz (2004: 147-178) made a passing mention of the role of fixers within his ethnographic study of foreign correspondents, Hamilton and Erickson (2006) discussed the role of fixers at some length as important support systems for foreign correspondents. Tumber and Webster (2006: 106-115) dedicated a chapter describing the work of fixers based on interviews with British journalists within their book-length study on contemporary war reporting. In the following year, Palmer and Fontan (2007) specifically focused on the role of fixers in producing news about the Iraq war for global audiences. Their study, like Tumber and Webster's, was also based largely on interviews with foreign journalists working in the country. Exploring the work and practice of fixers within international news production has, since then, followed the tradition of making sense of their work *largely* from the perspective of the foreign journalists they work with (Murrell, 2015)[14], rather than based on their own perceptions. Palmer (2016; 2017), in her recent articles, has criticized this and sought to steer away from it by focusing exclusively on the fixers' own perceptions of their work in her 2016 study.

While academic researchers are increasingly interested in the role of fixers within international news production, research on local journalists who *produce* international news for a global audience remains scarce. While Hamilton and Jenner acknowledged the role of local-foreign correspondents back in 2004, Bunce's (2010) study of the dynamics and cultural clash in the East Africa bureaus of international news organizations, where local Kenyan journalists worked side by side with foreign journalists, was the first study to seek to understand first-hand the work and practices of local-global journalists. Bunce (2011) published the results of another investigation the following year, this time of the work and role perceptions of 'local-national foreign correspondents' in Sudan who worked for international news organizations and later wrote a discussion of the impact of the growing number of African local-global journalists on international news from the African continent (2015).

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[14] Though Paterson's (2011) longitudinal ethnographic study of video news production by the Associated Press Television News Agency may be said to be an exception because of its partial focus on understanding the audio-visual news production by local fixers and stringer journalists.

A relatively lesser-known study by Khan (2011) was published in an edited volume (largely focused on macro and meso-level analysis of forces of globalization at work in Afghanistan), and explored the work of local Pukhtoon[15] journalists in Peshawar[16], Pakistan who worked for and with international journalists to report on the war in Afghanistan. More recently, Seo (2016) has explored the role played by ‘local journalistic hires’ in foreign bureaus run by the global news agency Associated Press (AP)[17]. Seo’s study shows that while local-global journalism is often understood as a recent phenomenon, local news staff have long played an important role in international news production, at least for this particular international news agency.

Though they have sought to understand the work of local-global journalists and fixers from diverse methodological approaches[18], theoretical angles[19], and in different geo-cultural areas of the world[20], a clear thread runs through the findings, arguments, and discussions by these scholars though it is not named as such by them. My reading of these studies leads me to argue that they all point to different forms of *local-global tensions* that permeate local-global journalism. Some studies have pointed to the local-global tensions arising out of local-global journalists and fixers facing more dangers and threats than international journalists (Tumber & Webster, 2006: 106-115[21]; Bunce, 2011; Khan, 2011; Palmer, 2016, 2017). Some have pointed to tensions arising out of local-global journalists and fixers facing material disadvantages, such as being paid less or their journalistic work not being recognized as such (Khan, 2011; Murrell, 2015; Seo, 2016; Palmer, 2016) compared to the international journalists they work with or for. Apart from these tensions within the context of the professional experience of local-global journalists and fixers, some researchers have also pointed to differences (Bunce, 2011; Khan, 2011) as well as similarities (Murrell, 2015) in how local-global journalists and fixers perceive their professional role compared to international journalists. Though role perceptions of local-global journalists and fixers have not been extensively investigated in previous research, the findings of these investigations point to the role perceptions of local-global journalists being another potential site of local-global tensions within local-global journalism.

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[15] An ethno-cultural group who live on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

[16] City in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, close to the border with Afghanistan.

[17] Seo’s study (2016) is based on archived interviews kept in the oral history records of AP.

[18] In-depth interviews have been the most common approach. The study by Paterson (2011) is the exception, as it was based on ethnographic observation. Seo (2016) used archival interviews.

[19] While most research in this area is based on ethnographic observation or more commonly in-depth interviews, and largely offers a first-hand data-driven understanding of the role of the local-global journalists and fixers based on their perceptions, Murrell has sought to understand the work of fixers in light of Bourdieu’s theoretical model of journalism as a ‘field’ where cultural and social ‘capitals’ are exchanged (2015: 46-67).

[20] While Palmer and Fontan (2007), Murrell (2015), and Palmer (2016) all focus on the Middle East, Bunce has focused on East African countries in her studies. Khan’s study was based in Pakistan. Paterson (2011) and Seo’s work (2016) do not have a specific geographic focus. Their focus is on the practices of the international news agency – Associated Press in both cases – rather than specific geo-locations.

Finally, researchers (Palmer & Fontan, 2007; Bunce, 2010; 2011; Murrell, 2015; Palmer, 2016, 2017) have pointed to how processes of news production within local-global journalism are affected by the "'inside'/'outside' cultural dichotomy" (Bunce, 2010: 527) because the identity-based affiliations and affinities, as well as the local knowledge and familiarity of the local-global journalists and fixers, are important factors within local-global news production. Some researchers have pointed to the potential positive influence that such local affiliations and affinities, knowledge and familiarity of the local-global journalists and fixers can have on international news (Paterson, 2011: 99-100; Bunce, 2015; Palmer, 2017). Other researchers on the role of fixers have viewed such influence negatively (Tumber & Webster, 2006[22]; Palmer and Fontan, 2007), or have been ambivalent in their conclusions (Murrell, 2015: 150-1), regarding what impact such influences may have. The findings of these researchers help form an understanding of the different local influences at work within local-global news production, and also the local-global tensions which may result from them. Bunce specifically noted that the identity-based affiliations and affinities of the local-global journalists she studied meant that local-global “news production today is *a site of struggle* where journalists from diverse backgrounds contest the way in which news events should be framed” (Bunce 2015: 46; emphasis added).

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[21] Tumber and Webster (2006: 114) also describe fixers and international journalists having "intense relationships" and note that the British journalists they talked to spoke "movingly" of the fixers they worked with. But the scholars also mention many instances that show that fixers are far more at risk than the international journalists they worked with. As such, the personal relationships mentioned by Tumber and Webster must be understood within a context of professional disadvantages and inequities between the two groups.

[22] See the description of fixers as "partial" to local interests rather than neutral or objective (Tumber & Webster, 2006: 109-110).

In summary, existing research has shown that local-global journalism, involving both local journalists and fixers – a small part (Murrell, 2015: 13) of what might be a larger shift towards “transnational and collaborative” international news-making (Palmer, 2016: 3) – is far from being harmonious and may be marked by local-global tensions in several of its aspects.

1.4 Local-global photojournalism: A practice acknowledged but not investigated

Local-global journalism had first been acknowledged as a widespread practice in international news-making (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004; Hannerz, 2004; Hamilton & Erickson, 2006) and subsequently started to be investigated in-depth by scholars. At the time of writing, it may be said to now form a growing, but still nascent, body of research. For a long time, academic research on conflict *photojournalism* has largely followed the trends in research on conflict journalism that I mention above. It has focused (Griffin, 1999: 122-157), and still does (Kennedy, 2014: 34-59) largely focus, on Western photojournalists and photographers and their images of conflicts in foreign countries. Research on the professional experiences and practices of *local* photojournalists covering conflicts in the global south remain rare, while the work and practices of *local-global photojournalists* have only received limited and partial attention (Paterson, 2011; Seo, 2016).

Regarding the former, I am aware of one published study by Ndoma Brown (2013) focusing on Nigerian photojournalists’ professional experiences, and another broader but as yet unpublished study on Mexican photojournalists by Ramírez and Mazzotti (2017). The lack of studies on both local photojournalists in the global south and local-global photojournalists from the global south is not surprising because academic research on the work and practices of photojournalists, except for certain famous individual photographers mostly from Western countries (Griffin, 1999: 122-157), is sparse as Hadland et al. (2015: 10-11) recently noted. They also found that when photographers are studied as a group, they tend to be studied along with amateur and citizen photographers (p. 11).

Hadland et al.'s large-scale study based on surveys conducted with 1,556 professional photographers affiliated with the World Press Photo Foundation has sought to address this gap. While over 60 percent of their respondents were residents of Europe and North America, their survey did include 572 photographers (roughly one-third) who were resident in the global south[23]. One of the interesting points raised by Hadland et al. (2015: 15) is how photography for news does not have a single descriptor among professionals engaged in news image production. 'Photojournalism' and 'news photography' or 'press photography' tend to be interchangeably used by these professionals while 'documentary photography' is a closely-related practice. In this thesis, I use the term photojournalism most often and sometimes interchangeably with news photography, but I distinguish the related but separate practice of documentary photography which aims to produce 'photodocumentalistic' images (based on Sousa, 1998[24] discussed in Ramos and Marocco, 2017).

In parallel to the shifts in international news and foreign correspondence, scholars are also pointing out that producing news images of conflicts has never been the domain solely of Western photojournalists and photographers (Seo, 2016: 45-6). Moreover, the recent trend has been that locals affected by the conflicts are also producing images of those conflicts that reach global audiences (Allan, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2015; Mortensen, 2015). This emerging area of research is mostly focused on local citizens' and activists' images (as noted by Hadland et al., 2015: 11) of conflicts that reach audiences elsewhere through digital media outside of traditional news formats. In my focus on *professional* photojournalism in this thesis, unlike recent academic studies on images of conflicts which investigate non-professionally produced images of conflicts, e.g. by citizen journalists, amateurs as well as activists (Allan, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2015; Mortensen, 2015), I am informed by Waisbord's (2013: 218-222) argument that the current state of global journalism has not entered a 'post-professional' phase as yet, and by his call for continued engagement with professional journalism in academic studies.

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[23] However, given their large-scale focus, the findings of Hadland et al. (2015) mostly provide an overview of the biographical details and backgrounds of the photojournalists surveyed. They are not particularly pertinent to this thesis.

[24] Sousa's (1998) original text is in Portuguese. My understanding of Sousa's discussion of photodocumentalistic images is based on Ramos and Marocco's (2017) summary.

Academic research on *professional* photojournalism from conflict zones *has acknowledged* that local professional photojournalists play a role in producing news images of war for global audiences (Allan, 2011: 147-67; Kennedy & Patrick, 2014: 1-14; Allan and Sreedharan, 2016). Furthermore, Seo, whose study included interviews with 10 AP photographers and videographers, noted that, "[p]hoto and video journalists, because the nature of their work requires less perfect English and close access to the locals, are also more likely to be recruited from local fixers and freelancers" (2016: 47). But while mentioned or partially acknowledged, over the period of time that research on local-global journalism has grown, research on local-global photojournalism has lagged behind. To the best of my knowledge, other than Paterson (2011) and Seo (2016), who both partially touched on audio-visual and visual news production by local journalists and fixers for the same organization (Associated Press Television News and Associated Press), there has been no study with a sustained focus on local-global photojournalism as I have chosen to have in this thesis. As such, the larger goal of this thesis is to further the growing understanding of local-global journalism within international news-making, especially of conflicts, by including local-global *photojournalism* within its purview.

1.5 Areas of focus in current thesis within local-global photojournalism

As I have noted before, my reading of existing research on local-global journalism suggested that local-global journalists' professional experiences, role perceptions, and news production are marked by local-global tensions. Given the lack of a substantive body of research on local-global journalism, or prior research in local-global photojournalism specifically, my understanding of the existing research on local-global journalism was supplemented by several different research strands within the discipline of journalism studies, and conflict journalism specifically. These together informed the areas within local-global photojournalism I focus on in this thesis.

1.5.1 Local-global tensions in the professional experience of local-global photojournalists

In this thesis, I explore the local-global tensions in the *professional experiences* of local-global photojournalists. In my focus on this aspect, I was largely informed by the previous research on local-global journalists and fixers, rather than studies beyond this particular form of news-work. The heightened level of danger and physical threats (Tumber and Webster, 2006; Bunce, 2011; Khan, 2011; Palmer, 2016, 2017) and material disadvantages faced by local-global journalists and fixers (Khan, 2011; Murrell, 2015; Seo, 2016) are the two most common findings of previous researchers on local-global journalism. Seo (2016: 44) described the professional experiences of the 'local journalistic hires' by saying that: "[it] resembles a caste system, with different roles and compensations expected according to nationality and/or ethnicity". While differing threat perceptions and material disadvantages have been the most often discussed, Seo's (2016) description points to more deep-seated inequities and disadvantages between 'local journalistic hires' and international journalists. Based on these, I chose to be more open-ended in my research to take into account other perceived contributing factors – beyond heightened danger and material disadvantages – to local-global tensions within the professional experiences of local-global photojournalists.

1.5.2 Local-global tensions in professional role perceptions of local-global photojournalists

While local-global tensions within the professional experiences of local-global journalists and fixers have been discussed extensively within previous research, local-global tensions within the professional role perceptions of local-global journalists and fixers – that is, how they view their *journalistic role* in light of their *local affiliations and affinities, knowledge and familiarity* – have not been explored at length.

One of the central and universal ideals of journalism's and journalists' institutional role is that of being 'objective' while reporting and representing real life events and phenomena (Deuze, 2005: 445; Weaver and Wilnat, 2012: 537). This 'unchanging', 'core' journalistic ideal (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa, 2008) ultimately stems from journalism's growth as a populist, 'low' offshoot of the positivist traditions (Keeble & Wheeler, 2007: 6) that emerged in late 19th century Europe (Martinisi & Lugo-Ocando, 2015). Critical theory as well as studies based on observation of journalistic practices have called into question this idea that journalistic reportage is unbiased or 'objective' (e.g. Gitlin, 1980; Hallin, 1984). Notwithstanding such critical re-evaluation, the notion of 'objectivity' persists in journalistic role perception and has permeated conceptions of 'what is journalism' and 'what it is to be a journalist' across the world as Euro-American models of journalism have been exported far and wide across the globe in the twentieth century (Banda, 2008; Betz, 2015: 219-232; Fahmy et al., 2015; Rodny-Gumede, 2016).

The existing research that has dealt with this institutional ideal of journalism (flawed and contested as it might be) and adherence of local-global fixers and journalists to this ideal can be considered contradictory. Murrell (2015) found that the journalistic role perception of being 'objective' recorders of 'truth' had been adopted by the six fixers she interviewed for her study (p.150), while Bunce (2011) found that there were significant differences between the role perceptions of Sudanese local-global journalists and international journalists. Khan (2011) hinted at local-global tensions coalescing around the adoption of the principle of objectivity and reporting the 'truth' in the perceptions of the Pakistani Pukhtoon journalists working for international news organizations he studied. He observed a loss of faith in this journalistic 'ideal' among them because of the biases they noticed in international news media's reportage. This led them to question the maxim that truth shall prevail in the "marketplace of ideas" (p. 93).

Given the relatively less attention paid in previous research on local-global tensions within local-global journalists and fixers' role perceptions, my focus on this aspect in this thesis is also informed by prior research on journalistic role perceptions (beyond that of research on local-global journalism). Scholars have repeatedly found that national and socio-cultural affiliations and affinities, beyond the institution of journalism, also affect journalists' role perceptions. This has been noted by researchers both within Western contexts (Gitlin, 1980; Hallin, 1984; Bromley 2004; Rantanen, 2004; Tumber and Prentoulis, 2003; Tumber, 2004) as well as outside Western contexts (Ibrahim, 2003; Pintak, 2014)[25]. Recent evidence from the cross-cultural study called the 'Worlds of Journalism' project[26] has also suggested differences between Western and non-Western journalistic role perceptions, particularly regarding the perceptions of the importance of objectivity in journalism. Hanitzsch et al., who investigated "the perception of journalism's institutional roles"[27] among journalists in 18 different countries (2011: 275), found that there are differences between how journalists in Western countries and "journalists in developing societies and transitional contexts" imagine their own social function. The authors particularly noted that the acceptance of the norm of 'objectivity' is "often idiosyncratic" across cultures and not shared universally (2011: 287).

In this context, I must acknowledge that prior research on journalistic professional role perception has noted several other nuances in how journalists perceive of their role beyond that of the central norm of 'objectivity' (see Weaver & Wilnat, 2012: 529-551). However, I chose to base my query on journalistic role perception stemming from the journalistic ideal of ‘objectivity’, rather than these further nuances, because existing research on local-global journalism has dealt with this particular aspect of journalistic role perception (Khan, 2011; Murrell, 2015) and because *photojournalistic* role perception has been discussed in previous research as having its own nuances which were important to explore in this study.

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[25] See Pintak (2014: 484-5) for a discussion and summary of previous research that have found non-Western journalists' role perceptions as affected by national and socio-cultural affiliations and affinities beyond that of the professional institution of journalism.

[26] For an introduction to this project see Hannerz and Boyer (2006: 5-17).

[27] Along with epistemologies and ethical ideologies (see Hanitzsch et al. 2011: 275-6).

The notion of objective reproduction of reality in photographic practice has been integral from its very inception (Benjamin, 2008 [1936]: 21-23; Bourdieu, 1990 [1965]: 99-173), much like in journalism (Keeble and Wheeler, 2007: 1-14). But prior research shows that within the institutional practice of photojournalism, the concern for objective reproduction of reality through photographs is also closely intermeshed with aesthetic considerations (Newton, 2001: 49-60; Zelizer, 2004: 115-135; Ramos & Marocco, 2017). This dual concern for objectivity and aesthetic considerations has also been noted in prior observational studies of photojournalists at work[28] (Rosenblum, 1978; Bock, 2008)[29]. Based on the previous research on local-global journalists and fixers as well as others which have explored journalistic role perceptions, especially photojournalistic role perceptions situated at the intersection of being objective and being aesthetically pleasing, I chose to focus on this aspect of local-global photojournalism in this thesis to understand what kind of local-global tensions might exist within it.

1.5.3 Local-global tensions within processes of image production

Bunce (2015), as mentioned, has noted that local-global news production is a ‘site of struggle’ because of the insider/outsider cultural dichotomies within the processes of such news production. Though the other researchers on local-global journalism do not mention local-global *tensions* within the processes of news production in such clear terms, two related elements can be discerned as important in local-global news production from this prior body of research. The first is that the identity-based affiliations and affinities of local-global journalists and fixers is a factor in the processes of news production (Tumber & Webster, 2006; Palmer & Fontan, 2007; Bunce, 2010; Khan, 2011). Some of these researchers have discussed how the local affiliations and affinities of fixers are perceived by international journalists to skew the news they produce, (Tumber & Webster, 2006; Palmer & Fontan, 2007), while others have pointed to how local-global journalists feel the need to influence news-making because they feel misrepresented by outsiders (Bunce, 2010; Khan, 2011).

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[28] Both studies are based on ethnographic observations of US photojournalists working for local news media.

[29] Unlike journalistic role perceptions, not much is known about how national or socio-cultural affinities and affiliations influence photojournalistic role perceptions. Sontag (2003: 31) noted that since the early years of the twentieth century, photography has always “declared itself a global enterprise. The photographer’s nationality and national journalistic affiliation were, in principle, irrelevant.” Academic research also seems to have followed this understanding as cross-cultural and cross-national studies on photojournalists’ practices and roles are rarer within already rare studies on photojournalists’ work and practice (Hadfield et al., 2015: 11).

The second element noticeable in prior research is the importance within the processes of local-global news production of local knowledge and familiarity that the local-global journalists and fixers have about the local context (Tumber and Webster, 2006; Palmer and Fontan, 2007; Murrell, 2015; Palmer, 2016). Previous researchers have noted that local knowledge and familiarity of the fixers are seen as assets for news production because of the in-depth understanding of the local situation they can provide as well as the better access to the local population they have. However, some researchers have also pointed to a potential negative influence of such local knowledge and familiarity, because it can skew the news coverage towards the biases in the knowledge and social networks of the fixers concerned (Murrell, 2015). Based on these prior discussions, I felt it important to focus on local-global news image production by local-global photojournalists in this thesis and to explore the local-global tensions within it.

In my understanding of the processes of news production, I was also informed by prior research on news production, beyond studies of local-global journalism. Two closely-related models (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014: 31) of understanding news production, the Hierarchy of Influences model (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; 2014; Reese, 2001, 2007) and the ‘gatekeeping’ model (Shoemaker, 1991; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), were particularly effective as they have been previously applied in understanding news image production (Bissell, 2000; Fahmy, 2005a) and in non-Western contexts (Ibrahim, 2003) to understand the influences of identity-based affiliations and affiliations of journalists.

Within these two models, news production is understood as influenced by both organizational and audience demands as well as, at the individual level, by the "background, values, role conceptions, and experiences" of the journalists concerned (Shoemaker, 1991:34; Shoemaker and Vos, 2009: 33).

Understanding the different factors within local-global news production mentioned by previous researchers on local-global journalism as *influences* on news production, helped to structure my exploration of the local-global tensions within the image production of local-global photojournalists. I adapted the understanding of different influences on news production as developed by Shoemaker and Reese (2014: 210) to the purpose of understanding local-global tensions within local-global news image production by differentiating between *local influences* and *international influences*. Based on prior research on local-global journalism, I understood local influences as influences of the identity-based affiliations and affinities as well the local knowledge and familiarity to the local situation of the local-global photojournalists. I understood international influences as any perceived organizational, audience-related, or other influences, whose source or nature is international, on their image production. Based on these, I explore the local-global tensions within the processes of image production by local-global photojournalists generated by the local influences and the different international influences they perceived on their image production.

1.5.4 From perceptions to images: possibilities of counter-flows?

With one exception where research was conducted through both in-depth interviews as well as content analysis of news stories (Bunce, 2011), research on local-global journalism has so far been limited to understanding local-global journalism through the *perceptions* of the local-global journalists and fixers (and international journalists). Understood in Mellado and Van Dalen's terms (2014), existing research on local-global journalism has largely focused on the 'rhetoric' of journalists and fixers and has not linked such rhetoric to the 'performance' of local-global journalists and fixers. However, researchers on local-global journalism *have* raised the question of whether the increasing importance of the local-global journalists and fixers can affect the actual news produced and what impact it may have for international news meant for global audiences.

These questions go back to the very beginnings of academic discussion on the growing importance of local-global journalism. Hamilton and Jenner (2004) wondered, "[w]ill local foreign correspondents promote greater international awareness or, as some have suggested, accentuate provincialism?" (p. 315). Paterson (2011: 99-100) mentioned in the context of global audio-visual news produced by Associated Press Television News, the international news agency where he based his ethnographic study, that "[i]f the brain…is made up of the central newsrooms…, then the heart is made up of the hundreds of…local journalists and photographers…." This he said (2011: 100), "raises the intriguing question of whether local understandings of events and local loyalties ever conflict with the established (globally oriented…) story frames…" Murrell has also noted that the "access to local stories" accorded to international journalists by hiring local fixers could mean "a positive impact if it brings into the Western news agenda (and public sphere) a localized, non-Western view of the issues concerned" (2015: 150), though she noted that her own findings among the six fixers she interviewed pointed to the potential for such 'positive impact' being limited.

These questions, which go beyond the perceptions of the local-global journalists and fixers and speak more to their potential *performance*, I felt were important to engage with, as they refer back to the broader debate regarding contemporary international news flows that I have mentioned above. Essentially, the question raised by these scholars is whether local-global journalists, photojournalists, and fixers, whose importance is growing within international news-making can, may or do produce counter-flows to the dominant Western perspectives in international news through the news and news images they take part in making. Verschueren (2012: 158-9) has also raised this same question that speaks to the immediate context of this study – Afghan local-global photojournalists. I return to his suggestion about the potential role that local-global photojournalists might play and how it informed my focus on grounding the perceptions of local-global photojournalists in actual images in this thesis further below.[30]

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[30] I would like to note for the reader here that while my review of the existing literature on local-global journalism is exhaustive to the best of my knowledge, the research from other strands of journalism studies

1.6 Post-2001 Afghanistan and the local-global Afghan photojournalists

Local-global journalism is associated mostly with producing international news about conflicts and crises (Tumber & Webster, 2006; Palmer & Fontan, 2007; Bunce, 2011; Khan, 2011; Murrell, 2015). Along with other financial and technological factors (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004; Hamilton, 2012), as Palmer noted, it is in the context of the ‘war on terror’ that local-global journalism as a news-making practice has grown, as conflict zones have become more dangerous for international journalists (2016: 3). The two main theatres of the post-9/11 ‘war on terror’ have been Afghanistan and Iraq, though it may be said to have spread beyond these two places in the recent years. Prior research on local-global journalism has been conducted in Iraq (Palmer & Fontan, 2007; Murrell, 2010, 2015) but not in Afghanistan. My study is based in Afghanistan and addresses this lack of research on local-global journalism in Afghanistan, in light of the growing importance of local-global *photojournalism* in post-2001 Afghanistan (Murray, 2012).

The ‘war on terror’ that started in 2001 was only the latest phase in the longer civil war that had been underway in Afghanistan since the late 1970s[31]. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attack, an invasion of Afghanistan was led by the US (aided by its Afghan allies, the Northern Alliance, and joined later by the NATO forces) to oust the Taliban regime which had consolidated power in most parts of Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001. Since then, the conflict in Afghanistan has waxed and waned between ‘hot’ and ‘latent’ phases (Kempf, 2007), but cannot be said to have ever ended – though even as early as 2003, the US administration had considered the war in Afghanistan all but over (Rohde &

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that I mention in this section should not be read as an exhaustive review but selective for the purposes of the subject at hand.

[31] For accounts of Afghanistan written at several points in the twentieth and twenty-first century, see Dupree (1977, 2002); Tapper (1989); Shahrani (1986, 2002); Steward (2011: 51-77). These texts together provide an overview of both the history as well as the changing historiography of Afghanistan. For a more focused approach on the history of the civil war in Afghanistan since the 1970s to the rise of the Taliban, see Nojumi (2002).

Sanger, 2007). In 2014, the same year when the first peaceful handover of political power was achieved in Afghanistan (Loyn, 2014), the conflict in Afghanistan entered a ‘hot’ phase: it “reached its highest level in the post-1989 period” and the number of civilian casualties “also increased” as “ground battles between the Taliban and the Afghan government became the main cause of civilian deaths” (Pettersson & Wallensteen, 2015: 540).

The conflict – which was never over to begin with in spite of official claims to the contrary (Rohde & Sanger, 2007) – worsened with the withdrawal of most US troops at the end of 2014 (Landler, 2014; Al Jazeera, 2014). The most recent data available notes Afghanistan as the third most conflict-affected country[32] in the world (Melander et al. 2016: 729), with conflict with the so-called Islamic State added to the ongoing conflict with the Taliban (Melander et al., 2016: 733). The conflict situation at the time of writing has only deteriorated further with continued escalation of the conflict with the Taliban, the growing threat of the Islamic State, and allegations of Russian presence in the country surfacing (Roberts, 2016). At the time of writing, a reversal of the 2014 withdrawal of US troops has been announced by the current US administration and more US troops are set to return to Afghanistan soon (Ackerman, 2017; Borger, 2017).

1.6.1 Media sector in post-2001 Afghanistan

Within this larger context of an ongoing conflict, post-2001 Afghanistan has seen large-scale reconstruction and development, aided largely by the international community[33].

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[32] Both Pettersson & Wallanstein’s (2015) and Melander et al.’s (2016) studies are part of the longitudinal studies of the conflicts of the world undertaken by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program based in the Uppsala University. Both of these studies measure the intensity of ‘organized conflicts’ based on number of fatalities.

[33] In 2008, an Oxfam report estimated that 90 percent of public expenditure in Afghanistan was funded by international donors (Waldman, 2008). In 2016, a report by the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction notes that the development expenditure in Afghanistan since 2001 – by the US government alone – has exceeded that of the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe in the post-WW2 era (SIGAR, 2016: 4). The role of the international community and donors in Afghanistan has not been without its criticisms. See Hayes & Sedra (2008); Goodhand & Sedra (2010); Jalalzai & Jefferess (2011); Byrd (2012) for ongoing critical analysis of the role of international donors in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan.

One of the areas where such internationally-funded development has been most pronounced is the Afghan media sector (Davin et al., 2010; Cary, 2012; Beikart, 2015). Rawan (2002) described the media sector in Afghanistan in general, and the news media in particular, as having “collapsed” (p. 160) under the Taliban[34]. He also described the media sector in Afghanistan in 2002 as having a ‘bi-polar structure’ where traditional forms of mass communication (such as public assemblies of tribal leaders known as Loya Jirgah, or information exchange and dissemination at bazaars and mosques) co-existed with modern forms of mass media such as radio, TV, and newspapers. The latter have overtaken traditional forms of mass communication in importance in the years since.

By 2008, a special report by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) was noting the “early successes” in redevelopment of the Afghan media sector as “most prominent in three areas of media development: local media outlets, especially radio; the national government’s communication with its citizens; and international broadcasters’ presence in Afghanistan” (Bajraktari & Parajon, 2008:1). The authors of the report stress the positive role that international donors have played since 2001, while calling for more proactive intervention from the international community in the future. It is undeniable that the largely private-ownership oriented (with some state-run media), pluralistic Afghan media system with its profusion of TV and radio stations as well as newspapers[35] has been largely shaped by the donor agencies and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who have been involved in every aspect of its evolution since 2001. They have provided support for infrastructure-building, as well as capacity building through training media professionals including journalists, through advertising in Afghan media outlets, campaigning for media development as well as in providing analysis of the media sector (Davin et al., 2010: 29-30; Smith, 2011: 44). The financial investment from these donor agencies and NGOs in the media sector development has been substantial: "…all told, the amount of money allocated for media development and support in Afghanistan has reached hundreds of millions of dollars" (Cary, 2012: 24-26). However, the redevelopment of the Afghan media sector in post-2001 Afghanistan has not been a story of unalloyed success. The efforts of the international community were already being criticized back in 2008 by Barker (2008) for having created a "polyarchic" media structure in Afghanistan. This criticism of polyarchy – plurality *sans* diversity (Karppinen, 2010) – in the Afghan media sector has only grown since (Beikart, 2015).

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[34] For longer accounts of the history of media in Afghanistan, see Vartan (1967); Torfeh and Sreberny (2010); Mahmood (2013: 47-50); Brown (2013: 164-178); Beikart (2015: 18-28).

[35] For overviews of the Afghan media sector as a whole since 2002, see Davin et al. (2010), Cary (2012), Brown (2013: 178-82), Beikart (2015: 28-54) and Relly & Zanger (2016: 3-4).

1.6.2 News media sector and journalism in post-2001 Afghanistan

Based on her research in the years preceding 2013, Katherine Brown described the media sector in Afghanistan as 'patrons'-based. She described the different patrons on whom the media sector depended as "Western countries, mainly the U.S. and U.K.; Afghanistan's neighbors, specifically Iran and Pakistan; Afghan warlords; and the Afghan government" (2013: 179). In a more recent study focused on the news media in Afghanistan, Relly and Zanger (2016) have noted the same agents and actors as Brown (2013) did. They argued (2016: 11-15) that these agents and actors have 'captured' journalistic practice in Afghanistan through *violence, threats and obstruction* of journalists (by government agents as well as the Taliban, warlords, insurgents and mafia), as well as through creating *dependencies* of the news media sector on them (by political actors and foreign donors). In this context, they said (2016: 10),

> [C]apture [of the news media] tended to stem from issues related to funding from donor countries, NGO contractors, foreign governments and political groups, and national and local governments. We also found capture in a separate category of groups operating outside of the law that included corrupt government officials, militias and armed government opposition groups, such as the Taliban and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and, finally, the 'mafia' and warlords – both of which operate inside and outside of government.

Reports from civil society organizations (CSOs) on Afghan news media (Bajraktari & Parajon, 2008; Afghan Journalist Safety Committee, 2015, 2017; Committee to Protect Journalists, 2016) have focused on the physical danger and insecurities faced by Afghan journalists. Academic research on journalistic practice in Afghanistan has also, largely, focused on this aspect (Smith, 2011; Khalvatgar, 2014; Eide, 2016a). Eide (2016a) argued that journalistic practice in Afghanistan is best understood not as carried out in a 'post-conflict' situation, but as journalistic practice carried out within the context of an ongoing conflict. But based on the *myriad* sources of violence, threats, and dangers for journalists, noted by both CSO reports and academic researchers, Afghan journalists' professional experiences in post-2001 Afghanistan must be understood not as affected by dangers and insecurities posed only by the overt conflict, but also by other factors related to the conflict but not necessarily, directly so.

The only scholarly work that has focused on journalistic practice in Afghanistan beyond the safety issues faced by Afghan journalists, albeit in a comparative context with Pakistani and US journalists, is that of Brown's (2013). In her study, the focus is on understanding how Afghan journalists make sense of other nations in their news reports. She found that much like the Pakistani and American journalists she also studied, Afghan journalists also used a 'national frame' in reporting news about other countries. Brown (2013: 283) described their reporting of international events as marked by 'ethnocentrism'. In her study, she also noted that "Afghans and Pakistanis do not appreciate the recurring picture of them as failed states seething with violence and instability" (2013: 284) in international media. Though the focus of her study was on local Afghan journalists and not on *local-global* Afghan journalists, Brown's (2013) findings of the importance of identity-based affiliations and affinities among Afghan journalists and their resentment towards international media's depiction of their country both inform my explorations of the work of Afghan local-global photojournalists in this thesis.

1.6.3 Photography and photojournalism in Afghanistan

Unlike prior research and CSO reports on journalism in Afghanistan, I focus exclusively on *photojournalists* in this thesis. Certain historical, religious, and socio-cultural particularities have been known to affect photographic practice in contemporary Afghanistan. Afghan society has long had a fraught relationship with photography. Edwards (2006: 113-4) noted that suspicion of photography and photographers in Afghanistan existed in the country as far back as the 19th century. Photographs were also a catalyst for political change in Afghanistan in the early 20th century: photographs of

Queen Soraya Tarzi of Afghanistan not wearing a veil and dancing with men at balls while on a royal tour in Germany were used by British agents working from across the border with British India (now Pakistan) to fuel unrest among the Afghan population, which ultimately toppled the pro-reform (and pro-German) Afghan King Sultan Amanullah[36] in 1929[37] (Edwards, 2006: 133-135). Both this historical event, where photographs showing the face of Queen Soraya 'sullied' the 'honour'[38] of the ruling monarch in the eyes of his subjects leading to his fall from power, as well as non-acceptance of photographic or other images of human beings based on hard-line interpretations of Islam by certain Muslim clerics in Afghanistan (Rawan, 2002: 162) have been noted as reasons for a general intolerance towards photographs in Afghanistan.

The most recent manifestation of such non-acceptance of photography in Afghan society was when the Taliban banned most forms of photography (Rawan, 2002: 162; Afghan Box Camera Project, 2016) in Afghanistan along with other forms of icons and idols[39] (Dupree, 2002: 977-989). Only headshots for identification purposes were allowed (Murray, 2012), while "full-body shots, portraits for non-identity purposes, and *particularly images of woman were more usually outlawed*" (Afghan Box Camera Project, 2016; emphasis added). While this last shows historical continuity of a societal taboo against photographing Afghan women, the Taliban also persecuted professional photographers and as a result, professional photography and photojournalism all but disappeared in Afghanistan under the Taliban (Murray, 2012). The ban on photography under the Taliban has been reversed in post-2001 Afghanistan (Afghan Box Camera

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[36] Interestingly, Amanullah was also the founder of the first public-sector media in Afghanistan in 1925, Radio Kabul, which continues to exist today as Radio and Television Afghanistan (RTA). Modern newspapers also proliferated in Afghanistan during his reign (Rawan, 2002: 156-158).

[37] See Edwards (2006: 111-136) for a detailed discussion. For more on the history of the visual culture in early 20th century Afghanistan, see Edwards (2013: 47-65).

[38] See Dupree (2002) for a discussion of the culturally imposed burden on women in Afghanistan to be moral benchmarks in society and especially to uphold familial honour.

[39] For a discussion of the process by which the stance of iconoclasm gradually hardened among the Taliban, see Dupree (2002: 986).

Project, 2016). International donor funded photography and photojournalism training programs – especially the Aina Afghan Media and Culture Centre (Cary, 2012; Murray, 2012) and the Third Eye Photojournalism and Film Centre[40] (Sayar, 2012) – as well as the efforts of dedicated Afghan women and men have meant that the number of professional documentary photographers and photojournalists in Afghanistan has been growing. Murray (2012) noted, "Afghan photographers now form a small, tight-knit community… [who] emphasized wanting to help other Afghans learn the craft, and to document issues most critical to them".

But the harassment of photographers and suspicion of photography have not disappeared entirely. Among the many studies that have focused on threats and dangers faced by Afghan journalists, one study on threat perceptions among journalists in Afghanistan found that journalists engaged in visual news production were particularly affected by violence in Afghanistan (Smith, 2011: 30-31). Smith (2011: 30) identified the reasons behind this heightened threat perception as twofold – the need to be on-site to report while carrying conspicuous equipment and the "visual aspect" itself which clashes with many "Afghans' religious beliefs and views". While no other studies specifically exploring this particular threat faced by Afghan photojournalists exist to my knowledge[41], it is significant that the current Media Law in Afghanistan continues to enshrine a ban on "subjects that could offend Islam and subjects that could dishonor the people or weaken the Army" (Brown, 2013: 175). This law is often rather flexibly applied to target photographers[42].

1.6.4 Growth of local-global photojournalism in Afghanistan

Local-global journalism and local-global photojournalism in Afghanistan have not been studied in-depth by academic researchers to date. Eide (2016b) has recently undertaken a study of news produced by Pahjwok News Agency – the largest domestic news agency in Afghanistan that counts both domestic and international news organizations among the clients it caters to (Eide, 2016b: 113). Eide's focus in this study, however, was not on locating potential local-global tensions in the news production by a domestic news agency for its international clients, but to compare how Afghan women are represented in news produced by this news agency in contrast to international news media's representations of Afghan women. Not only is her study the first to acknowledge that news about Afghanistan meant for a global audience is also produced by Afghans, it also underlines the need for further academic research on the work and news produced by local-global journalists in Afghanistan. However, in this thesis, I focus on the related but distinct professional group of Afghan *photojournalists* who are increasingly producing news images of Afghanistan for global audiences[43] (Murray, 2012).

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[40] See: http://3rdeye.af/

[41] Nor do studies that shed fuller light on the reasons behind the continuing intolerance and suspicion of photography in post-2001 Afghanistan, so far as I know.

[42] See Clark & Qaane (2015); Moosakhail (2015).

Research on the professional experiences, image production, and images of these Afghan local-global photojournalists has not been conducted before this thesis, but their role has been speculated upon as a possible antidote to Western news media's biases and stereotypes in representing Afghanistan. At the end of his book-length analysis of Euro-American news media's and Western documentary photographers' images of Afghanistan, Verschueren offered (2012: 158-9) a suggestion to correct the biases and stereotypes that he found in his analysis of Western images of Afghanistan and the Afghan conflict, saying,

> One route to addressing the issues of stereotyping, ethnocentrism, and simply access could be rethinking collaboration between Afghans and foreign journalists. The former cannot only provide an in-depth perspective of their own culture but they can also suggest new ways of photographing and representing conflict. Afghan photographers and

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[43] Perhaps the growth of local-global photojournalism in Afghanistan is because of the reasons that Seo (2016: 47) noted regarding the reduced need for linguistic efficiency in photo and audio-visual journalism as well as increased need for access to the local population. But I believe this growth is more readily understood as part of the re-establishment of photojournalism as a profession in Afghanistan after 2001, when the ban on photography by the Taliban was lifted and international aid facilitated the re-growth of the media sector. However, the reasons behind the seemingly meteoric rise in the number of Afghan photojournalists in post-2001 Afghanistan may be far more complex, requiring thorough historical and sociological analysis on its own right, which is beyond the purview of the current thesis.

> journalists can help replace the image of Afghanistan as an empty space, a medieval realm and an oppressive zone, and they can help connect with the multiplicities of living in contemporary Afghanistan.

This suggestion by Verschueren echoes the questions raised by previous researchers on local-global journalism (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004; Paterson, 2011; Murrell, 2015) and links the identity-based affiliations and affinities and local knowledge and familiarity of local Afghan journalists and photographers to their *potential* performance. Both the questions raised by previous researchers on the potential effect on international news through the increasing role of local-global journalists and fixers as well as Verschueren's statement in the particular context of *Afghan local-global photojournalists*, informed my focus in this thesis on grounding the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists' in actual images produced by Afghan photojournalists for global audiences.

Within this particular focus in this thesis, my understanding of how international news media have reflected the dominant Western views within news and news images of Afghanistan since 2001 was based not only on Verschueren's study, but also on other previous research on this topic. The studies that have critically evaluated the international news coverage of Afghanistan and the Afghan conflict are too numerous to review in full here, but the following observations can be said to have been made time and again:

a) International news, including visual news, has been more biased towards negative news – focusing on the ravages of the ongoing conflict as well as other socials ills and problems – from Afghanistan (Aday, 2010; Shabbir et al., 2011).
b) International visual news of Afghanistan has focused on the war and violence in Afghanistan (Verschueren, 2012).
c) International visual news of Afghanistan has tended to focus on the foreign military troops present in Afghanistan and other Afghan combatants (Ottosen, 2005; Fahmy, 2005a; Griffin, 2004; Zelizer, 2005; Campbell, 2011; Sliwinski, 2015), rather than the ordinary people in Afghanistan (Verschueren, 2012).
d) International visual news of Afghanistan has tended to focus on political and military leaders who 'manage' the war rather than the lived experience of those affected by the war (Verschueren, 2012: 131).

e) International visual news has reified prevailing historical and cultural stereotypes of Afghan society and culture through its use of images of Afghan women as symbols of oppression in Afghan society (Jabbra, 2006; Mackie, 2012) or have used their images to symbolize the progress of Afghan society since 2001 because of the war to 'liberate' Afghan women (Fahmy, 2004; Jiwani, 2009; Mitra, 2014)[44].

These biases and stereotypes noted by previous researchers in international news and news images of Afghanistan are important to keep in mind while reading on further, especially in the context of the implications the growth of local-global photojournalism in Afghanistan has for counter-flows within international news about Afghanistan. I explore this implication, albeit within certain limits, in this thesis by grounding the perceptions of Afghan local-global photojournalists in actual images to understand contradictions and correspondences between the two. An important caveat I had to keep in mind in this, however, is that images produced by photojournalists are subject to editorial decisions made not only by them but also by other news staff along the visual gatekeeping chain (Bissell, 2000: 90) through which their images are ultimately published. This is especially true of local-global photojournalists whose images are subject to editorial selection and contextualization at regional and central news-desks (Paterson, 1997, 2011). To circumvent this problem in finding sets of images which could be linked to the perceptions of local-global photojournalists – rather than also to editorial and organizational influences from non-Afghan sources – to explore the correspondences and contradictions between them, I rely in this thesis on a purposive sample of photodocumentalistic images (Sousa, 1998 in Ramos & Marocco, 2017) rather than photojournalistic or news images. I will return to a detailed discussion of this in Chapter 5.

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[44] See Bergner (2011: 95-116) for discussions of the issues surrounding the political manipulation of the cause of Afghan women's liberation to justify foreign invasion and occupation. Briefly, the problems surrounding the use of liberation of Afghan women suffering under the Taliban regime as justification for the US invasion can be stated following Ahmed-Ghosh (2003: 1): "Afghanistan may be the only country in the world where during the last century kings and politicians have been made and undone by struggles relating to women's status. Recently, the situation of women under the Taliban rule has been center stage. The situation of women came to symbolize to Western military powers a justification of war in the name of freedom of women. But the situation of women in Afghanistan today is not only the result of the Taliban's policies. There is a history over the centuries of women's subjugation. Even in more recent times the Mujahideen's (1992-1996) record is worse than the Taliban's. Thus, one must approach the analysis of women's situation in Afghanistan, not through the ideological formulation of 'before and after' the Taliban, but within the larger historical context of Afghanistan." See Fluri (2008); Kakar (2016) and Eide (2016b) for discussion on the position of women in contemporary Afghanistan.

1.7 Research goals

Informed by the previous research about local-global journalism, other studies from the journalism studies discipline on journalistic and photojournalistic practice and role perceptions, particularly in the context of conflict-reporting, as well as prior research which has focused on Afghanistan, particularly those which have focused on journalism and photography in the country and of the country, this thesis has four research goals, all of which are open-ended given the exploratory nature of my investigation.

The first research goal in this thesis is to understand the *local-global tensions in the perceptions of Afghan local-global photojournalists regarding their professional experience in comparison to international photojournalists.*

The second research goal in this thesis is to understand *if and how the Afghan local-global photojournalists' role perceptions correspond to or differ from the dual principle of objectivity and aesthetic considerations which have been noted as central to photojournalists' role perceptions, and if and how their identity-based affiliations and affinities affect their professional role perceptions.*

The third research goal in this thesis is to explore the *international influences – organizational, audience demands, and other influences of international source or nature – on the one hand, and local influences – influences of identity-based affiliations and affinities and local knowledge and familiarity of the Afghan local-global photojournalists – on the other, on news image production processes to form an understanding of local-global tensions as perceived by Afghan local-global photojournalists.*

The fourth research goal in this thesis is to see *if and how the local-global tensions in the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists regarding their image production* *can be said to contradict or correspond with images produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience.*

In the following chapter, I describe how I gathered data through interviews with Afghan local-global photojournalists and thematically analyzed them with the above research goals in mind.

Chapter 2

2 Methodology

In this chapter, I describe the phases of data gathering and data interpretation of my research project before providing a summary of the following chapters of this thesis. Central to understanding the description that follows in this chapter, however, is the ongoing, reflexive process through which my data gathering and interpretation proceeded.

In 2014, the time that I conceived this study and prepared for fieldwork in Afghanistan, I had two broad objectives. While one of the aims was to explore the work of Afghan local-global photojournalists as I do in this thesis, I also aimed to explore the larger context of photojournalism in post-2001 Afghanistan, as neither had been researched before. Both of these goals informed my data gathering. During the post data-gathering phase of the research, it became evident to me that the data I had gathered spoke more to the first aim, rather than the second. Most of the Afghan photojournalists who participated in the study were engaged in producing images for a global audience and their responses were much more useful in exploring local-global photojournalism in Afghanistan than photojournalism in post-2001 Afghanistan in general. Secondly, as the research on local-global journalism (Bunce, 2015; Murrell, 2015; Seo, 2016; Palmer, 2016, 2017) grew in the time after I had gathered my data, this body of research allowed me to structure my research goals more coherently. Consequently, in interpreting the data, I concentrated on exploring the local-global tensions in the Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions.

2.1 Data gathering

In this section, I describe the data-gathering phase of the research. I describe the methods I employed to gather data, as well as the reasons for my choices and other relevant details of the fieldwork I undertook for this thesis.

2.1.1 Individual semi-structured interviews

At the data gathering stage, my aim was to seek “neither purely novelistic reportage nor purely abstract conceptualizing” but to capture the Afghan photojournalists’ own “analytic order of the world” (Lofland, 1971: 7) to both explore their perceptions regarding the work they did as local-global photojournalists as well as their perceptions regarding photojournalism in post-2001 Afghanistan. For this purpose, I conducted individual, face-to-face research interviews with Afghan photojournalists. The interviews were open-ended but semi-structured and aided by an interview guide.

One of the two ways usually employed to explore the work of journalists, especially groups such as the Afghan photojournalists about whom written records are scarce (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981: 70), is through qualitative research interviews (Bunce, 2010; Murrell, 2015; Palmer, 2016 are examples from within previous studies on local-global journalists). The other qualitative method used by researchers in this context, though less frequently, is participant observation (Pedelty, 1995; Bunce, 2011). In the case of this research, participant observation was ruled out due to the danger it posed to a researcher conducting such a study in Afghanistan. While participant observation would have allowed observing firsthand the ‘performance’ (Mellado & Van Dalen, 2014) of the Afghan local-global photojournalists, such observation in Afghanistan, Kabul or elsewhere, which was an active conflict zone, was not feasible[45]. As such, the way open to me to explore my topic of interest was through interviewing, a method frequently used to understand phenomena which are “resistant to observation” (Bryman, 2008: 180-181). Though research interviews can only report the perceptions of the participants of the research, research interviews also come with certain advantages. They allow for a “greater breadth of coverage” than participant observation and they help to retain “specific focus” (Bryman, 2008: 180-181) for the research.

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[45] Both extant studies that have involved journalists in Afghanistan, one conducted prior to my fieldwork and the other the year after, have been based on interviews with them (Brown, 2013; Relly & Zanger, 2016).

Also, I chose individual interviews rather than a focus group-based study so that each interviewee could express his or her own views without being influenced by others. I preferred face-to-face interviews over sending questionnaires by post or email or holding Skype interviews. I expected that prospective participants would have little incentive to respond to these forms of contact from a researcher unknown to them who is based overseas. There was also the expectation that such methods may not provide substantially detailed answers to allow for a qualitative analysis of the data. Answers to static questions in written form or interviews through video-calls or telephone are also not able to give proper insight into the emotions, passions, and personal contexts of respondents. In addition, personal, face-to-face interviews provide more opportunity for interaction between the participants and the interviewer (Bryman, 2016: 204), which leads to dynamic questioning during the interviews where significant replies by the participants can be followed up with more questions on the topic (Bryman, 2016: 201).

I decided semi-structured interviews would best serve the purposes of my research. By having an already prepared interview guide on which to broadly structure the interviews, the data gathering could be informed by prior research on local-global journalism (that was available at the time) and other research within the journalism studies discipline – especially regarding conflict journalism – as well as research on international news media’s representation of Afghanistan. The body of existing literature about the role of international donors, particularly in the media sector, in post-2001 Afghanistan available at the time, could also be taken into account in this way. At the same time, I felt that given the exploratory nature of the study, it was important to not follow a rigid structure in the interviews and to allow topics not reflected in previous research or literature to be followed up outside of the prepared interview schedule when brought up by the respondents. As such, I chose individual and in-depth but semi-structured interviews as the method of data gathering because it could elicit responses which confirmed, contradicted, or expanded upon my knowledge, while also leaving the option open for the participants to take their answers in directions not previously known to me (Bryman, 2016: 468).

2.1.2 Developing the interview schedule

For the interview guide, I chose to use a list of questions[46] in a pre-designed interview schedule. Questions in the interview schedule were based around four broad topics – the images taken by the respondents (including questions which sought to explore their professional role perceptions), the work done by the respondents in taking images, how photojournalism as a profession was continuing to evolve in Afghanistan at the time of the study (2014) and, finally, issues related to depicting women in photographs in Afghanistan. The questions related to the first two topics were informed by prior research on journalistic and photojournalistic practice in general, as well as studies on local-global journalism which were available at the time. Questions on the third topic were informed by existing research and CSO reports on the media scenario and journalism in post-2001 Afghanistan. The fourth topic was informed by prior academic research on the representations of Afghan women in international news media. Within each of the four broadly conceived topics, I included open-ended questions meant to explore the particularities of local-global photojournalism as well as the broader context of photojournalism in post-2001 Afghanistan.

The interview schedule was, however, still meant as a guide. I did not intend to ask the questions in sequence, but rather to follow the responses of the participants. I intended to ask questions not included in the interview schedule, as is often done in qualitative interviewing (Bryman, 2008: 160; 2016: 201). I also planned to use ‘probing’ (Lofland et al., 2006: 102), a method of intensive interviewing to gain more information on a given response to a certain question or on a certain topic, during the interviews. For this last purpose, to be flexible, I did not prepare ‘probes’ for each interview question. Certain issues, as and when they needed further clarification and explanation, and especially those not reflected in existing research, I would follow up with specific questions. While in the field, the approach of individual, face-to-face, semi-structured but open-ended interviews helped me to create and sustain rapport with the interviewees and encouraged them to think on their own about the subject being explored (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981: 75), while the flexible and dynamic questioning of the respondents helped "elicit rich detailed material" for subsequent analysis (Lofland, 1971: 76).

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[46] See Appendix 1 for the interview schedule used.

2.1.3 Details regarding participants and fieldwork

I interviewed 20 Afghan photojournalists in Kabul, Afghanistan between 15th September and 15th October in 2014. Of the total number, 17 were men and three were women. As this study involved human participants, it received prior non-medical research ethics approval according to the Tri-council Policy Statement 2: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (December, 2010) of Canada from the Non-Medical Research Ethics Board of the University of Western Ontario under file no. 105378[47]. As part of the ethical guidelines to be followed in the research, confidentiality of the participants is to be maintained at all times. As such, the participants and the organizations they worked for are not named in this thesis, and all other information that can lead to their identity being known is removed in the following chapters. I have chosen to refer to the participants of the study in this thesis with a randomly assigned but consistent number between 1 and 20 following the word 'respondent'[48].

As mentioned, at this phase of the research, my goal was not only to explore the work of local-global photojournalists in Afghanistan but also to understand photojournalism in post-2001 Afghanistan. As such, the criteria I used to select participants, was to interview Afghan nationals who were working or had worked as photojournalists in Afghanistan. Criteria like age or seniority were not used in selecting participants. The aim at this stage was to have as inclusive a sample of Afghan photojournalists as possible.

Potential participants were contacted with the help of the Afghan Journalist Safety Committee (AJSC) – a Kabul-based Afghan civil society organization – who hosted me during my stay in Kabul. Independent contact with a photography and photojournalism training center in Kabul to recruit participants, as well as snowball sampling through the respondents themselves, were also used to reach participants. Care was taken to be identifiably independent of the host organization and to not allow any perceived organizational affiliation of the researcher bias the choice of participants or their views. My non-affiliation with the host organization was made clear to the participants both in writing, in letters of information[49] made available to them, as well as verbally before interviews. Written consent was also sought and received from all respondents. The consent form was available in English, Dari and Pashto.

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[47] See Appendix 2.

[48] I chose not to use pseudonyms for the respondents to avoid confusion for myself.

The longest interview conducted with the respondents was 1 hour, 43 minutes, 48 seconds long while the shortest was 30 minutes, 35 seconds long. The total recorded length of the interviews was 20 hours, 57 minutes, 23 seconds, and the average length of the interviews was 1 hour, two minutes and 52 seconds[50]. Nine of the interviews were conducted primarily in English and another nine primarily in Dari with the help of a translator[51] when the latter was the preferred language of the interviewee. Two of the interviews were conducted partially in Dari and partially in English. Guest et al. (2011: 96-97) warn of the pitfalls of translation in conducting research because all forms of translation are also forms of interpretation. Under the circumstances, the use of a translator was essential, and I took care to inform and instruct the translator about the aim of the research, as suggested by Guest et al. (2011: 97). I also paid close attention to understanding “culturally unique idioms” and words with “no literal counterparts” (Guest et al., 2011: 97) as and when they arose in an interview by using my knowledge of related languages[52] to test the meaning of the original words used by the respondent and the interpretation provided by the translator. Though this was not always possible during the flow of an interview, conversations with the translator immediately after the interviews were used to make sure that no significant observation, reflection, or expression by the interviewee was missed in the process of translation.

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[49] See Appendix 3 for the letter of information that doubled as the written consent form.

[50] See Appendix 5 for sample interview transcripts.

[51] A prior confidentiality agreement was signed. See Appendix 6.

[52] Urdu/Hindi that was often spoken by the respondents, as well as Bengali that shares an extensive vocabulary with Dari/Persian.

Among the 20 photojournalists I interviewed, 18 described prior or ongoing experience of producing images of Afghanistan for a global audience. Two respondents – one female and one male – did not describe having produced images of Afghanistan for a global audience[53]. As such, in my descriptions of the local-global Afghan photojournalists in the following chapters of this thesis, I have not included the data from the interviews with these two photojournalists, respondents 7 and 8. Of the 18 photojournalists who described producing images of Afghanistan for a global audience and who fit the description of Afghan local-global photojournalists, two were female while the rest were male.

2.2 Data interpretation

Following the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed and thematically analyzed. Thematic analysis is used most frequently in interview transcript analysis to go “beyond counting explicit words or phrases” to identify and describe “implicit and explicit ideas” or meanings expressed by individuals (Guest et al., 2011: 10-11). It is defined as “…a search for certain themes or patterns across an entire data set, rather than ‘within’ a data item, such as an individual interview or interviews from one person” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 81). In the sections below, I describe how I thematically analyzed the interview transcripts.

2.2.1 Hybrid Thematic Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed for themes both through an inductive process based on not previously known information emerging from the interview data as well as through a deductive – or prior-research driven – process. This dual approach has been called ‘hybrid’ thematic analysis by Fereday et al. (2006).

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[53] See Appendix 4 for a detailed list of all 20 respondents.

The philosophical framework behind inductive thematic analysis is based on the idea that "people living in the world of daily life are able to ascribe meaning to a situation and then make judgements" (Fereday et al., 2006: 2) and this form of thematic analysis aims at "capturing the subjective meaning [made by participants] of their experience" (Fereday et al., 2006: 2). Thematic analysis through the inductive process resonated with the goals of this study because of the lack of existing research on local-global photojournalism and photojournalism in general in post-2001 Afghanistan. The inductive approach to identifying and analyzing themes was particularly useful in exploring the themes that were *specific* to the Afghan context in the Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions.

The data-driven, inductive process of identifying themes was integral to offering original insight about the specificities of local-global photojournalism *in Afghanistan* in this thesis. In addition, continuous engagement with existing and emerging research about local-global journalism during the data-interpretation phase helped me focus my interpretation of the data on exploring the local-global tensions in the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists. Thus, I also identified themes through a deductive process of discovery of themes using a "prior-research driven approach" (Boyatzis, 1998: 99) to understand how the themes in the interview data spoke to local-global tensions in the 18 Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions.

2.2.2 Process of theme identification and clustering

Through reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts, as well as listening to the audio recordings repeatedly, I identified potential themes (Boyatzis, 1998: 86) in two ways: first, as they spoke to specifics of local-global photojournalism in Afghanistan through inductive analysis – for example, in understanding the different sources of physical dangers and threats that the local-global photojournalists perceived they faced in Afghanistan, and second, bearing in mind how the perceptions of the respondents spoke to potential local-global tensions through deductive analysis – for example, how the local-global photojournalists perceived that dangers and threats faced by them in Afghanistan affected them in contrast to international photojournalists. As thematic analysis is not a "linear, step by step procedure" but "iterative and reflexive" (Fereday et al., 2006: 4), I re-organized the themes several times during this process, for their clarity, focus, and relevance to the research goals in this thesis.

After the preliminary identification process, inductive and deductive themes from each transcript were identified and compared across all the transcripts and the ‘nominal score’ of individual themes calculated to understand the frequency of their absence/presence across the entire set of transcripts (Boyatzis, 1998: 130). I reproduce these nominal scores throughout the thesis for the sake of transparency. Rigour was exercised throughout this process. This involved “reading and re-reading of transcripts” beyond the preliminary stages of theme identification and supplementing the “pattern recognition in textual meaning” by listening to the audio recording to verify audio-text accuracy – in other words, to ground the “themes in raw data at all stages to reduce bias” (Guest et al., 2011: 12-13, 97), as recommended by Fereday et al. (2006: 3-4). The themes were also further categorized into three clusters (Boyatzis, 1998: 136), according to three aspects of the work of Afghan local-global photojournalists – their professional experiences, their role perceptions, and image production – in light of the research goals of this thesis.

For research goal 4, apart from the research interviews and thematic analysis of interview-transcripts, I also undertook an analysis of a purposive sample of images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience to ground the perceptions of the respondents in actual images produced. I describe the set of images that was my purposive sample for this part of the research, the methodology I used to analyze the images, as well as my reasons for the choice of sample and methods in Chapter 5.

2.3 Structure of thesis

In Chapter 3, I focus on the first two research goals of exploring the local-global tensions in the perceptions of Afghan local-global photojournalists regarding their professional experience and professional role. In Chapter 4, I focus on the third research goal of locating the local-global tensions in the Afghan local-global photojournalists’ image production. I do this by exploring the international influences on their image production on the one hand and the influences of their identity-based affiliation and affinity and local knowledge and familiarity as Afghans on the other. In this chapter, I also describe a pattern that could be discerned in the respondents’ perceptions regarding image-subjects they mentioned in the context of international influences on their image production on the one hand, and the image-subjects they mentioned in the context of their affiliations and affinities and local knowledge and familiarity as Afghans, on the other.

In Chapter 5, I undertake an analysis of a set of images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience. I compare the findings regarding the image-subjects depicted in these images to the image-subjects described in Chapter 4 to find how they corresponded to each other. In Chapter 6, I discuss the different local-global tensions that could be located in the Afghan local-global photojournalists’ perceptions regarding their professional experiences, role perceptions, and image production, and the implications of such local-global tensions in light of the case study I undertake in Chapter 5. I also discuss how this study adds to the growing body of research regarding local-global journalism and the limitations of the current research. Finally, I discuss what form future research on this particular area of journalism can take.

Chapter 3

3 Local-global tensions in Afghan photojournalists' perceptions of professional experiences and professional roles

In this chapter, I describe how local-global tensions could be located within Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions regarding their professional experiences and professional roles. Following this description, I discuss the different local-global tensions as well as a form of local-global negotiation that I found through analysis of the interview data in more detail. Throughout this chapter, I also note salient points from the descriptions in this chapter that informs the next chapter in this thesis.

3.1 Professional experience of Afghan local-global photojournalists

While describing their professional experience, all but one of the 18 respondents[54] stressed the *adversities* they faced as professionals. The respondents described three broad adversities[55] that they perceived as obstacles in their professional lives. These broader adversities were not linked to particular employment situations of photojournalists in the accounts of the respondents. The respondents also described some other adversities that were specific to certain employment situations. Within each of these descriptions, I detail how the respondents described being disadvantaged compared to international photojournalists in relation to these adversities.

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[54] Respondent 15 was the only respondent who did not discuss problems or obstacles Afghan photojournalists faced in their professional experience, or how these affected them differently from international photojournalists.

[55] Apart from the three kinds of adversities I describe here, the respondents identified other types of adversities in their professional experience: lack of enforcement of legal copyright to protect ownership of images (four respondents); and ethnic tensions within the community of photojournalists in Afghanistan (two respondents). As these emergent themes were related in the respondents' accounts to the specificities of photojournalistic work in post-2001 Afghanistan in general, rather than *local-global* photojournalistic work, I have left them out of the current discussion.

3.1.1 Lack of security

Most respondents felt that being a photojournalist in Afghanistan meant being exposed to extreme levels of insecurity. In all, 17 respondents discussed lack of security while doing their job as part and parcel of being a photojournalist in Afghanistan. As respondent 1 stressed,

> [t]*he most important* [obstacle] *for photographer*[s] *or photojournalist*[s] *is security. It is most important. We never feel secure.*

These respondents described that as part of their photojournalistic work they faced the prospects of death or physical injury, harassment, imprisonment, loss of equipment, or obstructions to doing their work. The accounts of the respondents about this general lack of security for photojournalists could be broadly divided into five different categories based on what or who they perceived as the source of danger and threat while doing their job. The first source of threat perceived by the respondents stemmed from their routine work as photojournalists in a conflict zone, i.e. being susceptible to injury and death from their proximity to regular acts of violence – such as suicide explosions and attacks – that they produced images of. The second source of security threat identified by them was the Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan. Third, they perceived the Afghan military, intelligence personnel, as well as the police as threats to their security. Officials working for the Afghan national government were perceived as a fourth source of threat. Finally, the respondents identified the general population in Afghanistan as a source of threat to them because of the distrust of photography and photographers in Afghan society.

Ten respondents among the 18 local-global photojournalists I interviewed shared the perception that Afghan photojournalists were more insecure than international photojournalists while working in Afghanistan. In their descriptions of heightened insecurity for Afghan photojournalists compared to international photojournalists, three of the five types of security threats were mentioned as affecting them more than international photojournalists. Two of the perceived security threats – from the Taliban and government officials – were not mentioned in the context of heightened insecurity for Afghan photojournalists compared to international photojournalists by the respondents. For clarity, I present the number of respondents who identified each particular source of security threat and how many of them perceived it to be affecting Afghan photojournalists more, in Table 1.

Table 1: Perceptions regarding security threat among Afghan local-global photojournalists

Source of threat to photojournalists' safety	**Perceived as a security threat for photojournalists in Afghanistan by number of respondents**	**Perceived as a higher threat for Afghan photojournalists by number of respondents**
Routine work in a conflict zone	7	3
Taliban	5	0
Afghan security forces, police and intelligence officials	8	8
Government officials	4	0
General population	17	4

Below I describe the respondents' perceptions regarding each of these kinds of security threats that they felt they contended with in their professional life, followed by descriptions of the local-global photojournalists' perceptions of higher insecurity compared to international photojournalists in relation to that particular source of threat, where relevant.

3.1.1.1 Routine work in a conflict zone

In the descriptions of seven respondents, threat to their security was linked to their routine work producing images of the frequent suicide attacks and bombings, which meant that they faced the danger of being killed or injured while at work. Respondent 16 described the dangers he faced while producing images of suicide bombings carried out by the Taliban,

> *…I even sometimes went after the first blast and the second blast would happen. I lost some of my friends, even my foot was injured once. Now, I have more experience* [and] *consider the risk of going to the area.*

While the risks and dangers to photojournalists working in a conflict zone are well-known and have been noted by researchers before (e.g. Allan, 2011; Allan and Sreedharan, 2016), what is of particular importance for the purposes of the current research is that three respondents shared the perception that Afghan photojournalists took more risks to capture photographs of the conflict than their international counterparts. Some responses were,

> *for all serious events, like blast*[s], *group fights, Afghan photographer*[s] *mostly* [get]*... close to the subject. This itself is a kind of risk. So it is hard for Afghan*[s]. *Not foreigners.* (Respondent 1)
>
> *…because* [I am] *Afghan,* [I am] *sent to do dangerous jobs. For example, they wanted to cover a story in* ------ [Western province of Afghanistan] *and the place was very insecure* [because of landmines] *and even* [we] *were told by the government that the place is very insecure, that you shouldn't go there…* [d]*espite all difficulties,* [I] *went there and it was so difficult to make a feature story out of that story, and the place was very dangerous. Despite all…the difficulties,* [I] *did it.* (Respondent 13)

This perception of having to take more risks while producing images of acts of violence and war than international photojournalists is one of the ways that local-global tensions marked the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists regarding the security threats they faced as part of their professional experience.

3.1.1.2 Taliban as a source of threat

Apart from the dangers posed by the regular attacks and bomb blasts (which also were mostly perpetrated by the Taliban at the time of the study), five respondents[56] described the Taliban insurgents' role in posing a threat to photojournalists in Afghanistan in a more direct way. Such threats to photojournalists from the Taliban were mentioned by the respondents in different contexts, and there was no single cause attributed to why the

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[56] Here I exclude the descriptions by some respondents of the Taliban as a source of threat for photojournalists before 2001. Respondents 5, 10 and 12 all spoke at length about the persecutions that they or other Afghan photojournalists faced under the Taliban prior to 2001. Respondent 7 whose account I do not include here also mentioned *"the newly emerged group like ISIS"* as a source of threat to photojournalists. She was the only respondent to describe ISIS as a threat to photojournalists. This of course is reflective of the situation in 2014 when ISIS's presence in Afghanistan was much more limited. Threats to journalists from ISIS have grown since (AJSC, 2017).

Taliban threatened photojournalists. Respondent 16 said that he had had to abandon the house he had built in a province in the south of the country and move to Kabul because his Taliban relatives,

> *consider me a* kafer[57], *non-Muslim, they want me to be killed because they think* [as] *I am working with Americans, I* [have] *become an American… I am being warned because I am doing such work. And they don't want me to work with, you know, do photography…*

Respondent 17 thought that if the Taliban capture photojournalists they are liable to kill them without asking questions, while Respondent 4 said that while publishing her images on her personal website,

> *…Sometimes I don't use my name because they will find me* (laughs)*…if some Mullahs*[58] *or Taliban sees it, there will be problem*[s] *for me.*

There was one further way that the threat against photojournalists from the Taliban was described: the Taliban's distrust of photojournalists as 'spies' working for the international military forces. Respondent 19 briefly mentioned this while Respondent 16 described it at length. Respondent 16 said that he found out that the Taliban were targeting him not only because they considered him an apostate but also because,

> [they think that] *'journalists are spies.'* [I am] *a spy. When* [I] *take photos for* [the] *media,* [I] *give photos to American soldiers, to government, to Afghan soldiers and then the Afghan soldiers attack there and kill their friend*[s]*…the government bombard*[s] *the area, the area that* [I] *took pictures from. So that's why they believe that the photographer should be killed.*

This problem of journalists being viewed as spies was noted in the case of international journalists working in Afghanistan by David Rohde who reported on the Afghan conflict for *The New York Times* (Rhode, 2014, min. 22:30). Legal definitions of spies and journalists are often blurred in conflict zones, having a detrimental effect on the safety of news professionals covering conflicts. This particular factor affecting the safety of conflict journalists has only recently started being discussed within academic circles (Garrido, 2017).

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[57] Infidel.

[58] Islamic cleric/religious leader.

None of the local-global photojournalists mentioned direct threats from the Taliban as affecting them more than international photojournalists.

3.1.1.3 Security threats from Afghan military, intelligence, and police personnel

Eight respondents perceived photojournalists as under threat – assaulted, obstructed or harassed during their work – from one or more of the following: the Afghan military, agents of the Afghan intelligence agency, and the civilian police force. Respondent 16 perceived Afghan military forces to be a threat to himself in addition to the threat posed by the Taliban. He said that the,

> *thing that bothers* [me] *the most is the bad manner*[s] *of the security forces. You* [have to] *consider how security forces would react to us… That's why I think a lot before going to take photographs.*

Respondent 9 spoke of the *"unprofessionalism of the Afghan security forces"* as a threat to photojournalists while also mentioning that,

> *"I have been beaten, I have been injured. Police fired at me during my job".*

Obstruction of photojournalists by police and intelligence officials was described by Respondent 2, who said,

> *every ten or fifteen meters, the police, the NDS operatives* [National Directorate of Security][59] *stop* [photojournalists]*, 'what are you doing here? Give me your camera'. They…check your memory, what you have captured …*

All eight respondents perceived that obstruction and harassment by agents of the Afghan national government were more common for Afghan photojournalists than their foreign counterparts. Five of these respondents described Afghan photojournalists being targeted more often than international photojournalists by police and intelligence officials. For example, Respondent 1 said,

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[59] Intelligence agency of the Afghan national government.

> *For foreigner*[s]*, it is easy…*[b]*ecause they have…* [an] *international background. For example, I am* [an] *Afghan photographer, I…* [take] *photographs in the city, a police or NDS* [National Directorate of Security] *agent* [will] *capture me and ask me 'why you* [take] *photos?' It is very hard for me to* [get] *release*[d]*, to free myself from* [the] *military organization. They will charge me for something. For foreigners it is easy, 'I am new, I don't know'. 'Ok, you are free'. But for Afghan*[s]*, 'why* [did] *you* [do] *this'?*

The other three respondents felt that the Afghan military forces obstructed or harassed Afghan photojournalists more than international photojournalists. For example, Respondent 18 said that,

> [T]*he bad thing here, I tell you, is with the security forces. When you go sometimes to cover these incidents, scene of incidents, if they know you are Afghan, they will stop you. If they recognize it's* [an] *international* [photojournalist]*, or it is* [a] *foreigner, 'alright, ok, go.' It makes me very sad. Most of the time. They are doing something wrong with us. They will keep us, 'no, not allowed for you guys'. And they didn't know what they* [we]*re doing. They think they are foreigner, they are very important. They have to be there.*

This perception among the Afghan local-global photojournalists that as Afghans they were more prone to be obstructed and harassed by military forces, intelligence agents or police personnel than international photojournalists pointed to another form of local-global tension in the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists regarding the security threats they faced, as that from government officials.

3.1.1.4 Threat from government officials

Four respondents mentioned the threat to Afghan photojournalists from government officials. Respondent 2 said that government officials *"directly threat*[ened]*"* photojournalists in case they covered news that criticized them, while Respondent 11 described photojournalists' work being obstructed by such officials for the same reason. Respondent 10 described his experience of having to move to Kabul, which had parallels to the statements of Respondent 16 I have mentioned above, but the source of threat he described was not the Taliban but,

> *the Chief of Police, Provincial Governor, Prosecutor…I made a* [news] *report*, [and the] *Chief of Police was dismissed next day. How can I live there anymore? …I don't feel very…secure in my town so I decided to come to Kabul, because in Kabul, they are not* [as] *much strong as* [in] ------------ [province to the west of Kabul]*…*

None of the local-global photojournalists specifically mentioned Afghan journalists being more prone to be threatened by government officials compared to international photojournalists.

3.1.1.5 Threats from the general population

Seventeen respondents shared the perception that they faced threats from the general population in Afghanistan because of the distrust of photography and photographers in Afghan society[60]. These respondents described the distrust of photographic images as the cause of significant obstruction to their work at the very least, and prompting violence against them at the very worst. Nine respondents described this source of threat as stemming from a societal taboo against taking pictures of women for public circulation. Respondent 17 described the societal taboo[61] in Afghanistan surrounding women having their photographs taken and published,

> *…here in Afghanistan, the women, they don't want to be in the picture. When they don't want to show their faces…how can they be in* [a] *picture? Some women, they are not wearing the burqa, still they are saying if our relative*[s] *see our picture, in the TV or in the newspaper, 'they* [will ask]

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[60] Respondent 2 was the only respondent to describe a security threat to photojournalists from the general population that was not related to the societal distrust of photography and photographers. He described photojournalists being targets of crime because of the expensive cameras and equipment they carried with them. However, he also identified distrust of photography among the general population as a source of threat.

[61] Dupree (2002: 978) described the traditional roles for Afghan women as centered around the dual aspects of individual and family 'honour' as well as the obligation of women to be the benchmark of morality in Afghan society. This moral role, both at the family level and the social level, means in some cases not showing their faces, including in photographs.

> *me why… you are in the newspaper?' So they don't have any answer for that. It's kind of…like shame for that woman. 'Do you know why your picture is there?' and she* [would] *have no answer for that.*

He went on to describe this taboo as one of the reasons why Afghan photojournalists were often obstructed in their work. Some respondents described societal rules against photographing women as having prompted violence against them. Respondent 10 described two instances when his life was threatened because of taking photographs of women. In one of these instances, he said,

> *I was taking a photo of a very old lady, who had a very colourful dress, coming down from* [a] *mountain. I checked my* [surroundings] *… and I didn't see anybody…looking at me. I took some photos and* (slaps hands together) *I realize*[d] *a man has [seen] me. And then he shouted to the village, and from* [the] *village, many people came with AK 47*[s]. *And they wanted to kill me.*

Four respondents felt that the societal taboo against taking photos of women fed into the threats faced by photojournalists from the police or the Afghan military forces. Respondent 6 said that,

> *sometimes…when we take pictures of women, we face different clashes, even from police officers, asking why you are taking picture*[s] *of wom*[e]*n, it's not allowed and this kind of thing…mostly we avoid taking pictures of women…because of the cultural problem. Because two or three times, I went to jail. I mean jail for many hours, because people attack*[ed] *me* [for] *taking pictures. Even the woman in burqa, you know their face was not in view but they attack*[ed]*…me and in one case, they wanted to break my camera…*

Being a woman[62] was not perceived as advantageous by the two female respondents when it came to overcoming the difficulty of taking photographs of women. Respondent 20 described the problems surrounding photographing women, while Respondent 4 said that even for a woman photographer,

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[62] Respondent 7, the other female respondent I interviewed but whose account I have excluded here also described the same problems as the other two female respondents.

> *things are very sensitive when it comes to women and photographing women. And you have to use sometimes your judgement, when to stop, forget it, or when it's the time to go.*

Threats due to public distrust of photography were not always linked specifically to taboos against taking photographs of women for public circulation in the accounts of the photojournalists. Nine respondents described the distrust of photography and photographers in more general terms. Among these, three respondents specifically mentioned that even men resisted having photographs taken of themselves. Respondent 10 said that not only has his life been threatened for taking photographs of women but that he had even,

> *been punished because of taking photos* [of] *men, not from female, female is very sensitive, you know, in Afghanistan, still, there are many problems with male also. They cannot accept that.*

Respondent 18 described an incident in

> *Helmand*[63], [where] *there was* [an] *elder*[s'] *gathering. They were gathered with the ISAF*[64]*, with the Brits,* [to] *discuss about some problem*[s in] *the villages. When I tr*[ied] *to take* [a] *picture,* (gestures gun-cocking)*, 'no, don't!' …*[I said] *'but you are man, not woman'. 'No'. None of them* [agreed].

Some of these respondents, when describing threats to photojournalists because of societal distrust of photography in general, felt that this threat was not universal to all areas of Afghanistan. Three respondents described cities in Afghanistan being safer for photojournalists, or that the rural population tended to be more hostile to them. Among these three, two respondents felt that people's tolerance of photojournalists differed from province to province within Afghanistan. However, two other respondents felt that photojournalists faced threats from the general population across rural/urban or regional differences when it came to taking photographs of Afghan women. For example, Respondent 18 said that, even

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[63] Province in Afghanistan.

[64] International Security Assistance Force.

> [i]*n Kabul or the big cities… you have to be very careful to not cover very close*[ly]*…the women…* [if] [t]*hey are ...walking or doing something with their male relatives…it's* [a] *very bad idea.*

While almost all local-global photojournalists perceived the general population as a threat to their security because of distrust and suspicion of photography and photographers, four respondents felt that public distrust of photographic images disproportionately affected Afghan photojournalists compared to international photojournalists. For example, Respondent 9 said that,

> *when an Afghan woman is wearing veil, in Shahr-e-naw*[65] *for example, let's say, if* [Afghan photojournalist] *wants to take her picture, it would be so hard and the girl would be angry* [at] *him. But if an international photographer was* [there] *instead of him, and he wanted to take a picture of the girl, the girl would accept so easily. She will cooperate in taking pictures.*

Respondent 11 described how on one occasion, he had to initially pose as an Iranian-Canadian to be able to gain access to take photographs of a woman who had tried to immolate herself. He thought that Afghan photojournalists were more susceptible to suspicion from people in Afghanistan because,

> *in some places, people do not like Afghan photographer*[s] *because they believe that the photograph will be* [seen] *inside Afghanistan. And everybody will see it and it will be a shame…*

In their descriptions regarding Afghan photojournalists being more at risk than international photojournalists because of the security threat posed by the general population, the perceptions of the local-global photojournalists were linked specifically to photographing Afghan women for public circulation, rather than in general. Nonetheless, the local-global tensions in the perceptions of these respondents regarding this type of security threat faced by them were apparent.

In summation to sections 3.1.1.1 to 3.1.1.5., it must be noted that four of the five sources of security threats perceived by the respondents of this study have been noted in the existing academic studies and CSO reports on journalists' safety in Afghanistan[66]. Apart from the sources of threat that have already been noted in previous research on journalists' safety in Afghanistan, the threat perceived by the respondents of this study *from the general population* stands out. A large majority of the respondents shared the perception that, as photojournalists, they were under threat from the general population, which they explained in terms of the suspicion of photography and photographers in Afghanistan, as well as societal taboos surrounding photographing women for public circulation. Other studies on journalists' safety in Afghanistan have not significantly reported on this source of threat[67]. But as a medium-specific threat-perception widely shared among the respondents I interviewed, it is key to understanding the Afghan photojournalists' professional experience from their own perspectives. It is also germane to the purposes of the current research because it was one of the threats perceived by the Afghan photojournalists as affecting them more than international photojournalists, further pointing to local-global tensions in their perceptions.

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[65] A neighbourhood in Kabul.

Apart from this medium-specific threat, overall, the description of the respondents' perceptions regarding security threats faced by them that I have provided above, seen in aggregate, helps to build a larger picture. The sheer variety of sources of threat perceived by the respondents, and the seriousness of the consequences that they perceived they faced, gives a sense of the pervasiveness of the utter insecurity that the respondents felt they worked in. Respondent 17 pointed out how the diversity of the sources of threat for Afghan photojournalists affected his professional experience,

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[66] Cf. Brown (2013); AJSC Six-monthly reports (2015; 2017); Khalvatgar (2014); Relly and Zanger (2016); Eide (2016a).

[67] Except briefly, as I mention in Chapter 1, by Smith (2011: 30-31). Though this threat may be understood as medium-specific, it might have wider implications because four respondents of this study perceived that the general distrust of photography in Afghan society accentuated the threats photojournalists faced from the Afghan military forces and the police. Among these four respondents, two felt that the Afghan police and military forces shared the general population's distrust of photography. The two others linked the threats the Afghan police and military forces posed to Afghan photojournalists to their motivation to enforce the societal taboo against photographing women for public circulation.

> [T]*his is kind of …like everyday life. If the Taliban capture us…just straight…killing* [us] *and with the Afghan force*[s]*, they don't know nothing…they can beat you, they can do anything they want. So we are facing a lot of problems. People, with security force, with foreign troops*[68]*, with insurgents. In Afghanistan, we have to be careful with everything, everybody.*

Echoing Respondent 17, Respondent 6 described his work as not just dangerous like that of conflict photojournalists elsewhere, but dangerous all the time, everywhere. He said that while in other places,

> [t]*here is a war and you know that's the frontline and I cannot go there,* [but in Afghanistan] *here the frontlines disappear, it happens every minute.*

Within this larger context of pervasive insecurity in their professional lives described by the respondents, in their descriptions of all but two types of security threats, the local-global photojournalists felt that these security threats affected them more than international photojournalists. This is the particular local-global tension I located from the interview data within the respondents' perceptions regarding security threats in their professional experience.

3.1.2 Lack of professional training and formal education in photography

Lack of access to training and education in photography was perceived to be an adversity for Afghan photojournalists by 15 respondents. These respondents felt that, at the time of the study, the available training or education in photography or photojournalism was inaccessible to many Afghans, too limited in their scope, or ineffective in imparting anything but basic knowledge of photography. A chronological progression could be noted in the description by the respondents of the adversity they faced regarding training opportunities in photography and photojournalism. The nine respondents who were old enough, and said that they had been in Afghanistan soon after 2001, shared the perception that this particular adversity for Afghan photojournalists had been far worse at that time. Respondent 6 described the situation in Afghanistan in the years immediately after 2001,

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[68] Respondent 17 was the only Afghan photojournalist who mentioned the international military troops as a source of threat as well as the Afghan security forces.

> *…there were many limits to education, I mean training places for photographers. In Afghanistan, you can say, we are the first generation after the civil war… so we have many limit*[s] *for professional photographers. Then, there* [were] *no special or governmental schools or training centres for photography.*

These respondents also shared the perception that international donor-funded journalistic training programs have had a positive and important role since 2001 in creating access for Afghans to photography training. For example, Respondent 10 said that,

> *in 2002-2003… millions of dollars came to Afghanistan, and there* [were]*… opportunities for you to learn photography – one month, one week, one day, one year, or six months training….*

Among these nine respondents, eight respondents shared the perception that one particular photojournalism training program had been particularly effective in providing training for Afghans in photography and photojournalism. This was the training program offered by Aina[69], an organization founded by the French-Iranian photographers Reza Deghati and Manoocher Deghati (Cary, 2012: 24; Murray, 2012). Three respondents described the training program at Aina as a watershed for photojournalism training in post-2001 Afghanistan to which they unfavourably compared the available training and education in photojournalism at the time of the study. Respondent 4 said that,

> *…there* [was] *one period lasting, ten to twelve years which* [began with] *the start of Aina…. Most of the people, photographers, who worked in Aina… are working in Afghanistan now. Some of them, like ------ who won* ------- [international award for photographers] *prize, are the result of Aina. It was great, actually a place to go to learn…unfortunately, it got closed…. And after that it was all different…you know, Aina period was ten years ago. And since then things* [haven't] *change*[d] *much. And if you compare it with outside, there has been so much change. And so we are kind of behind, I would say.*

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[69] 'Mirror' in Pashto and Dari.

Respondent 17 also described the role of Aina in similar terms and, like Respondent 4, felt that once this organization stopped providing photojournalistic training, it left a vacuum in photography and photojournalism training for Afghans at the time of the study. Respondent 19 who had attended training at Aina[70] shared this perception,

> [I]*t was different because* [me] *and* [my] *friends* [at Aina] *were trained for a long time.* [We] *received long term training, and* [we] *received training from the very beginning, the basics of photography. And for the next generation, the trainings are for short*[er] *period*[s] *of time. They receive short term training and* [I myself have] *trained people for* [a] *very short time, even* [I have] *held training sessions for only one day.*

Apart from these three respondents, 12 other respondents also felt that there was a lack of training and education available for Afghan photojournalists at the time of the study. There were two different ways that these respondents described this as an adversity for Afghan photojournalists – as a problem for aspiring photojournalists (mentioned by nine respondents) and as a problem for working photojournalists (mentioned by seven respondents)[71].

Respondents 1 and 5, like Respondent 19 mentioned above, both felt that existing photojournalistic training programs for aspiring photojournalists were too short in duration and as a result not imparting quality training. Respondent 12, while describing his experience as a photography trainer, said that available training programs were unaffordable for aspiring photojournalists. The lack of training and education for aspiring Afghan photojournalists was described by five respondents in the specific context of the existing options for higher education in photography and photojournalism at Kabul University[72] being inadequate because of limited curricula (Respondents 1 and 2), lack of technical facilities for the students to learn (Respondents 12 and 14) and because of ineffective teachers (Respondents 2 and 6).

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[70] In total, nine of the respondents of this study received training at *Aina*. All but one of them were local-global photojournalists.

[71] Respondent 10 described both.

[72] There are other universities in Afghanistan – both public and private – some of which offer journalism courses as well (see Eide, 2016b: 116). These other universities were mentioned by Respondents 1 and 10 in other contexts. But the respondents mostly spoke of Kabul University's journalism program and the photography training offered within the faculty of fine arts. This is perhaps

Seven respondents described the lack of education and training for photojournalists as an adversity for working photojournalists. Four of these respondents spoke about the lack of access to training at an advanced level as a problem for working photojournalists in Afghanistan. For example, talking about a training program advertised for working photojournalists as a *"master class"* in advanced photography that he had attended, Respondent 5 thought that as the training program was only for one week, it was

> *ridiculous* [because] [i]*t cannot help so much. It should be for* [a] *long*[er] *period…when they named it 'master class', one week…is not sufficient time.*

Apart from the lack of advanced training for working photojournalists, three respondents specifically described lack of effective university education in photojournalism or photography as a problem that continues to hamper working photojournalists later in their career. For example, Respondent 10 thought that Afghan photojournalists lacked professionalism because,

> *Ninety-five per cent of Afghan photographers, including myself, are not educated at the university in terms of photography or photojournalism. So these people have come into the field of photography with their own ideas and they have not been taught very much about photography and photojournalism.*

This perception that Afghan photojournalists lacked professionalism as a result of lack of advanced training or university education was specifically described by some local-global photojournalists in terms of Afghan photojournalists being at a disadvantage compared to international photojournalists. Six respondents shared the perception that they were disadvantaged compared to international photojournalists as a result of their lack of advanced training and education. Among these, four respondents shared the perception

because the interviews were conducted in Kabul, but my informed speculation would be that Kabul University was seen as a prestigious institution by the respondents.

that they were 'less professional' than international photojournalists as a result of their lack of education and training. Respondent 20 said that,

> *we are just trained* [in] *the basics, but an international photographer, he might be trained professionally. He might be a professional…we are just beginners… we just take the camera and start taking photographs….* [I]*t is important how you are trained, how much you know about photography. For example, in foreign countries, there is the field of photography, which is taught in University, PhDs,* [or] *Master's degree*[s] *but in Afghanistan, that is not available… it really matters to study photography academically and professionally. And if I had the opportunity to study in this field, I will definitely become a better photographer.*

Respondent 4 was the only respondent among the 18 local-global photojournalists who said that she received formal education in photography in a university abroad as well as training in Afghanistan. She said that after coming back from her studies abroad, she felt that

> *these photographers* [in Afghanistan] *need to know things I learned in ----…* [W]*hen I came from ------, I saw the difference. How* [many] *things that I didn't know before going to ----- and how much they are important in photography, especially photojournalism, that photographers should know* [of].

She said that at the time of the study she was planning a training project for photojournalists at the *"intermediate and advanced"* levels. She mentioned her proposed project would cover the subjects she felt working Afghan photojournalists needed to learn: *"ethics"* for photographers, *"critical thinking"*, *"brainstorming"* and *"how to do documentary projects"*, as well as *"publishing and marketing"* of their work.

Four local-global photojournalists shared a more specific understanding of this perceived lack of professionalism compared to international photojournalists. They described the disadvantage in not having access to more than basic skills training in photography as a matter of lacking specialization in certain areas of photography, unlike international photojournalists. A typical response was that of Respondent 9, who said,

> *Afghan photographers, since* [we] *have studied photography or worked in photojournalism generally, we are not specialized, so we are taking photographs generally, while international photographers are specialized*

> *in sports photography or taking artistic photos or news photography…* [if] *there is an international photographer who is specialized in covering football matches, he might be able to take better photos than me….*

Five respondents shared the perception that Afghan photojournalists' lack of advanced training and formal education meant that international photojournalists take 'better photos' than them. For example, Respondent 1 said,

> *you can find out that a photographer is Afghan, you can find* [out] *from their angle. I can see and tell that this is from* [an] *Afghan, and not from* [an] *Afghan* [photojournalist].

Discussing the lack of advanced training opportunities for Afghan photojournalists, Respondent 6 said that even after having worked as a photojournalist for international news agencies for a number of years,

> *Still my work, I am not comparing…with other photographer*[s] *because* [between the way] *they have studied and the way I have studied, here there's lots of* [difference]. *There are things they know that I might not be aware of.*

In summation to section 3.1.2., while the respondents shared the perception that the availability of photographic and photojournalistic training has improved in the years after 2001 in Afghanistan, they felt that the situation at the time of the study still needed improvement. The chronological progression in increasing access to training as well as the problems facing aspiring and working photojournalists in Afghanistan, as perceived by the respondents, demonstrates the background within which the respondents viewed this particular adversity[73] in their professional experience. Of particular relevance for my purpose of locating local-global tensions in the professional experience was, however, the shared perception among the six local-global photojournalists that not having access to advanced training and formal education in their field meant they were at a professional disadvantage compared to their international counterparts.

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[73] The perceptions of the respondents I have described here offer some insight into the impact of international donor-funded media development efforts in Afghanistan on Afghan photojournalism and photojournalists since 2001. The perceptions of the respondents were largely positive, though they did speak about shortcomings of international donor-funded efforts in providing training for photojournalists. It is interesting to note here that unlike the recent study on Afghan journalists by Relly and Zanger (2016), where they found that the Afghan news media industry was 'captured' by donors, the respondents in this study did not perceive such a strong influence from international donors or aid agencies in their professional work as photojournalists. The only exception being Respondent 9 who said that he lost his job due to donor funded support for his domestic news agency being withdrawn. However, as my description here is mostly based on local-global photojournalists in Afghanistan rather than those engaged primarily in

3.1.3 Lack of high quality photographic equipment

The third type of adversity in their professional experience perceived by the respondents was access to high quality photographic equipment. Six respondents shared this perception. Similar to their perceptions regarding the lack of professional training and education in photojournalism, a chronological progression could also be noted in the way these respondents described this particular adversity.

Four respondents who said that they had started work as photojournalists before 2001 described a more acute scarcity of photographic equipment in Afghanistan at that time. Three of these respondents shared the perception that even having a camera during this period was a distinct advantage for them as aspiring photojournalists. Respondent 5 attributed his becoming a photographer later in his life partially to finding an old ‘Zenit’[74] camera as a young man living in Afghanistan under the Mujahideen regime. Respondent 10 also described the impact that finding a ‘Zenit’ camera had on launching his career as a photojournalist. He said that an acquaintance fleeing Afghanistan when the Taliban were consolidating their power in the country had left some of his belongings with his family and,

> [i]*n it was a Russian camera. Zenit... and I got it…oh, I got it! And I got four roll*[s] *of films. I took it and I got out and I took some photos from the war which was going on,* [of the] *heavy weapons they were firing and then I was arrested by them. And then I was told I should not take photo*[s] *and I accepted. But I never stopped and I finished those four…rolls. Of course, they were not good photos because I had* [no] *idea… about photography and it was a manual camera too. But it was a good start you know.*

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the domestic news media sector, the perceptions of the Afghan photojournalists I have reported here should not be read as reflective of all Afghan photojournalists.

[74] A brand of still-photo camera produced in erstwhile Soviet Russia.

These four respondents shared the perception that the accessibility of photographic equipment at the time of the study was much better than when they had started in the profession. In this regard, all four respondents pointed to the introduction of cheaper digital cameras and digital photographic equipment as having solved the acute lack of photographic equipment that they had experienced.

However, six respondents perceived that lack of access to high quality, professional photographic equipment was still an issue for photojournalists in Afghanistan at the time of the study. Among these six, four respondents described the lack of access to high quality cameras for Afghan photojournalists in terms of their affordability. For example, Respondent 6 said,

> *here in Afghanistan, if you want to buy two cameras, one with zoom lens…, I mean professional camera*[s]*…with that, you can have your wedding even.... So I mean it is very difficult to buy equipment.*

Also, among these respondents, three respondents described this problem as one that aspiring photojournalists particularly face. Respondent 12 said that,

> *if we train a hundred people in here, there should be at least fifteen professional or semi-professional camera*[s]*…the trainees are not financially good enough to buy a camera themselves. And you cannot learn photography directly, you have to practice. And we cannot provide enough cameras for the trainees to learn photography.*

Respondent 4 described another aspect of the problem that Afghan photojournalists face regarding access to high quality cameras. This problem extended to both working photojournalists and aspiring photojournalists in her description,

> *My camera was broken and I didn't have any place to fix it. And I have noticed that during* [training] *sessions, photographers say that too. Because we don't have any good place to get equipment and to* [have] *our equipment* [fixed] *when it is broken. We don't get good quality.*

Along with Respondent 4, four other respondents described lack of access to high quality photographic equipment as an adversity for *working Afghan photojournalists*. All five of these respondents shared the perception that lack of access to high quality photographic equipment put Afghan photojournalists at a disadvantage compared to their international counterparts. While Respondent 4 described the professional disadvantage of Afghan photojournalists because of lack of access to high quality cameras and equipment compared to international photojournalists generally, Respondents 1, 6, 12 and 16 all expressed this disadvantage in terms of not being able to produce better quality images. They felt that as international photojournalists had better quality cameras and equipment than Afghan photojournalists, it helped them produce better quality images. For example, Respondent 6 said that,

> *foreign photographers come with updated equipment, good quality equipment they have and they make good pictures in different light,* [and] *you don't have money to have those equipment so it is not possible here to get it.*

The perceptions of the respondents regarding the lack of equipment faced by Afghan photojournalists, both soon after 2001 and at the time of the study that I describe above, illustrate the wider background for this particular obstacle in the professional experience of Afghan photojournalists as perceived by them. But the shared perception among five respondents that this was an obstacle that put them at a disadvantage compared to international photojournalists is most germane to the goal of the current research. It points to another form of local-global tension within the description of their professional experience by the Afghan local-global photojournalists.

There was also a noticeable parallel between the perceptions of the respondents who thought that advanced training and formal education in photography helped international photojournalists produce better images or be more professional and the perception of the respondents who felt that access to high quality cameras and equipment meant international photojournalists produced better photographs than Afghan photojournalists. While both of these shared perceptions of the local-global photojournalists point to local-global tensions in their perceptions regarding their professional experience, the shared perception among these respondents that international photojournalists are more professional or produce better images also informed my exploration of the local-global tensions in their processes of image production, which I describe in the next chapter.

3.1.4 Perceived disadvantages to international photojournalists specific to employment situations

Apart from the above, some local-global photojournalists also perceived certain disadvantages compared to international photojournalists that arguably were specific to their employment situations. Respondents 6, 11 and 18, all of whom were full-time photojournalists working for international news agencies at the time of the study, shared the perception that Afghan photojournalists suffered from having less international mobility than their international colleagues. This, they felt, limited their career advancement prospects. For example, Respondent 11 said,

> *…I believe that I do photography for all the world, not for my people…. Because I now* [after winning an international award] *saw that I* [can] *do it… all the world saw a picture that I took. So now I have to go out. Now I have to cover other countries. Other wars. But it depends…* [on] *a lot of complications…. One of them is* [our] *passport. Like if I go to Syria, it's not like this* (snaps fingers)*, foreigners, westerners, it's really easy* [for them] *to go somewhere, but for me, no, I have to wait two weeks for* [a] *visa.*

Respondents 10, 12 and 16, all of whom had worked or were working as freelance photojournalists for international news organizations, shared the perception that as Afghan freelance photojournalists they were financially disadvantaged compared to their international counterparts. Respondent 10 said that if,

> *I send a photo to Time magazine, since my name is* -----, [they think,] *'----- is an Afghan name, Eastern name, I will pay only four hundred dollar*[s] *per photo'. But if I write Alex, then I will receive double or maybe four times more.*

Respondent 10 also described the financial disadvantage of Afghan freelance photojournalists compared to international photojournalists in another way. Describing the lack of direct access for Afghan freelance photojournalists to international news organizations to sell their photos, he thought Afghan freelance photojournalists were *"fourth-hand photographers"* because their earnings from the images they sold to international news organizations were subject to profit-making by middlemen. He said,

> [I]*f I take a photo… I have to sell it to another photographer, and the photographer will send it to the media. The media will send four thousand dollars to him and he will send to me one thousand dollars.*

Respondent 12 also described the financial disadvantage of Afghan freelance photojournalists in terms of their lack of access to international clients. He said that,

> *we are professionals. For example, we put our pictures on* [a] *website, but…since we don't have the facilities to sell our pictures, the relations to show our pictures to those who want to buy our pictures…we haven't been…successful to sell our pictures, and we have sold only a few of our pictures to other people…*[75]

While specific to employment situations in the context that the respondents mentioned these professional disadvantages, these responses also pertained to the local-global tensions in the perceptions of the respondents regarding their professional experience.

In summation to sections 3.1.1., 3.1.2., 3.1.3., 3.1.4. and 3.1.5., in all, 17 of the 18 local-global photojournalists shared the perception that they were disadvantaged compared to international photojournalists in at least one, or more than one, of the ways described above. All of these 17 respondents mentioned more than one form of disadvantage compared to international photojournalists while describing their professional experience as local-global photojournalists: the perceptions of being more at risk than international photojournalists, lacking high quality equipment and educational opportunities, as well as getting paid less and having fewer opportunities than international photojournalists were also all explicitly stated by the respondents. Thus, I describe the local-global tensions locatable in the respondents' perceptions regarding their professional experience, as *overt* forms of local-global tensions.

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[75] Both Respondents 10 and 12 also described it as a problem not only for working photojournalists but also as a factor affecting aspiring photojournalists in Afghanistan, who are not able to supplement their income as they establish themselves in the profession.

3.2 Professional role perceptions of Afghan photojournalists: Similarities and negotiations with global norms and perceived differences to international photojournalists

Moving away from exploring the local-global tensions in the professional experience of the local-global photojournalists in Afghanistan, in this section I describe how these local-global photojournalists perceived their professional role as photojournalists. The aim here was to understand how the perceptions of the 18 Afghan local-global photojournalists about their professional role compared to the dual importance for photojournalists of being objective as well as aesthetically pleasing, noted previously by scholars. At the same time, the goal was to explore how the respondents' identity-based affiliations and affinities affected their professional role perception.

3.2.1 Professional role perceptions of Afghan photojournalists: Importance of objectivity

Sixteen of the 18 local-global photojournalists shared the perception that the 'truth', 'accuracy', and 'reality' of the photos they took were important considerations for them in their profession. A typical response was that of Respondent 12 who said that,

> [I] *prefer true pictures and… the most valuable pictures for* [me] *are the ones* [which show] *the reality as* [it] *happen*[s].

Two respondents described the importance they placed on objective portrayal of reality by saying that the objectivity of photojournalistic practice was the very reason they had taken up the profession. Respondent 3 said that,

> [I] *wanted to become a photographer because* [I] *wanted to show the reality. Photography was one way to show reality and express myself.*

Six respondents described the importance of objectivity in their role perception in terms of not manipulating or 'setting up' the subject or event which they were photographing and thus not affecting the 'reality' shown in the images. For example, Respondent 19 said that he tried to take photos

> *without setting up the scene or faking the picture.* [I don't] *care much about the beauty of the picture,* [I] *care more about the true moment.*

These respondents' perceptions regarding their role as photojournalists were comparable to the importance of objectivity that has been described by researchers as central to how journalists (Deuze, 2005: 445; Weaver and Wilnat, 2012: 537) and photojournalists perceive of their work (Rosenblum, 1978; Bock, 2008). The expression, by six local-global photojournalists, of this perception of being objective in their work in 'somatic' terms (Bock, 2008) – the non-manipulation of the photographic *mise en scène* while producing images – also closely followed previous observations made through ethnographic study of photojournalists in the US. Bock (2008: 172) observed that, "news photographers operate within norms that restrict them from materially manipulating their subject matter, whether in the course of recording the image or after the fact through digital techniques." Rosenblum also observed this practice among photojournalists in her study (conducted decades before Bock's study) and termed this non-manipulation of the photographic *mise en scène*, the "choreography of the unobtrusive" (1978: 22-23).

In sum, the respondents seemed to adhere closely to the principle of objectivity central to journalism. But, as has also been noted by researchers, the adherence to the principle of objectivity in photojournalism works in conjunction with aesthetic considerations. As Bock (2008: 172) described, while photojournalists adhere to the principle of objectivity, "[y]et they are still trained to try to please the eye while providing information".

3.2.2 Professional role perceptions of Afghan photojournalists: Aesthetic considerations

While being objective recorders of reality was a professional role perception shared by almost all respondents, the responses by 13 respondents showed a shared perception that individual subjectivity and consideration for certain aesthetic aspects of photography were deemed as important in the role of a photojournalist.

In the statements of 10 respondents, the shared perception that individual subjectivity of the photojournalist[76] plays a role in the kind of photographs produced, was noticeable. Some typical responses were:

> [it] *is not the camera which makes the picture. It's the person behind the camera who is making the picture.* (Respondent 6)
>
> *Photography is not easy. It's the eye, you know, looking for something. It's not the camera which is taking the pictures. It's your eye, it's your experience or how good* [you are]. (Respondent 17)

Apart from their perception that the individual subjectivity of a photojournalist was important in their professional work, 13 respondents shared the perception that additional aesthetic considerations beyond the importance of depicting 'reality' or 'truth' were important in the work of a photojournalist. The aesthetic considerations described by the respondents included the importance of the technical quality of the images captured, as well as other aesthetic considerations such as the composition of the images. Seven respondents described the importance of technical aspects of the photographs produced by a photojournalist in addition to the value of photojournalistic images as a rendition of reality. For example, Respondent 14 said,

> *when a picture is very true, when the subject is very strong, yet there are technical problems in the photo, then the photo is not very much acceptable. But…when* [it is] *both technically… and truthfully* [good], *then it is acceptable for the audience. So I try to do both.*

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[76] In her study on image-selection by news photo-editors, Fahmy (2005b: 155) also noted the role of individual subjectivity in photojournalism. Bissell (2000: 90) found in her study that the decisions of photo-editors regarding image selection were "quite subjective" and based on "political preferences" and "personal opinion". The perceptions of the respondents in this study seem to suggest that individual subjectivity in photojournalism extends not only to image-processing but also to image-gathering in photojournalism. As my study is not based on direct observation of the photojournalists while at work, I do not claim that individual subjectivity *does* play a role in the work of the photojournalists I interviewed (as Bissell did in her 2000 study), but that the respondents of this study perceived the role of photojournalists to involve individual subjectivity (as Fahmy did in her 2005b study).

Six respondents described the importance of producing aesthetically pleasing images as a photojournalist. Respondent 6 described the need

> *to make a composition….* [When] *I go to take* [a] *picture…you have to put something else, you may add some beauty on that.*

Respondent 11 was more specific in the different visual aesthetic considerations he described as being part of his professional role. He mentioned that he *"played"* with the *"light"*, *"the space of things"*, *"architecture",* and also incorporated *"cultural symbols"* unique to Afghanistan in his images.

Four respondents shared the perception of a certain hierarchy of importance between the principle of objectivity and other aesthetic considerations in their professional role as photojournalists. Some typical responses were:

> *Specially, when I am working for news, the most important* [are] *true picture*[s]. *Sometimes in my office, people are trying to edit and make a picture so beautiful but it is against the… law of media to change* [the photograph]. *For example, there's a blast. There's…less smoke and you edit* [with] *Photoshop and make the smoke more dark to show a huge smoke… I prefer the true image. After true, it must be beautiful and according to the photographic law, it must be of standard.* (Respondent 2)
>
> *First I have to do the truth. And second, show the light, the beautiful things. For me both* [are] *important. The truth, the beautiful. If the news is important and the men… are important, I have to look for* [a] *very clear picture and then some beautiful backgrounds….* (Respondent 18)

Apart from these aesthetic considerations, another distinct aesthetic consideration was described by six respondents as the need for a photograph to 'speak for itself' or 'tell something'. This was not very clearly defined by the respondents but I understood it as the *narrative value* of the image. Respondent 20 described how she used narrative devices in images to increase their narrative value,

> [m]*ostly we have to take pictures that show emotions and tell something. You can't take* [a] *picture from somebody who is just sitting like this* [meaning herself] *and it's just nothing. It shows nothing from a* [press] *conference. For example, here,* [I] *work for ------- and* [I am] *holding the cup in* [my] *hand* [with her news organization's logo and name printed on it] *and if there wasn't anything, the picture wouldn't make any sense.*

Three respondents described this narrative value of the image as the quality which allowed their images to be transcendent across cultures. Typical responses included,

> *As a professional photographer…someone should take pictures* [so] *that the picture itself talks. That the picture itself delivers the message to the world.* (Respondent 16)
>
> *If the picture is clear enough, if it speaks itself, then both domestic audiences and international audiences, both of them can understand.* (Respondent 3)

The shared perception of these respondents that as photojournalists they needed to imbue their images with a narrative value, which transcended cultural boundaries beyond Afghanistan, shows the importance these respondents placed on international audiences in their image production.

In sum, the importance of aesthetic considerations that these respondents acknowledged as part of the role of a photojournalist, along with the perceived importance to be 'objective' described in the previous section, was similar to what has been observed among photojournalists elsewhere (Rosenblum, 1978; Bock, 2008). But the similarity in the professional role perceptions among many of the local-global photojournalists who participated in this study was also negotiated with identity-based affiliation and affinities as Afghans, among some of these photojournalists.

3.2.3 Professional role perceptions: Negotiations with being Afghan

In the responses of nine local-global photojournalists[77], a pattern emerged which spoke to their role perception as objective recorders of reality being linked to their affiliation and affinities related to 'being Afghan'. Six respondents viewed their role as photojournalists not only as objective recorders of truth, but also as recorders of the history of Afghanistan or the life of Afghan people. Having been moved by the plight of fellow Afghan refugees while living in Iran, Respondent 11 said that,

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[77] Respondents 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19. Some of these responses were in the context of image-subjects preferred by these respondents as Afghans that I describe in the next chapter. To avoid repetition, I have not included more responses by these photojournalists that informed my understanding of their perceived role as visual interlocutors, in this chapter.

> *First of all, I tried to write something* [about the issue]. *But I…felt that writing was including a lot of… my own emotion*[s]. *And any word I was using in my language had a lot of emotion*[s] [i]*n it. And that was not the history, not the real history. So I definitely thought that photo*[graphy] *would be the best, just to show the reality, to show the real life of these people.*

The other respondents linked the importance they placed on being objective photojournalists to their charge of representing Afghanistan to an international audience. They construed the importance they placed on objectivity as a need to depict their country accurately. For example, Respondent 10 said that,

> *I don't like to export a fake picture of Afghanistan. Truth should always be considered in photojournalism and I like this.*

I chose to understand the perceptions of these respondents as being that of *visual interlocutors*[78] *of Afghanistan* to the world. The perceptions of these respondents showed a negotiation between their perceived roles as photojournalists *and* as Afghans. I return to a discussion of this below. In addition, the explicit importance placed on an international audience by three among these respondents also had implications for exploring the local-global tensions in the description of their *image production* by these respondents. I describe these in the next chapter.

Apart from this *negotiation* between respondents' *local* affiliation and affinity as Afghans and what might be said to be 'global' professional norms – being objective/aesthetic – in photojournalism, there were also forms of local-global *tensions* that I could locate in the respondents' descriptions of their professional roles.

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[78] I use the word 'interlocutor' throughout this thesis in its original Latin meaning of *one who speaks between* (e.g. two parties).

3.2.4 Perceived differences to international photojournalists expressed in the context of professional role perceptions

Some differences to international photojournalists were expressed by the respondents in the context of their role perceptions as photojournalists – both in terms of their role perception as objective recorders of reality as well as in the context of aesthetic considerations.

Four Afghan local-global photojournalists set themselves apart from international photojournalists by saying that while they themselves always adhered to the principle of objectivity, international photojournalists working in Afghanistan did not. These four respondents were the ones who described the importance of objectivity in terms of not manipulating or ‘setting up’ the subject or event they were photographing. They described their own role as objective recorders of reality by distancing themselves from this perceived *non-photojournalistic* practice of international photojournalists working in Afghanistan. Typical responses included,

> *International photographers… came and did fake stories. They paid Afghans to act and they did. Because of insecurity, they were not able to go to Kandahar, to Helmand etc., and they go to some desert here in Kabul and imagine that it is Helmand.* (Respondent 10)
>
> *Some foreign photographers… I have seen it with my own eyes, they set up the scene and take photos. Like they take* [a] *photo from a hill that no one even crosses… but he hire*[d] *someone with a horse and, you know, set up the scene. So that’s the difference between Afghan photographers and international photographers.* (Respondent 12)

Apart from these respondents who brought up differences to international photojournalists in the context of Afghan photojournalists being *more objective*, four respondents spoke about their differences to international photojournalists in terms of differing aesthetic considerations. Apart from all four describing aesthetic considerations of Afghan photojournalists, which they thought were *different* to that of international photojournalists, no coherent pattern emerged among these responses regarding the perceived aesthetic differences. Respondent 12 felt that international photojournalists were more prone to paying attention to the technical aspects of a photograph while Respondents 11 and 15 felt that as Afghans they composed their photographs differently to that of international photojournalists. Respondent 10 described differing aesthetic considerations between Afghan and international photojournalists in the following terms,

> *we Afghans like those art*[istic] *photos. With good light, with very dramatic atmosphere. But…the Western* [photographers] *look mostly* [for] *document*[ary photos] *or photos* [that] *can tell the story. Which they are right* [to do]*, in journalism, they are right. But sometimes, they can forget about that quality of the light, they cannot acknowledge* [it]. *But in our culture, in our photographers' culture, it's very important to have a good light. But* [international photographers] *don't pay that much attention… And we Afghans like very close shots, like portraits, and they like more wide shots also. This is* [the] *basic difference.*

Like the differences to international photojournalists that the respondents noted in the context of their professional experiences, these perceptions of being different to international photojournalists in terms of being more objective as well as aesthetically different were *overt*, that is, explicitly stated by the respondents.

In sum, the perceptions of the local-global photojournalists that aesthetic considerations, as well as being objective recorders of reality, were important for professional photojournalists, are comparable to what previous research suggests are central to the institution of photojournalism (Newton, 2001: 49-60; Ramos & Marocco, 2017). Writing about news images produced in conflict zones, Zelizer (2004:115-135) noted a dual imperative of providing visual evidence through "the referential force of the image" as well as producing aesthetically appealing images through a "photograph's symbolic or connotative force" (p. 130). This dual imperative of photojournalism was also noted by Bock as affecting how photojournalists view their professional role. She (2008: 171) noted that perceptions of photojournalists are fraught by this "rhetorical contradiction…at the intersection between the artistic/subjective and factual/objective". Thirteen of the 18 local-global photojournalists I interviewed shared this duality in their professional role perceptions as image-producers, while three others who did not discuss aesthetic considerations did perceive their professional role to be objective recorders of reality – a universal notion central to the institutional practices of journalism (Deuze, 2005: 445; Weaver and Wilnat, 2012: 537). Thus, I argue that most of these local-global photojournalists' role perceptions may be said to be similar to the global[79] norms of their profession.

But while the role perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists by and large were comparable to what has been noted in previous studies of journalistic and photojournalistic role perceptions, some respondents seemed to negotiate between being Afghan *and* being photojournalists by linking their objective role perceptions to that of being *visual interlocutors* of Afghanistan. In addition, forms of overt local-global tensions could also be located in the responses regarding the importance of objectivity and aesthetic considerations for photojournalists among some of the local-global photojournalists. These respondents perceived themselves as *more objective* than international photojournalists when it came to producing images of Afghanistan, or as *different in the aesthetic considerations* they gave attention to in their images. These overt forms of local-global tensions, as well as the subtle local-global *negotiation* of their professional role with their role as visual interlocutors of Afghanistan, were the important findings that help understand the interplay of the local and the global in the respondents' perceptions regarding their professional role as local-global photojournalists.

3.3 Local-global tensions in perceptions regarding professional experience and professional roles

In the interview data, it was noticeable firstly that the respondents, irrespective of levels of experience or employment situation, perceived that lack of security was pervasive in the professional experiences of Afghan photojournalists. Second, the respondents perceived that lack of professional training and education in photography and photojournalism was a common problem faced by Afghan photojournalists. In their accounts, this adversity was linked to the level of experience of photojournalists – while some perceived this adversity as affecting aspiring photojournalists, others thought it also affected working photojournalists. Third, the Afghan photojournalists perceived that their professional work was hampered by lack of access to high quality photographic equipment. In their description of this adversity as well, the respondents often saw the problem in terms of which stage in their career photojournalists were, with aspiring photojournalists affected more but working photojournalists also facing this obstacle.

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[79] Both of the ethnographic studies of photojournalists that I use here were conducted on American photojournalists and thus do not represent as substantial, and broadly comparative, a body of research as, for example, Weaver & Wilnat's study (2012) of journalists' role perceptions. I was restricted in my choice by lack of extensive research on photojournalist's role perceptions. Of the two studies conducted on photojournalistic practice in the global south – that I know of – Brown, N. (2013) does not address the question of photojournalistic role perceptions in her study. However, Ramírez & Mazzotti (2017) also found evidence of this duality in the role perceptions of the Mexican photojournalists they studied, according to Ramírez's recent conference presentation about their findings. This informed my argument for the objective/aesthetic duality being a 'global' professional norm among photojournalists. However, a published version of their study is not available at the time of writing. Thus, my understanding of this duality being a *global* norm in photojournalism is mostly informed by the discussions by Newton (2001: 49-60), Zelizer (2004:115-135), and Ramos & Marocco (2017).

Within these broader adversities, irrespective of employment situations described by the respondents, local-global tensions could be located. Some of the respondents felt that Afghan photojournalists were more at risk in terms of their security compared to international photojournalists, while others felt that their lack of access to advanced training or university education placed them at a professional disadvantage compared to international photojournalists. This perception of being professionally disadvantaged compared to international photojournalists was also expressed by some respondents because they felt that they had poorer quality cameras and equipment at their disposal, compared to international photojournalists. Apart from these, a few other disadvantages compared to international photojournalists were perceived by some respondents, which can be understood as specific to certain employment situations. Those local-global photojournalists who worked at international news agencies felt that, lacking international mobility as Afghans, their career advancement prospects were limited compared to their international colleagues. For freelance photojournalists, the issues raised by the respondents were that of receiving less financial remuneration compared to international photojournalists, as well as limited or indirect access to clients to sell their photographs.

Except for one respondent who did not engage in this topic during the interview, all of the respondents felt that the different adversities that were part and parcel of their professional experience affected them more or placed them at a disadvantage compared to their international counterparts. These perceived disadvantages to international photojournalists seen in aggregate covered many facets of the professional experiences of the photojournalists. It ranged from perceptions regarding disadvantages stemming from physical threats (the heightened sense of insecurity compared to international photojournalists) to material disadvantages (related to lack of high quality equipment as well as financial disadvantages), to intangible disadvantages such as the lack of opportunities for advanced training or education, and lack of international mobility. As aspects of their professional experiences where they felt disadvantaged compared to international photojournalists, these are the different areas within local-global photojournalists' perceptions regarding their professional experiences where local-global tensions coalesced in the interview data. The local-global tensions that could be located within the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists regarding their professional experience were, by and large, explicitly stated by the respondents and, as such, were forms of *overt local-global tensions* in their perceptions.

The interview data presented a more complex picture regarding the interplay of 'local' and 'global' in the Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions of their professional roles. Most of the Afghan photojournalists interviewed for this study seemed to be, by and large, socialized in the same photojournalistic role perceptions as have been noted by researchers regarding photojournalists in the US (Rosenblum, 1978; Bock, 2008) or as central to the institutional practice of photojournalism generally (Newton, 2001: 49-60; Zelizer, 2004: 115-135; Ramos & Marocco, 2017). However, in their discussions regarding the importance of objectivity, as well as the importance of aesthetic considerations, some respondents described differences from international photojournalists. In the context of their role as objective recorders of reality, some photojournalists described international photojournalists in Afghanistan who, according to them, 'set up' or manipulated the events and actors they photographed. These instances were raised by these respondents in the context of describing themselves as being *more objective* than international photojournalists. In their discussions regarding aesthetic considerations that they deemed important for photojournalists, some respondents felt that *aesthetic considerations* of Afghan photojournalists were different from that of international photojournalists. Both of these perceived differences from international photojournalists were explicitly stated in the interviews and thus may be said to be *overt* forms of local-global tensions within the descriptions of the Afghan photojournalists regarding their professional roles.

There was another, more *subtle*, form of interaction between the local and the global that could be located in the interview data. A pattern could be discerned in the responses of nine respondents that spoke to their perception of being *visual interlocutors of Afghanistan* to an international audience. This role perception was expressed by seven of these respondents in the same context as their professional role as ‘objective’ photojournalists as a need they felt as Afghans to create an accurate, historical record of Afghanistan and its people, or to accurately represent their country to an international audience. In the perceptions of these respondents, their role as Afghans was not in conflict – or *tension* – with their role as ‘objective’ photojournalists, and in most cases, it was expressed as an *extension* of their role as objective recorders of reality. This points to a negotiation between these respondents’ socialization into the global norms of their profession and their local affiliation and affinities as Afghans.

In summation, overt local-global tensions as well as one form of subtle local-global negotiation could be located in the Afghan photojournalists’ perceptions regarding their professional roles, while the local-global tensions in the respondents’ descriptions of their professional experience was explicitly stated and overt.

I would like to single out for the readers’ attention from the above discussion that six Afghan photojournalists perceived their disadvantages in advanced training and formal education in terms of being less ‘professional’ or ‘specialized’ than international photojournalists. Five of these respondents also described Afghan photojournalists as taking ‘worse’ photographs than international photojournalists (linked by them to both lack of training and education as well as lack of high quality equipment). These shared perceptions among the respondents have resonance for the next chapter, wherein I discuss the local-global photojournalists’ perceptions regarding the different local and international influences in their image production processes.

Chapter 4

4 Local-global tensions in the image production of Afghan photojournalists

In this chapter, I describe the respondents’ perceptions regarding their image production and explore the local-global tensions within their accounts. In understanding the interplay of the local and the global in the perceptions of the respondents regarding their image production, I chose to analyze their responses in terms of the international influences they perceived on their image production on the one hand, and the local influences – those related to being Afghan – on the other. I also describe how in the respondents’ perceptions regarding these international and local influences, a largely divergent pattern emerged regarding image-subjects – between those they thought were most often present in international representations of Afghanistan and those they said they would prefer to depict in their images.

4.1 International and local influences on image production

In this section, I describe the different international and local influences perceived by the Afghan local-global photojournalists as important in their image production. First, I describe the different international influences that I could locate in the interview data.

4.1.1 International influences in the image production process

Some international influences on image production were explicitly stated by the respondents while other influences were more implicitly present in the responses. As such, the respondents’ perceptions of international influences included both *direct* forms of influences on the image production process as well as more subtle, *indirect* forms of influence.

4.1.1.1 Direct international influences in image production

In all, 17 of the 18 local-global photojournalists[80] reported that one or more forms of international influences directly affected their image production. These direct international influences in their responses were influences from international audiences, foreign editors, and international client news organizations.

The most commonly reported form of direct international influence in image production, mentioned by 11 respondents, was the importance of keeping an international audience in mind while producing images. This form of direct international influence was reported by photojournalists in contexts across different employment situations – while describing their work as full-time photojournalists for international news agencies (Respondents 11, 17 and 18), as freelance photojournalists for international news agencies (Respondents 13 and 16), freelance and full-time photojournalists for international news organizations (Respondents 10, 12, 14, 15), as well as those who worked for an Afghanistan-based news agency (Respondents 3 and 9) which has both domestic and international news organizations as clients.

Among those who worked for international news agencies and organizations, typical comments were,

> [I am] *mostly interested in these stories* [that he routinely covered], *because international people are interested in such stories, so* [I] *want to show such stories.* (Respondent 13)
>
> [I have] *developed the sense…* [of] *which picture is important for the foreigners.* (Respondent 16)
>
> *I am thinking …about th*[is] *other side of* [the] *world* [where] *guys who are reading newspaper*[s], *magazines, online* [news], *what* [are] *their needs.* (Respondent 18)

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[80] No direct international influences were noted by Respondent 20.

Both of the photojournalists who worked for a domestic news agency with international clientele described the audience they had in mind while working as both domestic and international. Respondent 3 mentioned that as part of his work, he distinguished between,

> *those photos that can be shown to the domestic audience and those photos that can be shown to the international audience.*

The second most-perceived – mentioned by six respondents[81] – source of direct international influence on the Afghan photojournalists' image production was that of the foreign editors who oversaw their work. The respondents who shared this perception included three respondents (6, 17 and 19) who worked full-time for international news agencies, as well respondents 5, 10 and 13 who worked in freelance capacities for international news agencies and organizations. The photojournalists who worked for international news agencies all described the images they produced as subject to the choices of foreign editors. The description by Respondent 6 was typical,

> *when I am working for my agency or clients, mostly my target is my editor. Because I see which type of photo is good for him, it's pleasant or not.* [So] *you take care* [when] *you are on a story* [that] *you have experienced in the past that the story was not used, so again, why are you going to take that picture?*

Among the freelance photojournalists who described the influence on their image production from foreign editors, like Respondent 6, Respondent 10 also described at length how he disagreed with the kind of images he was *"tasked"* to produce by his foreign editor, but had no choice but to do as he was told in order to keep his job. Respondent 5 also mentioned that the foreign editors he worked with

> *… used to say that you should not take this picture from this angle, you should take it from a different angle…and* [I] *would do what they said. So when* [I] *was going out* [to] *take photographs,* [I] *was trying so hard to take photographs that…those people* [I] *was working for can be pleased.*

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[81] Respondent 20 also mentioned editorial demands as important in her image production, but did not describe the editorial demands on her work as originating with foreign editors but with the Afghan photo-editors she worked under.

Four of the six local-global photojournalists (Respondents 5, 6, 10, 13) who discussed this form of direct international influence on their image production shared the perception that they were obligated (rather than self-motivated) to meet the demands of their foreign editors. The local-global tension that this perception of obligation points to, could also be located in the responses by the local-global photojournalists regarding the image-subjects they preferred as Afghans, described further below.

Another form of international influence the respondents reported was keeping the international clients – the foreign news organizations who would ultimately publish their images – in mind while taking photographs. This influence was relevant for those photojournalists who worked for news agencies rather than international news organizations. Among the five respondents who mentioned this form of influence on their image production, three worked full-time (Respondents 6, 17 and 19) for international news agencies while the other two (Respondents 1 and 2) worked for the domestic news agency with both domestic and international clients. Among the latter, Respondent 2 said that as a result of working for *"international news clients* [like] *BBC, AP, Reuters, AFP"*[82] he had developed an understanding of the particular demands regarding news images from Afghanistan that these international news agencies and organizations have, saying that ,*"because I work for years, it is normal for me… I can feel what they really want."*

Altogether, almost all of the local-global photojournalists interviewed for this study reported one or more forms of direct international influences on the images they produced. The type of direct influences reported by the respondents on their image production were within expectations. They closely parallel the kind of influences on news production which have been observed and discussed by journalism studies scholars previously. These different levels of influences – editorial, organizational and audience demands – form part of the Hierarchy of Influences (HoI) model of studying news production[83]. But to understand the image production of *local-global* photojournalists, the *international* nature of these influences – while within expectations for production processes of photojournalists who produce images for a global audience – must be noted. Apart from these direct influences, there were other international influences notable in the respondents' perceptions. I describe these indirect international influences in the next section.

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[82] British Broadcasting Corporation, Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France-Presse.

4.1.1.2 Indirect international influences in image production process

The perceptions of indirect international influences on image production among the local-global photojournalists were harder to identify from the interview data than the direct international influences because they were more diffuse and diverse in the contexts in which the respondents mentioned them. These perceptions of indirect international influences often emerged in context rather than in response to specific questions on the topic of image production[84]. However, they were apparent in the responses of no less than 15 of the 18 Afghan local-global photojournalists.

By strictly applying the parameter of the importance *within image production*, I understood these perceptions of indirect, subtle international influences notable in the respondents' perceptions broadly as twofold – first, a shared sense of the importance of emulating images taken by international photojournalists and those published in international news media; and second, a shared sense that international recognition of the images taken by them was a measure of achievement of the required professional standard in their image production.

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[83] See, Shoemaker (1991: 67-70); Reese and Shoemaker (1996: 221-251; 2014: 64-94); Shoemaker and Vos (2009: 105-107); Fahmy et al. (2015b) for expositions on both the hierarchy of influences model for studying news production as a whole as well as the theoretical model developed by researchers for studying gatekeeping processes within news production.

[84] In my understanding of these forms of indirect international influences in the image production by the respondents, I was informed by the discussion by Murrell (2015) of forms of objectified and institutionalized cultural capital important in local-global news production (p.147). But I do not use the same theoretical model to interpret the interview data as she did with hers.

There were a total of eight respondents among the local-global photojournalists who shared the perception that emulating the images taken by international photojournalists or those published by international news media was important. The importance placed on emulation of international images that I describe here should be read in light of the perception of a number of respondents described in Chapter 2 who felt that international photojournalists took ‘better’ images than Afghan photojournalists because of Afghan photojournalists’ lack of advanced training or formal education and high quality photographic equipment.

While sharing this perception, these respondents described their emulation in several different ways. Five respondents (Respondents 6, 9, 11, 15 and 16) described emulating the images of international photojournalists generally while three other respondents (Respondents 2, 17 and 18) mentioned that they emulated the work of their foreign colleague-photojournalists. Five respondents (Respondents 2, 6, 9, 17 and 18) among these eight, also mentioned that they honed their understanding of which images are ‘good’ or ‘bad’ through studying images published on the websites of international news media.

Among the respondents who described their emulation of images taken by international photojournalists, Respondent 11 mentioned one particular international photojournalist[85] he emulated (not a colleague),

> ---- --------- *was a war photographer and he* [had] *cover*[ed] *a lot of wars…in the world. So I really wanted to be like him. And then my point of view and my style went exactly like ---’s style. So I really tried to cover war in Afghanistan and I became successful for that. …And this bec*[a]*me my style* [so much so] *that I am only… really very good in clash, and war and conflict. Now…I can do that really easy because I am really excited about that. Plus some of the artistic pictures, they are also very good, but I am never…famous with them.*

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[85] Incidentally, Respondent 19 also named the same photojournalist as his ‘inspiration’, but did not specifically mention emulating his images.

> *Whatever I am famous* [for] *is war photography, in conflict* [and] *violence….*

Respondent 16 described his emulation of the technical and aesthetic standards of international photojournalists he competed with as a freelancer for international news agencies, while Respondent 9 described his emulation of international photojournalists' images as a form of learning,

> *I was used to looking at international photographers' pictures and I was comparing my pictures to their pictures, and I was noting the positive points in their pictures and their style. I was learning. I was seeing their pictures and learning how they take pictures.*

In describing emulation of international photojournalists' images as a learning process, Respondent 9 was closer to those respondents who mentioned that they sought to emulate the images of international photojournalists they worked with[86] at their place of employment. Respondent 2 gave a lengthy description of how he unlearned his visual arts training and remade himself as a photojournalist by closely following the instructions regarding what kind of images to take from his foreign photojournalist-colleague. Both Respondents 17 and 18 also described a process of emulation similar to that of Respondent 2. They described learning what kind of images to produce from photojournalist-colleagues at the international news agencies they worked at, through a slow, osmotic process of observing their work as they took, selected, and edited images and then trying to replicate it. Respondent 18 especially emphasized this process as 'copying',

> *This* [photo] *is a good one, this is a bad one… Oh, this is his choice, I think it is better. So I think and do like this. I copied. I copied from -----, what he* [was] *doing. Because I didn't know.*

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[86] Respondents 1, 2, 10 and 11 described working as 'fixers' for international photojournalists as a form of learning, but their description of the process dealt more with learning of professional opportunities and photographic techniques while working with these international photojournalists rather than 'copying' their images.

Related to such learning through emulating images of international photojournalists, was the perception of four other respondents who mentioned visiting the websites of international news organizations and international photojournalists to identify and understand the kinds of photos that they should be taking[87]. Respondent 6 mentioned learning about *"good pictures"* by visiting the websites of international photojournalists. He felt that this learning process meant he now successfully emulated images acceptable to international news agencies[88],

> *we…made a looking schedule for* [ourselves to] *check websites by professional photographers… these things, led us to take good pictures. For example, I see my pictures now and compare it with photographer*[s] *from Reuters, AFP and other photographers. I see no difference, it's the same one.*

Among the respondents who mentioned emulating images from international sources, only Respondent 15 had a negative perception of such emulation. He felt that not only had Afghan photographers historically copied the aesthetic standards of photography originating from the 'West' but that his contemporary photojournalists, by and large, were also continuing this tradition. Apart from this one exception, all the other seven respondents shared a positive view of emulating images taken by international photojournalists and those published in international news media.

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[87] While I have excluded the interview with Respondent 8 here, it is interesting to note that though he did not describe working as a local-global photojournalist, he also mentioned visiting the websites of international media as the way he learned about what kind of images to take. While describing his experience as an aspiring photojournalist who lacked the money to afford training programs, or to replace the camera he had lost, he said that by visiting websites of international media and looking at the images,

> *I take the*[se] *image*[s] *in my mind. If I had* [a] *camera, then I would take these views.*

[88] I must note the ambivalence in the account of Respondent 6. As I mention in the previous chapter, he also felt that he could not favourably compare his images with international photojournalists because he lacked advanced training or formal education in photography. However, the *importance* placed by him on emulation of international photojournalists' and international news organizations' images can be seen in both his statements.

Related to the largely positive view and emphasis on the importance of emulating images taken by international photojournalists, or those published in international news media, in their image production, 13 respondents shared the perception that when images produced by them or other Afghan local-global photojournalists received recognition from international sources, it meant that they had reached the professional standard required of them. The forms of recognition mentioned by the respondents were different in their accounts, but their *international* nature remained constant.

One of the ways the respondents expressed the importance of their images receiving recognition internationally was through the emphasis they placed on whether or not their images were published in Western news media. In total, four photojournalists placed importance on this form of international recognition of their images. While the importance of publishing photographs in Western news media may be seen as part of the job description of local-global photojournalists, and as such, a direct international influence on their image production, I chose to understand it as a form of indirect influence on their image production because in the respondents' perceptions, being published in Western news media was not only a part of their work, but also linked to the quality of the images they produced. As such, being published in Western news media was a form of recognition of their images having achieved the professional standards they aspired to. For example, Respondent 17 felt that among the photographs he took,

> *when it's a strong picture, it has got good light and you know good frame, then* [media in] *UK, America, Europe… all these countries use my pictures.*

In placing this inflection on what being published in *Western* news media meant for the images they produced, this shared perception among the four respondents paralleled the importance placed by respondents on other forms of recognition from international, but also mostly Western, sources of the images they produced. Five respondents placed importance on their or other Afghan photojournalists' photographs having been part of exhibitions abroad – mostly in Western countries – as proof that their or other Afghan photojournalists' images were up to international standards. Respondents 4 and 11 returned several times during their respective interviews to describe at length the appreciation they received for the images they displayed in exhibitions in Western countries. They, as well as Respondent 6, shared the perception that such participation and appreciation were a measure of the worth of the images they produced. Respondent 14 described the success of the images that fellow Afghan photojournalists displayed in a photography exhibition, not only in terms of the *"more than sixty thousand viewers"* in Afghanistan who viewed these images, but also that the

> *same exhibition was moved to* [Switzerland] *and it was appreciated very much by the people there…and this same exhibition was moved* [to] *Germany as well, and* [it was] *appreciated a lot by people there* [as well].

Two respondents expressed the importance of international recognition by describing Afghan photojournalists working at international news agencies in Afghanistan as proof that these Afghan photojournalists had achieved the professional standards required of them, and that this reflected positively on Afghan photojournalists as a whole. Respondent 5 described what he felt was a mark of improvement in the images taken by Afghan photojournalists over the years in such terms,

> *In the beginning, the early times, since the* [Afghan] *photographers were inexperienced and not so professional, there were differences between the photos that international photographers were taking and domestic photographers were taking. But little by little, it got better, and now… there is no need for international photographers to cover Afghanistan events because our photographers have become so professional and they know what to do…for instance, we see Afghan photographers are working for international agencies. International agencies do not spend a lot of money for an international photographer to go to Kandahar and cover an event or stories, as an example. It's Afghan photographers who do it.*

Respondent 5 also mentioned another form of international recognition that he thought proved that Afghan photojournalists' images had 'improved' to international standards – receiving international awards. He said,

> *since 2008, photography in Afghanistan was boosted or improved dramatically. For example, we have the examples of* -------- *who received an award,* ---------- --------- *who received* ----------- [and] ------------ *who received many awards….*

Five other respondents shared his perception that receiving international recognition in the form of awards or prizes for their images meant Afghan photojournalists had achieved the standard required of them in their images. Respondent 10 not only described recognition through international awards for Afghan photojournalists as an achievement of professional standards, but also described why it was especially important as an *Afghan* photojournalist to receive such international awards. He traced the importance to the idea that Afghans as a people had long been photographed by outsiders:

> *I have a friend who is a poet. And he* [wrote] *a poem seven years ago…'We will die/To pave the road/For New York Times journalist… or photojournalist…/To take the golden award.'….* [The poem] *means that we were subjects* [of photography]. *But now,* --------- [Afghan photojournalist] *got* -------- [international award for photographers].

In total, one or more indirect forms of international influences on their image production could be discerned in the perceptions of 15 of the 18 respondents. On one level, it may be said that emulation of images of international photojournalists and those published in international media, as well as the importance placed upon being published in international news outlets, are part of producing images as a local-global photojournalist. At the same time, there was also a sense shared among the local-global photojournalists that looking outside Afghanistan – to the West – for recognition of their images was not only a matter of their employment situations, but was a benchmark against which they judged the images they produced.

In addition, five respondents mentioned the importance of international sources of recognition in the context of Afghan photojournalists lacking professional associations or unions which could serve to recognize and reward images produced by Afghan photojournalists. Respondents 4, 6 and 11, all of whom placed importance on the international exhibitions they had taken part in or international awards they received, also shared this perception that sources of recognition and reward for photojournalists within Afghanistan were lacking or absent. Seen in this context, the importance placed upon international recognition of their images by the respondents was not only linked to being *local-global* photojournalists but also influenced by the 'social systems' or 'social institutions' level in Afghanistan (Reese & Shoemaker, 2014) within which they functioned as *Afghan* photojournalists. At the same time, what is most germane to the discussion at hand is that both these direct and indirect influences were *international* in source or nature.

In summation, the responses and perceptions of 17 Afghan local-global photojournalists[89] regarding their image production described in sections 4.1.1.1 and 4.1.1.2, acknowledged or pointed to *one or more,* direct *and* indirect forms of international influences in their image production. But most of these same photojournalists also perceived that ‘being Afghan’ influenced their image production as well.

4.1.2 Local influences on image production process

Most of the local-global photojournalists shared a sense that *being Afghan* influenced their image production. This perception could be seen in the accounts of 16 out of the 18 respondents, who felt that being an Afghan meant having better knowledge of, or familiarity with, the people, places, and culture of Afghanistan[90]. This local knowledge and familiarity was perceived by the respondents as both a positive and negative influence on their image production.

4.1.2.1 Positive influence of local knowledge and familiarity

Nine respondents shared the perception that their local knowledge and familiarity was a positive influence in their image production because it placed them at an advantage over international photojournalists. But these nine respondents differed in how they described local knowledge and familiarity. Two respondents described the advantage in general terms as knowledge of Afghanistan:

> *Afghan photographers, because they belong to this country, they live here, they can understand the subject better than international photographer*[s]. *So as a result, they can take better photos from the subject because they can understand it better than international photographers.* (Respondent 5)

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[89] The one exception being Respondent 20.

[90] Among these, three respondents also spoke in terms of their identity-based affiliations and affinities as well as their local knowledge and familiarity. I mention these further below.

> [International photojournalists] *think colourful dresses represents somebody from* [a] *rich family. And that's why a girl, who's* [a] *refugee girl, dealing with hunger* [can] *never wear* [such] *colourful dresses. These kind*[s] *of paradoxical things creates many problems.* (Respondent 10)

Six photojournalists shared the perception that being Afghan was an advantage in image production because of superior knowledge of Afghan *culture*. For example, Respondent 11 said,

> *…I know the culture here so when somebody's doing something, that has a meaning for me, but that doesn't have a meaning for Westerners. So maybe it's different for them to take pictures… Like for example when we go to the old part of the city of Kabul. So the people are different, they live different*[ly]. *Right? So they can go, the foreigner can go, I mean, go inside the houses like we can go too, but they really don't understand some part*[s] *of the… culture. Like some…of the cultural symbols in our life* [are] *different from…* [what] *Westerners do.*

Four respondents pointed to the linguistic advantage that Afghan photojournalists had over international photojournalists. Respondents 4, 6 and 14 all shared the perception that because they could talk to the people they took photographs of, Afghan photojournalists held an advantage over international photojournalists. Respondents 17 and 19 also shared this perception, but they felt that advantages from linguistic (and cultural knowledge) only helped Afghan photojournalists in the case of certain types of images. Respondent 17 said,

> *If we are talking about the* [photos of] *daily life…*[for us it] *is much easier than foreigners because we speak the language and we know the culture, and we know how to deal with the* [people], *we know how to talk with them. And…a foreign photographer cannot do it. This is the difference between me and…the foreign journalist.*

Respondents 1 and 9 shared the perception that familiarity with *places* – as well as superior cultural knowledge – was an advantage for Afghan photojournalists. Respondent 9 said,

> *at some points it is easier for an Afghan to take good photographs in Afghanistan. For example, Afghan photographers know the geography of Afghanistan, know the places, know where to take photos…and the culture.*

While these respondents spoke about familiarity with Afghanistan in general, as well as cultural, linguistic, and geographical knowledge of Afghanistan as positive factors in the image production of Afghan photojournalists, some respondents shared the perception that familiarity with Afghanistan did not always work in favour of Afghan photojournalists.

4.1.2.2 Negative influence of familiarity

Six respondents felt that Afghan photojournalists were at a disadvantage compared to their international counterparts *because* of their *familiarity* with Afghanistan. They were unanimous in what they thought the disadvantage stemmed from. According to these respondents, lacking familiarity enabled the international photojournalists to be able to bring a fresh perspective to photographing Afghanistan and Afghans. Typical responses were,

> *I think they are taking different picture*[s] *than us. Because you grow up here, you live here, you are bored. Our eyes are tired with these kind of things. Gun, fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting, all of my life. But they can. Because they are fresh…. Everything is different for them, everything is new…. When you are faced everyday with this, how can [you do it]?* (Respondent 18)

> *For example, I go to the city, I capture the photos…* [f]*rom a beggar…. I can see daily these things. I* [was] *raised in this poverty, in this country. A foreigner,* [when] *he is coming, he is shock*[ed]. *He can have more feeling in that image, to capture the feeling of the image….* (Respondent 2)

In summation to sections 4.1.2.1 and 4.1.2.2, 16 respondents out of the 18 local-global photojournalists, while sharing the perception that their local knowledge and familiarity was a factor in their image production, varied in how they evaluated the influence of such local knowledge and familiarity. Nine respondents were of the opinion that local knowledge and familiarity *worked in favour* of *Afghan photojournalists* when it came to image production compared to international photojournalists. Six other respondents, who mentioned local knowledge and familiarity of Afghan photojournalists as a factor in image production, were of the opinion that their familiarity with Afghanistan *worked against Afghan photojournalists*.

The perceptions of these six Afghan photojournalists who thought that international photojournalists' unfamiliarity with Afghan society worked in favour of international photojournalists stand in contrast to most existing views regarding what has been termed 'parachute journalism'[91]. Later in this thesis, I will return briefly to a discussion of the difference between existing academic understanding and these respondents' *positive* evaluation of what may be called parachute *photo*journalism to point to one area of possible future research on local-global photojournalism.

To return to the discussion at hand, *the descriptions I have provided above in sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2,* of the perceived international influences and the perceived local influences of being Afghan respectively, need to be *seen together*. Reading one in the light of the other shows the local-global tension in the perceptions of the respondents regarding their image production. In the accounts of 17 out of the 18 respondents, one or more forms of international influences in their image production could be located, and 14 of them could also be said to share a positive view towards such international influences because of the importance they placed on emulation of international images and recognition from international sources.

At the same time, 16 of these same respondents also thought that being Afghan was an important factor in the images they produced. And for nine of them, it was an unequivocally positive factor. Thus, in sum, it may be said that the respondents' perceptions regarding their image production was fraught with the tension between the perceived obligations and aspirations to produce images which would be acceptable internationally, and the perception that as Afghans they were better placed to represent Afghanistan in their images. I will return to a more detailed discussion of my understanding of this local-global tension after describing another particular pattern noticeable in the respondents' descriptions regarding image production.

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[91] See Murrell (2015: 13-26) for a comprehensive review of relevant academic discussions of this practice in international news-making.

4.2 Differences in perceived international image-subjects and Afghan photojournalists' preferred image-subjects

Discussing the international influences on their image production as well as the importance of being Afghan, the respondents also spoke in terms of choice of image-subjects. Two patterns emerged in the respondents' accounts regarding these image-subjects. The respondents perceived a number of image-subjects as most often present in photographic representations of Afghanistan internationally. The respondents also mentioned a number of image-subjects that they said they preferred as Afghans. These image-subjects, as gleaned from their accounts, diverged in all cases but one.

4.2.1 Subjects of images of Afghanistan perceived as dominant in international representations

In total, five types of image-subjects could be identified based on the responses of 17 of the 18 local-global photojournalists[92], which were perceived by them as most often present in international representations of Afghanistan[93]. These image-subjects were images of war and violence, foreign military personnel, Afghan women, 'negative' aspects of Afghan society, and images showing political leaders. The respondents expressed the perceived salience of these image-subjects in the international media's representations of Afghanistan in three main ways. Two of these ways were linked to their perceptions of the direct international influences on their image production described above: those image-subjects that they felt were demanded by international audiences and those they felt were demanded by international news agencies and organizations. A related third context in which the respondents described these image-subjects was while describing the subjects they felt international photojournalists working in Afghanistan most often depicted in their images.

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[92] Respondent 15 did not describe image-subjects in his responses.

4.2.1.1 Images of war and violence

The type of image-subject that recurred most often in the perceptions of the Afghan photojournalists regarding international representations of Afghanistan were images depicting events of war and violence. In their responses, the local-global photojournalists often mentioned ‘suicide attacks’ by the Taliban while discussing this particular image-subject[94]. This may have been due to the time and place when the interviews were conducted – in Kabul in late 2014. At this time, the most common manifestation of the ongoing conflict in Kabul was suicide attacks carried out regularly by the Taliban in the capital. I have chosen to broaden the description of this image-subject here to that of ‘war and violence’ to allow for an understanding of the *type of image-subject* rather than the particular *type of event* depicted, which I believe is due to top-of-the-mind recall of the interviewees.

In total, 11 respondents shared the perception that images of war and violence dominated international representations. The responses varied between such images perceived by the respondents as being demanded by international audiences (two respondents); were sought out by international photojournalists (two respondents); and were demanded by international news agencies and organizations[95] (nine respondents)[96].

Respondents 3 and 13 linked images of war and violence with what they perceived as the demands of international audiences. Respondent 13 said that,

> *mostly* [I] *like to show violent stories of Afghanistan to international people…* [they] *want to know about breaking news…like I mean suicide attack.*

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[94] Ten respondents among the 18 described taking images from suicide attacks, explosions or war as routine assignments for them.

[95] Including both international news agencies and organizations the respondents worked in as well as the international news organizations that were clients of the news agencies they worked in.

[96] Some respondents mentioned more than one form of demand for images of war and violence.

Respondents 14 and 20 felt that international photojournalists working in Afghanistan focused on producing images of war and violence. While Respondent 20 thought that international photojournalists attended the aftermath of suicide attacks and explosions to take photographs more often than other news events, Respondent 14 felt that the focus of international photojournalists on images of war and violence was linked to their unfamiliarity with the situation in Afghanistan. He noted that,

> *when an international photographer comes, from* [a] *Western country especially, because he is not familiar with war…he has never seen* [a] *suicide bombing or violent situation, this is surprising for him. He always wants to take pictures of the negative sides of the society, the violent side of the society….What's new for them? War, because they have never faced war in Western culture. So they see violence as something new and they take photographs of that. They show those kind*[s] *of pictures to the world.*

These two respondents, as well as seven other respondents, also mentioned that there was a specific demand for images of war and violence from international news organizations – both their employers as well as international clients that their (domestic or international) news agencies catered to. Typical responses were,

> *the international agencies or the international media, they are focusing on attacks. For example, in one month, there's no* [other] *picture of Kabul, there* [are] *attacks, there are wounded, there are people* [who] *died so then you can see all over the world, that they are publishing the news, 'oh Afghanistan!'… the problem with the international agencies* [is] *that if you send pictures* [to] *them from daily life, or other subjects, they don't show much interest* [i]*n it. They like fifteen picture*[s] *of suicide attacks* [and] *fourteen of them are right away* [o]*n the website. And then you see it is published in the New York Times and so this is the problem.* (Respondent 6)

> *AP, AFP, they are asking about hard story…they are asking specially for security, in security section... the image, of* [a blast at the] *Indian Embassy, it is not so important for Afghanistan. The reality here is* [that there is] *daily a blast. But it was very important for all the international news agenc*[ies]*….* (Respondent 2)

Within these descriptions of the perceived salience of images of war and violence in international representations of Afghanistan, there was another closely related but distinct image-subject mentioned by some respondents.

4.2.1.2 Images of foreign military personnel

The image-subject of foreign military personnel was noticeable in the responses of three respondents. Two of them, Respondents 11 and 18, spoke of how international news agencies they worked for focused on images of foreign military personnel in Afghanistan. Respondent 11 described images of foreign military personnel among the images he sought out after a suicide attack happened,

> *when I arrive and I* [see] *that ok, the bodies are already out so don't go really close to do it, you know, because there is no necess*[ity]. *So I take the whole scene, wide shot of the whole scene. And the detail, what's the police doing, what's the army doing,* [what is] *the US army is doing?*

The other photojournalist, Respondent 6, thought that international photojournalists tended to focus on foreign military troops:

> *for* [a] *person who comes from America or somewhere, they target on their soldiers, how many soldiers are being killed and how many wounded,* [they] *only cover the soldiers. Because their soldiers are very important for them….*

Both the images of war and violence and the related image-subject of foreign military personnel related to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. The other three image-subjects mentioned by the respondents as most often present in international representations of Afghanistan could be described together as pertaining to civilian life in Afghanistan. Within this broader category, there were distinct image-subjects mentioned by the respondents.

4.2.1.3 Images of Afghan women

As mentioned in the previous chapter, half of the respondents who discussed the general suspicion of photography and photographers in Afghanistan felt that this suspicion was related to the taboo against photographing of Afghan women for public circulation, and that consequently, it was dangerous both for the photojournalists and the Afghan women whose photographs were taken. Yet, nine respondents perceived images of Afghan women to be prominent in international representations of Afghanistan. Six respondents among these linked images of Afghan women to demands from international news organizations, while three respondents felt Afghan women, especially in burqa, was often a subject chosen by international photojournalists to photograph.

Among the respondents who felt that international news agencies and organizations focused on images of Afghan women, Respondent 2 mentioned *“women*[’s] *business …women*[’s] *development in the provinces, handicrafts of women”* among the image-subjects which were in demand from the international client news organizations that his domestic news agency catered to. Respondent 6 also mentioned *“Afghan wom*[e]*n, wom*[e]*n*[’s] *situation, what challenges they are facing”* as part of a list of image-subjects which he felt were in demand from the international news agency he worked for. Respondent 13, while describing the kind of photos he routinely took for the international news agencies he worked for as a freelancer, mentioned pictures of Afghan women wearing burqa as an important subject. Respondents 11 and 17 both described taking photos of Afghan women because they perceived that these images were what was ‘news’ from Afghanistan for international audiences.

Of the respondents who felt that international photojournalists often focused on Afghan women as a subject of the images they produced in Afghanistan, all three felt that it was Afghan women *in burqa* that international photojournalists were drawn to. These respondents (10, 12 and 16)[97] also all thought that the international photojournalists were drawn toward photographing burqa-clad Afghan women because they were unfamiliar with such sights[98].

4.2.1.4 ‘Negative’ images of Afghanistan

Three respondents shared the perception that ‘negative’ images of Afghanistan were the type of image-subjects that international audiences and international news organizations demanded. The description of this image-subject by these respondents varied from generally expressed 'negative' aspects of Afghan society (Respondents 5 and 14), to descriptions of particular social ills and problems such as the displacement of people (Respondent 13).

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[97] Among these three, Respondent 10 also mentioned the demand for taking pictures of Afghan women without their faces covered as proof of *“women*[’s] *participation in society”* for international news organizations.

[98] This was the opinion of these respondents. See Mazurski (2015) for deeper discussions and empirical research on representations of burqa-clad women in Western societies.

4.2.1.5 Images of political leaders

In the perceptions of four respondents, images of Afghan political leaders were linked to international representations of Afghanistan. Describing the kind of images he mostly produced for the international news agency he worked for, Respondent 18 said that over the previous few years before the time of the study, the subjects he had taken the most photos of were of two different types – suicide attacks and press conferences held by (then-) President Hamid Karzai. He also described a time when,

> *Every day was news conference for prime ministers or President Karzai…,* [and of] *authorities, high ranking authorities,* [who were] *coming to visit from US or UK….*

Like him, Respondent 11 also described at length the images he took at press conferences held by President Karzai for the international news agency he worked for. Respondent 2, while describing the type of image-subjects he supplied to the international clients of the domestic news agency he worked for, mentioned the importance of images of political leaders for these international news organizations. He noted that it was the political *leader* whose image was demanded,

> *international* [clients]*, they don't* [ask] *for a confusing photo. They want a personality…in the image…. I noticed this, they don't want* [a] *confusing image. For example, from… Mr. Ghani*['s] *oath taking ceremony*[99]*, we gave two [or] three photos…*[and] *they sa*[id]*… 'send a photo of just Mr. Ghani during the oath taking ceremony, we want that photo. Not the whole team'.*

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[99] Respondent 2 is here referring to the first peaceful transfer of power in Afghan history that was concluded during the time of the study. After a disputed election, President Hamid Karzai was replaced through a power-sharing deal between President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and rival Abdullah Abdullah who was given the post of Chief Executive Officer of Afghanistan. See Loyn (2014).

The perceptions of the Afghan photojournalists regarding what kind of image-subjects were most often present in international photographic representations of Afghanistan corresponded very closely with the observations in prior research – summarized in Chapter 1 – regarding international news and visual coverage of Afghanistan in international media. I will return to a discussion of this comparability below. For now, I move on to describe the preferences for certain, mostly different, image-subjects expressed by the respondents.

4.2.2 Preference of image-subjects as Afghans

Among the 17 local-global photojournalists who described image-subjects in their responses during the interviews, 14 respondents[100] mentioned image-subjects they preferred as Afghans. These different image-subjects all pertained to civilian life in Afghanistan. Within this, there were six distinct image-subjects mentioned by the respondents. These were: images showing the lives of ordinary people of Afghanistan (10 respondents)[101], reconstruction and development[102] in post-2001 Afghanistan (four respondents), images of Afghan women (five respondents), landscapes, natural beauty and historical sites[103] in Afghanistan (five respondents), sports (four respondents), and images depicting the re-introduced democratic process in post-2001 Afghanistan (three respondents).

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[100] The other three respondents did not describe image-subjects preferred by them while mentioning image-subjects they perceived as dominant in international news media.

[101] Images of ordinary people of Afghanistan (as opposed to those depicting Afghan women), was also mentioned by three respondents in the context of image-subjects that international news agencies and organizations are sometimes interested in. All of these respondents, however, described this image-subject as not salient in international representations of Afghanistan. While Respondents 6 and 16 said they had to struggle to have such photos accepted by their foreign editors, Respondent 17 described the specific circumstance when such images were accepted, in his experience,

> *First of all, they want to have picture*[s] *of news, daily news, every day. When* [there's] *no news, it's good to give them the picture of the daily life. Like a story, you know, like a photo essay.*

[102] This was also mentioned by Respondent 1 among a number of other subjects of images he supplied to the international news organization clients of his domestic new agency. He placed relatively less emphasis on this image-subject, compared to images of war and violence.

[103] Respondent 1, during the interview, described one instance when images of a particular historical place taken by him were published by an international news organization. Images of historical sites were

There were two ways that these respondents expressed their preferences for these image-subjects during the interviews. Sometimes the respondents described these image-subjects as a reaction against the image-subjects they perceived as salient in international representations of Afghanistan. At other times, the respondents described these image-subjects as preferred by them because as Afghans they were in a better position to understand the people, places, and culture in Afghanistan and thus better represent them in images[104]. Three respondents, among the last group, spoke not just about their local knowledge and familiarity with Afghanistan as the reason why they preferred certain image-subjects, but described their choice of image-subjects in terms of their national, gender, or ethnic affiliations and affinities.

In the interview data, the responses by the local-global photojournalists mostly list a number of types of image-subjects they preferred. Presenting the respondents' statements divided under each subject-category would fragment their account in an unnecessary and artificial way. Also, it would obfuscate important contextual information about how these respondents expressed their preference for certain image-subjects as Afghans. As such, I have chosen below to present a description of the respondents' perceptions categorized in the two ways they construed their preference as Afghans for certain image-subjects: firstly, as a reaction against international media's representations of Afghanistan; and secondly, because of their local knowledge and familiarity as Afghans and their identity-based affiliations and affinities.

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also mentioned by Respondent 2 among other types of images he supplied to the international news organization clients of his domestic news agency. However, these were specific instances when such images were sought according to the respondents.

[104] Respondents 6 and 20 described their preferred image-subjects in both of these ways.

4.2.2.1 Preference of image-subjects in reaction to international representations of Afghanistan

In total, five respondents described image-subjects they would prefer to portray in the context of a reaction to the kind of image-subjects they felt were over-represented in international representations of Afghanistan.

Two respondents described image-subjects that they preferred as a reaction to the kind of images they routinely supplied to the international news agencies they worked for. Respondent 6, who, as mentioned before, felt that photos of suicide attacks were readily accepted and circulated by the international news agency he worked for, went on to note the kind of image-subjects he would like to produce images of but thought that he was not able to,

> *Now we have women who are studying, who are teaching, we have farmers who are working in the field. They live like another farmer who is living in America or who is working in Germany. He's not supporting war, he is a peaceful man but war is something…* [that] *happens* [to him] *or* [he is] *forced to deal* [with] *so…this is something you can show by pictures. For example, we have football teams, we have premier league, we have viewers for that, these are all things which show the people* [outside Afghanistan] *that the same* [way] *they live, people* [in Afghanistan] *also wish to live like that…. I mean lots of good activities which we have, we also have to cover those things… Sometimes, I even fight with my editor, that why are you not using this picture? They just say, 'we have other important subjects, and which is why we cannot have these kind of pictures'.*

Respondent 16 said that the work he did for international news agencies was *"always about daily news, breaking news"* and noted that,

> *beside*[s] *showing the violent pictures, pictures of daily li*[fe] *should be shown to the world and positive pictures should also be shown to the world. For example, pictures from the girls who attend school, who go to school or pictures of an Afghan youth, who has done something amazing, or pictures of kids who have done something for civil rights…on the whole I want to show the positive side, the positive picture of our society and of our country to the world.*

The other three respondents mentioned their preferred image-subjects as a reaction against the kind of images that they thought were over-represented to international audiences, and brought up a number of image-subjects in this context that they would prefer to show to an international audience,

> [P]*ictures which show our rich culture, show the positive things about Afghanistan, like sportsmen's achievements, beautiful parts of Afghanistan and also artistic achievements of Afghanistan, daily lives of ordinary people in Afghanistan which creates a good image, a positive image in the minds of international people who want to know about Afghanistan. Those kind*[s] *of pictures should be shown in order to show a positive image of Afghanistan to those people.* (Respondent 9)

> [I]*nternational audience*[s should be shown] *pictures of beautiful views of Afghanistan or historical places, pictures of people's daily lives …*[But] *if you send them pictures, of nature of Afghanistan, of people's daily lives, they are not so interested in seeing those pictures. And* [I] *think that those pictures should be shown to international audiences. About nature, daily life, Afghan culture….* (Respondent 3)

> [o]*ver the last thirteen years, there have many good developments, many good things were done. But less of those good things have been shown to international people, those good things should be reflected more…. For example, democracy*[105]*, technology, sports….* (Respondent 5)

I had noted earlier that in the perceptions of some respondents, a pattern of obligation rather than self-motivation to meet the demands from their foreign editors could be noticed. The preference for certain image-subjects expressed by the five respondents as a reaction to how Afghanistan is represented internationally may be seen as closely associated with that pattern of perceived obligation. But for these respondents, the reaction against international influence in their image production included not only a reaction against demands from foreign editors but also against perceived demands of international news organizations and international audiences[106].

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[105] Respondent 19's description of images showing democracy referred to the democratic process. Among "*positive pictures*" that he felt "*should be shown to international people*", he mentioned "*and nowadays, politics, exchange of power*", referring to the first peaceful transition of power in the history of Afghanistan being concluded at the time of the study. Based on the respondents' descriptions, I understand this image-subject as referring to images representing the re-introduced democratic process in post-2001Afghanistan.

4.2.2.2 Preference for image-subjects as Afghans

Nine respondents mentioned the image-subjects they preferred in connection with ‘being Afghan’ – due to their local knowledge and familiarity, or in relation to their local affiliations and affinities. Six respondents mentioned certain image-subjects preferred by them in terms of their better local knowledge and familiarity as Afghans. Speaking in the context of his better knowledge of Afghanistan compared to international photojournalists, Respondent 11 said that,

> *a lot of the Westerners, I mean the Western photographers, do not know about the life* [of the Afghan people]. *What we create*[d] *after the Taliban. These daily life pictures in which we show all parts of the life of Afghanistan… we were able…to do this and no*[ne] *of the foreigners* [were] *coming for that kind of pictures…. So…I follow and show the modern part of life of Afghanistan, you know, the new generation… to just show to the world, that we are normal people as well.* [The] *only problem we have is political or military problem….*

Three respondents[107] expressed their preference for image-subjects in terms of their identity. However, their expression of the importance of their identity was not defined homogeneously as being ‘Afghan’. While Respondent 19 spoke of his preference to take images of *“social issues”* faced by ordinary people of Afghanistan as an *“active member of society”* of Afghanistan – and thus directly related his preference to his national affiliation – two other respondents pointed to other affiliations and affinities while describing the image-subjects they preferred. Respondent 10 identified himself as a Hazara during the interview and spoke at length about the importance his ethnic identity held for him. He mentioned this as important to the images he produced. He said that the,

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[106] Cf. “Afghans and Pakistanis [journalists] do not appreciate the recurring picture of them as failed states seething with violence and instability” (Brown, 2013: 284).

[107] These three respondents also all shared the perception that local knowledge and familiarity played a role in Afghan photojournalists’ image production.

> *love of Bamiyan people*[108] *for education is something that I really like and I ma*[d]*e photo essays and sen*[t] *it to* ---- [international news organization] *and they were telling me, 'ok, how many positive stories can we have from Bamiyan in a month?' And that was their reason for killing it, and they were deleting it easily….*

Respondent 4 described her identity not only as an Afghan but also as an Afghan woman in the context of her preference to portray different facets of Afghan women's lives in her images[109].

The patterns regarding the two groups of image-subjects in the interview data – those that respondents thought were present in the international media's representations of Afghanistan, and those that they thought were preferred by Afghans can be seen in Table 2. As Table 2 shows, the image-subjects, 'ordinary people of Afghanistan', 'reconstruction and development' in Afghanistan, and 'historical places' in Afghanistan were noted by some respondents as sometimes present in international images of Afghanistan, but these were mostly mentioned as specific instances or in specific contexts by these respondents.

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[108] Bamiyan province is the traditional homeland of the Hazara in Afghanistan.

[109] Respondent 20, another female respondent, also mentioned that as an Afghan woman she would prefer to take images depicting the problems faced by Afghan women, but she was speaking in the context of what kind of images she thought should be shown to a domestic audience in Afghanistan. Respondent 7, the other female respondent, (whose interview I have excluded here to focus on local-global photojournalists), also described the importance for her of portraying images of Afghan women.

Table 2: Image-subjects in international representations and preferred as Afghans

Image-subject	Mentioned *as present* in international images of Afghanistan by number of respondents	Preferred as Afghans by number of respondents
Images of War and Violence	11	0
Images of Foreign Military Personnel	3	0
Images of Afghan Women	9	5
‘Negative’ images of Afghanistan	3	0
Images of political leaders	4	0
Images of ordinary people	3	10
Images of reconstruction and development	1	4
Images of landscapes, natural beauty, historical places in Afghanistan	2	5
Images of sports	0	4
Images representing re-established democratic process in Afghanistan	0	3

There were five image-subjects (ordinary people, reconstruction and development, landscapes, natural beauty, historical places in Afghanistan, sports, and images representing re-established democracy in Afghanistan) which were mentioned by the respondents as preferred by them. These image-subjects contrasted with four image-subjects perceived as *most often* present in international news media’s images of Afghanistan by the respondents (war and violence, foreign military personnel, ‘negative’ images of Afghanistan, and political leaders). One image-subject – images of Afghan women – however was both mentioned as salient in international representations of Afghanistan and as a preferred image-subject.

The image-subjects that the respondents perceived as most often present or *dominant* in international representations of Afghanistan closely correspond with the trends in international news and international visual representations of Afghanistan and the Afghan conflict found by previous researchers. The findings by these previous researchers also by and large found that news and news images of Afghanistan tended to focus on negative aspects – social ills and problems – in Afghanistan (Aday, 2010; Shabbir et al., 2011); the war and violence in Afghanistan (Verschueren, 2012), as well as the foreign military troops in Afghanistan (Ottosen, 2005; Fahmy, 2005a; Griffin, 2004; Zelizer, 2005; Campbell, 2011, Verschueren, 2012; Sliwinski, 2015); and political leaders[110], rather than the lives of ordinary Afghans (Verschueren, 2012: 131).

Researchers have also previously noted the focus on images of Afghan women in international media. The trends noted were that images of Afghan women tended to be used as symbols of oppression in Afghan society (Fahmy, 2004; Jabbra, 2006; Mackie, 2012) as well as symbols of progress in Afghanistan since 2001, both of which reflect the official justification of the international intervention as a war to 'liberate' Afghan women[111] (Fahmy, 2004; Jiwani, 2009; Mitra, 2014). In the perceptions of the respondents regarding this image-subject, both of these types of symbolic use of the images of Afghan women could be located – while some spoke about images showing women's progress or participation in Afghan society, others spoke about images showing problems affecting Afghan women.

No prior research exists, to the best of my knowledge, regarding photographic representations of Afghanistan by Afghan photojournalists that I can compare with the image-subjects mentioned as preferred by the respondents. But the divergent pattern of image-subjects suggests that the Afghan local-global photojournalists I interviewed would prefer to depict Afghanistan – in most cases – *differently* to how international news media or international photojournalists have tended to do (as noted by previous researchers). Based on the interview data, it would appear that, if allowed, local Afghan photojournalists’ images, especially those meant for a global audience, would focus more on different facets of civilian life – by taking images of ordinary people and peaceful pursuits such as sports – in Afghanistan, rather than on the war and violence, and the foreign military personnel present in Afghanistan, which they thought dominated international media’s representations. It also suggests that if allowed, their images would focus on more ‘positive’ sides of Afghanistan: both generally through images of landscapes, beauty, and historical places in Afghanistan, as well as of post-2001 Afghanistan specifically, through images depicting the reconstruction and development, and images referring to the re-introduction of democracy in the country. I return to how this suggestion informed the next chapter in this thesis below.

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[110] Verschueren (2012: 131) also described 'military leaders' as often a subject of international images he analyzed. This image-subject was not mentioned by the respondents of this study in their descriptions of image-subjects present in international news media's images from Afghanistan.

[111] See also Bergner (2011: 95-116) and Ahmed-Ghosh (2003).

4.3 Local-global tensions in image production

In this chapter, I have described the international influences perceived by the respondents as important in their image production. I also described the respondents’ perceptions regarding ‘local’ influences – in terms of being Afghan – in their image production. Most of the respondents described the influence of being Afghan as an advantage they had over international photojournalists because of their knowledge and familiarity with the people, places, language, and culture in Afghanistan. However, some respondents also thought that their familiarity negatively affected their image production because they lacked the fresh perspective on Afghanistan they thought that international photojournalists visiting the country could have.

I also described the local-global photojournalists’ responses involving one specific aspect of image production – the subjects of images that they mentioned in the context of the international and local influences on their image production. Through identifying recurring patterns regarding image-subjects in the Afghan local-global photojournalists’ perceptions of image production, I found two groups of image-subjects. One was the kind of image-subjects the respondents perceived as most often present in the international news media’s representations of Afghanistan, and the second comprised of the kind of subjects they, as Afghans, felt should be given greater prominence in international representations of Afghanistan. The image-subjects in these two groups were largely different from each other, except in one case.

The image-subjects mentioned by the respondents as dominant in international images of Afghanistan largely corresponded with the trends noted in prior research regarding international representations of Afghanistan. Research on Afghan photojournalists' representations of Afghanistan does not exist to which I could compare the preferred image-subjects of the respondents. But the differences in image-subjects in the interview data would suggest that the images of Afghan photojournalists would depict Afghanistan *differently*, if allowed, to how international news media and international photojournalists have tended to do (as noted by previous researchers). Before I discuss a particular question that this suggestion raises, I offer a broader discussion of the local-global tensions in the respondents' perceptions regarding image production that I could locate.

The interplay between the international influences described by the respondents and the local influences in their image production that I have described above, helps to clarify the local-global tensions in the respondents' perceptions regarding their image production. In the perceptions of the local-global photojournalists, essentially two types of local-global tensions regarding image production could be noted. The first was more overt, expressed as reactions against international influences on their image production both in terms of their obligation to meet international demands as well as their reaction against the kind of image-subjects that dominate international representations of Afghanistan.

The second form of local-global tension, which was less overt, is best understood in light of the perceptions of some respondents regarding their professional experiences described in the last chapter. The importance of emulating internationally published and international photojournalists' images among some respondents described in this chapter, can also be seen as linked to the perception of some Afghan photojournalists that they were not as professional or as specialized as international photojournalists, or that their images were 'worse' than those of international photojournalists, as described in the previous chapter. I argue that the emulation by the local-global photojournalists of international photojournalists' and news organizations' images may be understood as a form of self-driven learning to overcome their perceived disadvantages to international photojournalists. This in turn helps put the importance the respondents gave to their images receiving international recognition in perspective. While their emulation implied a journey towards understanding and learning to produce (what they perceived to be) ‘better’ images, the international recognition of their images was perceived as a milestone, if not a destination, in terms of implementing ‘knowledge’ thus acquired. Indeed, even the direct international influences in image production I have described above can be seen as forms of knowledge, such as knowing what international audiences, editors, and news organizations want.

Understanding both the direct and indirect international influences as forms of knowledge which the Afghan local-global photojournalists aspired to and acquired, allows clarity while comparing these international influences with the respondents’ perceptions regarding local influences in their image production. Most of the respondents expressed the influence of being Afghan as a matter of local knowledge and familiarity as Afghans. Whether the respondents thought such knowledge and familiarity to be an advantage or not, they did not describe a progression in this form of knowledge. The respondents did not describe it as aspired to or acquired[112], rather as *inherent* to Afghan photojournalists. Though six respondents shared the perception that *unfamiliarity* with Afghanistan was an advantage for international photojournalists, most respondents shared the view that their inherent knowledge of Afghanistan placed them in a better position to represent Afghanistan through their images. Understood in these terms, I offer that the second, more subtle form of local-global tensions that could be located in the perceptions of the Afghan photojournalists regarding image production was a tension between these acquired/international and inherent/local forms of knowledge. Thus – as in the Afghan local-global photojournalists’ perceptions regarding their professional experience and in their professional role perceptions – both overt and subtle forms of local-global tensions could be located in their perceptions regarding image production.

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[112] However, some said it was possible to be acquired by international photojournalists. For example, Respondent 1 felt that the longer the international photojournalists spent in Afghanistan, and the more they ‘studied’ the Afghan culture, the better they became in representing Afghanistan in their images.

There is another connection I would like to draw between the Afghan photojournalists' perceptions *of their roles* described in the last chapter and their perceptions regarding their image production described in this chapter. The preference for image-subjects was most often mentioned by the respondents in terms of what they would like international audiences or the 'world' to see, while some also expressed these preferences in terms of their local affiliations and affinities. Thus, the preferences for image-subjects may again be seen in light of some Afghan photojournalists' perceptions of their role as visual interlocutors of Afghanistan to the world that I described in the last chapter. Seen in the light of both the overt local-global tension in their image production – their reaction against international demands for certain images – as well as the role perception of some Afghan photojournalists as visual interlocutors of Afghanistan, the preferences for image-subjects by the respondents can be understood as a concrete expression of the local-global tensions in the Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions.

The preferred image-subjects of the respondents of the study were mostly different to the image-subjects of Afghanistan noted as dominant in international media by previous researchers. This would suggest that images of Afghanistan taken by Afghan photojournalists meant for a global audience – were they not directly influenced by editorial, organizational and what were perceived to be pre-existing audience demands – would depict Afghanistan differently to international representations of Afghanistan. Except in the case of images of Afghan women – because their preference in this case matched what prior research shows is an often-depicted subject in images of Afghanistan present in international media – the responses by the interviewees suggest that Afghan photojournalists would depict Afghanistan to an international audience through subjects such as the lives of ordinary people and peaceful pursuits such as sports, landscapes and historical places in the country, as well as images which depict development, reconstruction, and re-introduction of democracy in post-2001 Afghanistan. It also suggests that they would eschew images of social ills and problems in Afghanistan, war and violence and foreign military personnel, as well as political leaders.

Based on this, the question that I felt needed further exploration was, understood in Mellado and Van Dalen's (2014) terms: do these preferences expressed by the respondents only pertain to the level of *rhetoric* of the respondents or are they traceable in Afghan photojournalists' *performance* in actual images of Afghanistan taken by them? More specifically, do Afghan photojournalists' actual images of Afghanistan meant for international audiences, when not influenced directly by organizational, editorial and perceived audience demands, indeed depict the subjects the respondents of this study preferred? And do such images eschew subjects which have been noted as often present in international representations of Afghanistan?

To engage with this question, grounding the Afghan local-global photojournalists' preferences regarding image-subjects in actual images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists was necessary. A body of prior research and analysis of *Afghan* photojournalists' photographic representations of Afghanistan (which could offer a broad understanding of which subjects are most often present in them) could have served this purpose. Such research does not exist to the best of my knowledge. As such, I chose to undertake an analysis of a set of images taken by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience to trace the presence and absence of the image-subjects mentioned by the respondents of this study.

Chapter 5

5 Correspondence between respondents' preferences and Afghan photojournalists' images of Afghanistan

In this chapter, I compare the Afghan local-global photojournalists' responses regarding image-subjects with a set of images of Afghanistan taken by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience. The interview data that I gathered, as I described and discussed in the last chapter, suggested that Afghan photojournalists' images of Afghanistan meant for an international audience, would eschew 'negative' images showing social ills and problems in Afghanistan, images of war and violence and foreign military personnel in the country, as well as images of political leaders. Instead, the interview data suggested that their images would depict lives of ordinary Afghans, sports events, landscapes, and historical places in Afghanistan, as well as reconstruction, development and the re-introduced democratic process in post-2001 Afghanistan. Furthermore, the respondents' accounts suggested that images of Afghan women would be a particular focus in images of Afghanistan taken by Afghan photojournalists.

The latter group of image-subjects, with the exception of images of Afghan women, are not always present in international media's representations of Afghanistan, according to prior studies. This suggests that Afghan photojournalists, if allowed, would depict Afghanistan differently than international representations of the country have in recent years. This, I argued, can be seen as a concrete expression of local-global tensions in the perceptions influencing image production of the local-global photojournalists I interviewed. But the interview data relates only to the level of *rhetoric* of the respondents of this study and cannot offer an understanding of the *performance* of Afghan photojournalists (Mellado & Van Dalen, 2014). As such, it was important to compare the image-subjects which emerged from the interview data to actual images taken by Afghan photojournalists meant for an international audience to better understand the local-global tensions that I located in the perceptions regarding image production among the local-global Afghan photojournalists I interviewed.

5.1 Comparing image producers’ perceptions with images

Comparing the perceptions of image producers to images presents a set of difficulties. Through my choice of research strategy, and the sample of images, I tried to mitigate certain problems inherent in trying to explore the linkage between perceptions of photojournalists and published images.

5.1.1 Case study as methodological strategy

To understand the correspondence of the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists to the subjects depicted in images produced by Afghan photojournalists to represent Afghanistan to international audiences, direct observation of local-global photojournalists’ subject choices while at work would have been ideal. Unfortunately, given the worsening conflict situation in Afghanistan, participant observation of Afghan local-global photojournalists at work in Afghanistan was not possible for me to undertake. I chose instead to compare the image-subjects that emerged from the interview data to an existing set of images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience as a qualitative case study.

Employing case studies is defined as a methodological strategy (Meyer, 2001: 348-9; Wilson, 2011: 90-1) to “investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” which “addresses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1993: 59 quoted in Meyer, 2001: 330-1). Identifying the types of investigation where a qualitative case study approach should be considered, Baxter and Jack (2008: 545 following Yin, 2003) mention four conditions:

> (a) the focus of the study is to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

All four conditions which justify a qualitative case study approach according to Baxter and Jack (2008) were true for the current project. But qualitative case studies are often criticized because of their “lack of scientific rigour and reliability and that they do not address the issues of generalizability” (Noor, 2008: 1603). I would like to clarify at the outset that I do not claim generalizability of the findings I present below. The case study-based description of the correspondence of Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions with image-subjects depicted by Afghan photojournalists in a chosen image-set that I present in this chapter is based on a strategy of instrumentality – i.e. it is chosen because it "provides insight into an issue" (Stake 1995 quoted in Baxter and Jack, 2008: 548). To address questions regarding rigour and reliability of the analysis I provide below, I have sought to be transparent in describing how I interpreted and understood image-subjects in my chosen set of images to compare them to the image-subjects which emerged in the interview data.

Though more feasible than participant observation, comparing the respondents' perceptions with images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience also posed certain problems that needed to be addressed as I discuss below. The first step to addressing these problems was however to choose qualitative case study as my research strategy to employ a flexible approach to focus on the "natural context" of the subject matter being studied (Cavaye, 1996: 229 quoted in Wilson, 2011: 90) so that I could select a set of images based on its "criticality, relevance, and representativeness" (Meyer, 2001: 334) *to the specific purpose* of my investigation (Stake, 1995: 17 quoted in Baxter and Jack, 2008: 552).

5.1.2 Choosing a purposive sample of photodocumentalistic images over a representative sample of photojournalistic images

One way to conduct this case study would have been to analyze *representative samples* of internationally published *photojournalistic* images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists to form an understanding of the image-subjects depicted. This could then be compared with the image-subjects which emerged from the Afghan local-global photojournalists' responses. But published news images are a result of subjective decisions made by individuals or groups at several levels along a "visual gatekeeping chain" (Bissell, 2000: 90). The Afghan local-global photojournalists who I interviewed perceived that influences from international sources were exerted upon the images they produced through demands of international editors they worked under and international news organizations they supplied images to, as well as through perceived international audience demands. The role played by international gatekeepers – foreign "image processors" (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009: 48) – in the selection of the images produced by Afghan local-global photojournalists, or the local "image gatherers" (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009: 48), for final appearance in international news media, makes it difficult to compare Afghan local-global photojournalists' preferences with such published news images. In addition, the need to meet international audience demands can be expected to have influenced both the Afghan local-global photojournalists' production and the international editors' selection of images which are finally published in international news media.

Thus, a randomized sample of images drawn from images of Afghanistan published in international news media over a certain period of time with the criterion of having been produced by Afghan photojournalists would arguably be more representative of the subject-choices dominant in international media's depiction of Afghanistan than of preferences of Afghan photojournalists. Such a set of images was not ideal for the purposes of my case study.

To minimize the direct international influences on the production process of the images to be compared, I chose to use "photodocumentalistic" (Sousa, 1998 in Ramos & Marocco, 2017: 134-5) rather than photojournalistic images of Afghanistan for my case study. The main difference between these two types of image production was described by Sousa as stemming from the temporality of the intention behind image production. While photojournalistic images aim to represent current events, photodocumentalistic images aim for "timeless" representations (Ramos & Marocco, 2017: 134). This difference in intentionality means that photodocumentalistic images tend not to be driven by 'news value' – which, in turn, is a subjective editorial and journalistic judgement based ultimately on perceived audience demands by news image producers (processors *and* gatherers) (Ramos and Marocco: 2017: 134). Thus, photodocumentalistic representations can be expected to be less influenced by editorial and audience demands and better reflect (and retain in spite of gatekeeping processes) the intentions of the photographers behind the images. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, a set of photodocumentalistic images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience was best suited.

5.1.3 Image-set chosen as purposive sample

While photodocumentalistic images of Afghanistan produced by international photojournalists abound[113], photodocumentalistic images of Afghanistan produced by Afghans for an international audience are not as easy to find. From the limited options available[114], the set of images that I chose as my purposive sample was the collection of images appearing in the catalogue for a photo-exhibition entitled, *New Afghanistan through Afghan Eyes*[115] (Seerat et al., 2011; see appendix 7) that I collected during my field-work in 2014. The photo-exhibition included images taken by photojournalists of the 3rd Eye Film and Photojournalism Center situated in Kabul, Afghanistan. The exhibition travelled in several cities in Switzerland and Germany (as well as in provincial capitals of Afghanistan). The catalogue for the exhibition holds 156[116] photographs of Afghanistan contributed by 14 Afghan photojournalists. Of the 14, two were women.

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[113] See Verschueren (2012) and Sliwinski (2015) for analysis of some well-known collections of photodocumentalistic images of Afghanistan by international photojournalists and documentary photographers.

[114] I am aware of two other sets of images of post-2001 Afghanistan produced by Afghan photographers. One, known as ‘Afghan Tales’, has been developed and curated with the help of a Danish organization called Culture and Commerce. The other is an archive of 2,194 images produced by the photojournalists of the 3rd Eye Film and Photojournalism Center of Kabul, Afghanistan. The former has a digital catalogue available in the public domain (afghantales.org), and the latter is available for viewing online here: http://3rdeye.af/photogallery. Both of these could have served as a sample for the comparison I produce here. However, I decided against using these because the images in these are presented without captions or other information regarding the photographs themselves, unlike the catalogue for the exhibition entitled *New Afghanistan through Afghan Eyes*. Involving the surrounding texts to understand the *subject* depicted was key to my purpose here, and without captions or other surrounding texts referring to the images, understanding the image-subjects would have been too reliant on my own interpretation of what is depicted in the images. So the catalogue I use was a better sample for the purposes of my case study. I invite the reader to view the photographs in these two other sets of images through the links I have provided above. Having gone through both, I believe that these images would support, rather than contradict, the findings of the analysis I present in this chapter.

[115] In my possession. As the catalogue is not widely available, I have included descriptions of the images and verbatim texts appearing with the images in the catalogue, in Appendix 7.

I must note here that this purposive sample cannot be said to be free of all international influences. It was sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation under the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Switzerland (SDC) and the US Embassy in Afghanistan (Sayar, 2012). As such, I do not claim that this set of photodocumentalistic images of Afghanistan is absolutely free of influences beyond that of the photojournalists involved. But within sets of published photodocumentalistic images representing Afghanistan, produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience, there are very few, to the best of my knowledge, where the intentions of Afghan photojournalists can be said to have had as strong an influence in the production of images[117]. Therefore, I chose this purposive sample for the best case study possible, under the constraints I have described above, to compare images of Afghanistan by Afghan photojournalists meant for an international audience to the Afghan local-global photojournalists' responses regarding image-subjects.

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[116] The exhibition is described in the preface to the catalogue and by Sayar (2012) as having included 142 images but the catalogue holds a total of 156 images. It was not ascertainable which images were not included in the exhibition. I have used all 156 images in my analysis. See Appendix 7 for more details.

[117] Mohammad Shakar Sayar, mentioned as the program manager of SDC in Kabul at the time, describes and stresses the roles and intentions of his donor organization in sponsoring this exhibition in the article I cite (2012). He mentions that SDC's rationale for sponsoring the exhibition was to portray aspects of life in Afghanistan that the international news media's predilection for images of war and violence did not convey to international audiences. At the same time, he describes the primary role that the Afghan photojournalists played in the selection and production of the images. He also mentions that over half of the images included in the exhibition were taken long before the exhibition had been envisaged. Sayar's account of the intentions in producing and selecting the images for this exhibition for SDC might be understood as an international influence which affected the image-subjects depicted in this catalogue. But, it should be noted that this description of an overt purpose was written after the exhibition was held, by an individual affiliated with the donor organization, in a publication of the donor organization. My understanding of the intentions and roles of the Afghan photojournalists behind the selection and production of these images is largely based on conversations with some of the photojournalists involved who mentioned this exhibition as an instance where they were able to show images of Afghanistan that they preferred to international audiences in Switzerland and Germany. In addition, the catalogue's two prefaces were written by two of the featured Afghan photojournalists. They write that the intentions of the photojournalists whose images were included in the exhibition, were to present the "reality" of Afghanistan to the "world" (Seerat et al., 2011). Respondents of this study also mentioned this particular exhibition as an instance when Afghan photojournalists were successful in showing the images they preferred to an international audience.

5.1.4 Details of *New Afghanistan*

The catalogue for *New Afghanistan through Afghan Eyes* (hereafter referred to as *New Afghanistan*) consists of 160 pages in total (including cover, back cover and fly-leaves). The written text within it is in three languages – English, Dari and Pashto. For my analysis, I have only used the English text. While comparing the texts written in Dari and Pashto with the English would have added another dimension to the analysis I present here[118], as the English text is presumably targeted towards the international audience of the images, the analysis of the English text was most germane to the purposes of this study[119].

Both the front and back cover of the catalogue carry images which also appear within the catalogue. The front cover shows a close-up of a girl child in hijab[120], on a brown background with the title of the catalogue appearing in English above the image. The words '3rd Eye Photojournalism Center' appear below the image. The back cover carries an image showing a silhouette of steel trusses in a building being constructed[121] with the same words as on the front cover, but written in Dari. Pages 1-8 consist of the front-matter section of the catalogue. The very first page contains the catalogue's bibliographical details in English and Dari. It also carries an image across the top half of the page of a landscape showing a green valley and mountains with red flowers growing on the slopes, a road passing through the valley on the left hand side of the image[122]. Pages 2-7 consist of two prefaces to the catalogue – one in English and Dari by photojournalist Basir Seerat, and the other in English, Dari and Pashto by photojournalist Najibullah Musafer. Page 8 carries portrait images of the 14 photojournalists who contributed images to the collection. They are[123]:

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[118] Arguably, it could allow for a comparison between how the images were contextualized for a domestic audience with how they were contextualized for an international audience, but this is beyond the remit of the current study.

[119] I do not read Dari or Pashto, though I can understand them to an extent when spoken based on my knowledge of Urdu/Hindi and Bengali. This of course also biased my choice towards depending on the English text. But other than the English text being presumably targeted towards an international audience, the primacy given to the English text can also be seen in the arrangement of the catalogue from left to right as well as the section-names appearing only in English. I am indebted to my friend Sediq Bezhan for confirming the languages in which the texts appear in the catalogue.

[120] Captioned within the catalogue as 'Education in a secure environment, Baghlan Province'.

[121] Captioned within the catalogue as 'Construction in Pawane 3, Kabul'.

1. Malyar Sadeq Azad
2. Nasir Fedayee
3. Amina Hussain
4. Mehdy Mehraeen
5. Najibullah Musafer
6. Ah. Nawid Nazari
7. Mani Meshken Qalam
8. Reza Sahel
9. Basir Seerat
10. Nasim Seyamak
11. Maisam Shaheen
12. Farzana Sultani
13. Asif Talash
14. Muhammad Zarin

Pages 9-17 of the catalogue offer a visual table of contents with thumbnail sized reproductions of the images that appear in the main body of the catalogue. Beside each thumbnail sized image is its caption, in Dari, Pashto, and English. The captions do not appear again in the main body of the catalogue.

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[122] This image also appears inside the collection of images and is captioned ‘Red Rose in Ishkashim District, Badakhshan Province’.

[123] In alphabetical order.

Verschueren (2012: 33 following Perlmutter 1998 and Scott 1999) notes that there are generally two types of captions employed to contextualize images. One type is minimalistic, which contextualizes the individual image as ‘iconic’ of larger social processes and phenomena. The other type of caption is specific. It describes the particularities of the slice of life represented in the image. In *New Afghanistan*, almost all of the English captions are minimalistic, making cryptic references to larger social processes and phenomena in Afghanistan that the images themselves refer to metonymically (though the specific places where the photos were taken are mentioned in a majority of the captions).

The main body of the catalogue consists of the pages numbered from 1-141[124]. The images appearing in these pages are divided into 16 different sections – ‘Sport’, ‘Reconstruction’, ‘Life in cities’, ‘People’, ‘Afghan women handicrafts’ (sic), ‘Religious’, ‘Security’, ‘Women in politics’, ‘Afghanistan’s nature’, ‘Art and culture’, ‘Agriculture’, ‘Nature Disasters’ (sic), ‘Health’, ‘Education’, ‘Effects of War and Poverty’ and ‘Historical Places’[125]. In analyzing the images, I based my understanding of the image-subjects on these section names, the captions for the images, as well as the images themselves.

5.1.5 Analyzing images to understand image-subjects

Existing theoretical frameworks to analyze images did not fit the purposes of this study, given my need to focus on image-subjects. Visual framing analysis[126] and socio-semiotic analysis of images[127] are employed extensively by researchers to analyze and compare image-sets, and they have been used to analyze international representations of Afghanistan before (Fahmy, 2004 and Verschueren, 2012; Sliwinski, 2015 respectively). Both visual framing analysis and socio-semiotic analysis involve analysis of the *form* of images rather than only the subjects depicted in the photographs. The respondents in this study, however, did not go in-depth in discussing differences in the form of images and mostly expressed differences in the kind of subjects chosen in images. In the analysis of images, focusing on details of the compositional aspects of the photographs, as would be studied in a visual framing analysis (Rodriguez and Dimitrova, 2011), was not germane to my purpose. Taking into account each photograph's spatial syntagma and paradigm (Verschueren, 2012: 34), which are important for socio-semiotic analysis, was also not particularly relevant.

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[124] The number of images in the catalogue does not correspond with the number of pages in the main section of the catalogue. There are several images that appear spread over two pages while some pages hold more than one image. For details of each image and the section and pages within which they appear, see Appendix 7.

[125] All these section names appear only in English in the catalogue.

[126] See Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011) for a useful summary of this method of analysis of images. See Entman (2004) for the theoretical approach underlying this method of analysis. This method is most often used to study news images. Fahmy (2004) is a relevant example here. But most often texts surrounding images are not taken into account in this form of analysis, which I argue is problematic (Mitra, 2014: 3-4).

Instead, I focus my analysis of the images of *New Afghanistan* on the types of image-subjects mentioned in the respondents' accounts that I identified and described in the previous chapter[128]. While I limit the study of the images to understanding the subjects depicted based on types identified by the respondents, I do use one tool of analysis from the socio-semiotic approach to studying images. This is the conceptual understanding of images and surrounding written texts as one "mixed-media unit" wherein the image is a metonymic device representing "a slice of life" and the written text provides the context within which to understand the image (Verschueren, 2012: 32). Analyzing images and surrounding texts as a mixed-media unit was essential to my purpose of understanding the subjects depicted in photographs. The 'subject' of a photo cannot be understood simply by viewing the particular (visual) slices of life in individual images. The context of those slices of life provided in the captions must be analyzed in tandem to understand clearly the subject being depicted in that image.

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[127] The methods of analyzing images within this approach are too numerous to adequately review here. A few examples of the theoretical approaches would be, Hall (1973); Barthes (1982); Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). See Myers et al. (1996) and van Leeuwen & Jaworski (2002) for examples of this form of analysis applied to images of conflicts.

[128] A case study approach "is open to the use of theory *or conceptual categories* that guide the research and analysis of data" (Meyer, 2001: 331; emphasis added).

In *New Afghanistan*, there are two types of written texts which are used to provide context for the images – captions and section headings. I treated these surrounding texts both as textual guides to, as well as part of, the subjects of the images presented to the viewer. This allowed me to minimize my own judgement and interpretation of the subjects depicted in each image. A good example of where this was useful was with those images that I describe below as representing the social problem of ‘poverty’ in Afghanistan. As perceptions of affluence and poverty are relative, the captions and the section headings of the images were my guide in understanding whether the intended context of the image was to serve as a metonymic representation of poverty in Afghanistan or not, rather than basing my analysis on my own interpretation of poverty. At the same time, the surrounding texts helped me understand whether ‘poverty’ is part of the subject being presented to the viewer through the image.

In the accounts of the Afghan local-global photojournalists interviewed for this study, I identified five types of subjects that they perceived as most often present in international representations of Afghanistan. These image-subjects were: a generally-described ‘negative aspects’ of Afghanistan; images of foreign military personnel; images of war and violence; images showing political leaders; and images showing Afghan women. From their responses, I also identified six types of subjects that they perceived as preferred by them as Afghans when representing Afghanistan to an international audience. These were: images of reconstruction and development in Afghanistan in recent years; images representing the re-introduced democratic process in post-2001 Afghanistan; images of sports; images of landscapes, historical sites and the natural beauty of Afghanistan; and images showing the ordinary people in Afghanistan. The respondents also mentioned that images of Afghan women were preferred by them as Afghans[129].

Identifying these types of subjects in the image-texts in the catalogue *New Afghanistan* required a flexible, iterative process. Taking into account both the image-texts themselves and the respondents' statements, as well as the context in which they mentioned each image-subject, were involved in this process. After an initial review of the images in *New Afghanistan*, I realized that the image-texts in the catalogue could be understood as depicting more than one image-subject. Also, the types of image-subjects mentioned by the respondents could be understood as being not always mutually exclusive. For example, 'Afghan women' are also 'ordinary Afghans', and 'negative aspects' of Afghanistan could also include the effects of 'war and violence' on 'ordinary Afghans'. So I revisited the responses by the interviewees repeatedly to clarify for myself – based on how the respondents described these image-subjects – which types of image-subjects should be understood as *mutually exclusive to which others* and which image-subjects I could understand as represented *at the same time within one image-text*. Reviewing the image-texts also helped my understanding at this stage.

Based on this process, I chose to identify the image-subjects 'war and violence' and 'negative aspects' as mutually exclusive *to each other*, though some of the image-texts which visually depicted social ills and problems also textually referred to these ills and problems as effects of war. This is because the sense in which the respondents had referred to images of war and violence was as *images of places where acts of war and violence are being committed or had been committed*. I also chose to understand the image-subject 'negative aspects' as inclusive of the image-subject 'ordinary Afghans'. This is because descriptions of images of ordinary Afghans by some respondents included images depicting *problems* faced by ordinary Afghans.

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[129] This image-subject was common between preferences of Afghan photojournalists and their perceptions of subjects dominant in international photographic representations of Afghanistan.

I chose to understand the image-subjects ‘ordinary Afghans’ and ‘Afghan women’ *as mutually exclusive to each other in those cases where the image or the surrounding text refers to the female referent in the image in a way that makes their gender part of the subject of the image* being presented to the viewer. This was because the particular sense in the respondents’ statements regarding images of Afghan women was that of the *female gender* being the *subject of the image*, as it could serve as a symbol, i.e. be representative of larger social processes and phenomena in Afghanistan beyond the immediate referent.

Based on the review of the images in the catalogue and the re-reading of the interview transcripts, I also chose to extend the image-subject ‘sports’ to include ‘play’, i.e. unorganized forms of active physical recreation – in which children are often shown engaged in *New Afghanistan* – because the sense in which the respondents had brought up sports as an image-subject could be understood as illustrative of peaceful (but physical) pursuits of ordinary Afghans. However, due to the same reason, I chose to understand these image-texts of sports and play *as inclusive to* the image-subject ‘ordinary Afghans’. I understood all the other types of image-subjects as not mutually exclusive to other image-subjects and possible to be present within one image-text. Below I describe each of the 10 different types of image-subjects, as they finally came to be understood for interpretation[130], of the image-texts in *New Afghanistan*.

Negative aspects of Afghanistan: Image-texts that visually depict or textually refer to social ills and problems in Afghanistan, irrespective of the implied cause of such problems.

War and violence: Image-texts that visually depict or textually refer to *places* where acts of war and violence are occurring or have occurred.

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[130] I do not claim that my interpretation – especially of how subjects are visually depicted – is not subjective. But my own knowledge, background, and biases may be said to be akin – perhaps informed and interested but still an outsider – to that of a viewer of this exhibition outside Afghanistan, viewing these images. For the full description of which image-subjects were interpreted to be present in which image-texts, see Appendix 7.

Foreign military personnel: Image-texts that visually depict or textually refer to non-Afghan soldiers[131].

Political leaders: Image-texts that visually depict or textually refer to individuals who play an influential political role.

Reconstruction and Development in post-2001 Afghanistan: Image-texts that visually depict or textually refer to physical infrastructure being built or having been built as part of the reconstruction and development efforts in post-2001 Afghanistan.

Re-introduced democratic process in post-2001 Afghanistan: Image-texts that visually depict or textually refer to re-introduced democratic political processes in post-2001 Afghanistan.

Sports/Play: Image-texts that visually depict or textually refer to organized and unorganized forms of active physical recreation.

Landscapes and historical sites: Image-texts that visually depict or textually refer to landscapes and historical sites in Afghanistan.

Ordinary Afghans: Image-texts that visually depict or textually refer to civilian Afghans. If civilian Afghans include visually recognizable women or girls, the image-text does not visually depict or textually refer to the female gender of the Afghans in a way that treats the gender of the female referents as part of, or the main, subject of the image and representative of larger social processes and phenomena in Afghanistan.

Afghan women as 'symbols': Image-texts that visually depict Afghan women or girls and/or textually refer to their female gender in a way that treats the gender of the female referents as the main subject and representative of larger social processes and phenomena in Afghanistan.

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[131] The images in *New Afghanistan* also depict Afghan National Army soldiers. These images were not included within images depicting ordinary Afghans because the image-texts visually depict and textually refer to them as soldiers, i.e. combatants rather than civilian, 'ordinary' Afghans. See Appendix 7.

5.2 Image-subjects in *New Afghanistan*

Based on the above, I classified each image-text in *New Afghanistan* according to its image-subjects (see Appendix 7). In Table 3, I note the number of image-texts in *New Afghanistan* that could be classified as pertaining to a particular image-subject in column 2. Several image-texts were classified as pertaining to more than one type of image-subject. This is reflected in column 2. In column 3, I offer an understanding of the relative presence/absence of a particular image-subject within the total number of images in *New Afghanistan* by noting the percentage of total images that pertained to the different image-subjects.

Table 3: Image-subjects in *New Afghanistan*

Image-subject	No. of image-texts of each subject	Presence/absence of image-subject by percentage of total image-texts (N=156)
1. Negative aspects of Afghanistan	12	7.6%
2. War and violence	4	2.5%
3. Foreign military personnel	1	0.6%
4. Political leaders	1	0.6%
5. Reconstruction/Development	12	7.6%
6. Democratic processes	5	3.2%
7. Sports/Play	16	10.2%
8. Landscapes and Historical sites	35	22.4%
9. Ordinary Afghans	77	49.3%
10. Afghan Women or Girls as ‘symbols’	33	21.1%

Table 3 provides an overview of the presence/absence of types of image-subjects in *New Afghanistan*. Below I describe each image-subject and some images which pertained to each.

5.2.1 Negative aspects of Afghanistan

Twelve image-texts (7.6%) in *New Afghanistan* pertain to social ills and problems faced by Afghans. Four of the image-texts included here appear within the section of the catalogue entitled ‘Effects of War and Poverty’. Among these, three visually depict *and* textually refer to war and conflict as the cause behind the social ill depicted, while a fourth shows a close-up of a man with black stains on his face and matted hair, captioned as ‘Addiction in Kabul’. Among the three image-texts which refer to war as the cause of the social ills depicted, two show individuals, whose faces are not seen, with prosthetic legs. The third image-text is of two children, one of whom is crying and holding a doll, while the other looks at her. The children are described as ‘refugees’ in the caption.

The other image-texts included are from within various sections of the catalogue: ‘Reconstruction’, ‘Natur[al] Disasters’, ‘City Life’ and ‘Health’. The issues depicted in these image-texts cover a range of social ills and problems where war is not mentioned as the cause. These include a disaster scene following an avalanche, and a photo showing smog over Kabul, captioned ‘Kabul’s air pollution’. Another five image-texts refer to infrastructural problems faced by Afghans. Two of these appear within the ‘Reconstruction’ section of the catalogue and textually refer to traffic problems and lack of access to telephone connectivity. The others include a girl child studying by the light of a candle (caption: ‘Lack of electricity in most provinces of Afghanistan – where is the 21st century?’), a girl carrying water (caption: ‘Water access problems in the capital of Afghanistan’), and women riding in a semi-open animal-drawn carriage (caption: ‘Transportation problems in Tashqorghan Bazaar, Samangan’). Another image refers to poverty in Afghanistan in the caption. Showing a family eating a meal in humble circumstances, the caption asks, ‘Will poverty be eliminated?’

5.2.2 War and violence

In *New Afghanistan*, there are four image-texts[132] out of the 156 (2.5%) which could be said to visually depict *and* textually refer to a place where acts of war and violence were being or had been committed[133]. The caption of the first image, which shows ruined buildings and a few people in front of them through a rusted tin wall, refers to the image as ‘Kabul after war’. The second image shows Afghan National Army soldiers carrying weapons in front of a charred building. The image is referred to with the ambiguous, perhaps ironic, caption ‘Prosperity after war, Afghan super market, Kabul’. The third is of a boy running while balancing a wheel with a stick along a low fence in the backdrop of the war-ravaged ruins of a palace[134] in Kabul, captioned ‘Entertainment after war’[135]. Apart from these image-texts, there is one other image included here which *visually* depicts a place which can be understood as where violence had been committed but does not *textually* refer to it. The image shows an election poster pasted on a lamppost which is twisted and torn out of shape, (presumably) by an explosion. The caption to this image – ‘Exercising democracy’ – does not mention war[136].

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[132] As I have mentioned above, not included here are those image-texts that refer to war in their captions but do not visually depict a scene where acts of war and violence had taken place. Two image-texts showing Afghan national army soldiers are also not included here as the captions refer to them respectively as ‘A soldier of national security’ and ‘Afghan National Army’ and they do not visually depict or textually refer to a place where acts of war and violence were being or had been committed.

[133] Conversely, four images refer to ‘peace’ visually and textually. One of these images shows a white dove sitting on the head of a woman wearing a white burqa. The caption says ‘symbol of peace’. The second shows a young boy carrying blue flags emblazoned with the peace dove with the caption ‘Welcome to peace'. Another is of a young girl holding onto a white cloth draped on her head, captioned, ‘If we be symbols of peace, we will live in peace’. The fourth is of a dove walking on the ground between marching khaki-clad feet. But ‘peace’ was not a type of image-subject mentioned by the Afghan local-global photojournalists. These image-texts are included within other image-subjects, e.g. ‘ordinary Afghans’.

[134] This is the Dar-ul-Aman palace in Kabul, often depicted in images showing the ravages of war in Afghanistan.

[135] This image is also included within the image-subject ‘sports/play’. I chose to include this image-text here because of the looming presence of the war-defaced ruins of the palace in the background coupled with the reference to the war in the caption. Contrastingly, not included here is an image that shows a girl standing up while swinging on a swing set. The image is captioned ‘Flight after War’, but the setting is that of a fairground and, as such, the image is *visually* not of a place where acts of war or violence were or had been committed. This latter image-text is included within ‘sports/play’.

5.2.3 Foreign military personnel

There is only one image-text in *New Afghanistan* which can be said to fit this image-subject (0.6%). This image-text shows a football match between an unidentified Afghan women’s team and a team of women soldiers of the International Security Assistance Force, with more international soldiers standing in the background as spectators. There is one other image-text which might be said to include troops or soldiers, though they are not referred to as such and no interpretation whether they show foreign or Afghan military troops can be made. The image is a close-up shot of a dove walking on the ground in between khaki-clad legs marching in lockstep. The caption only says, ‘Peace and Democracy in Kabul Stadium’[137].

5.2.4 Political leaders

In *New Afghanistan*, there is only one image-text which could be interpreted as pertaining to this image-subject (0.6%). This is an image captioned ‘Women[’s] participation in politics’ which shows an unnamed Afghan woman politician holding up a red card. An unfocused background appears to show a parliamentary setting.

5.2.5 Reconstruction and Development

There are 12 image-texts (7.6%) in the catalogue that pertain to this image-subject. As I note above, there is a section entitled ‘Reconstruction’ in the catalogue *New Afghanistan*. This section contains 10 image-texts and are all included here. In addition, two other image-texts also show reconstruction work. One is that of the silhouette of steel trusses captioned ‘Construction in Parwane 3, Kabul’, and another one is of labourers working on a building site captioned ‘Women laborers working together with men in reconstruction of the city, Kabul'[138]. Within the 'Reconstruction' section of the catalogue, various kinds of infrastructure are shown recently built or being built. These include a gas mining operation, an electrical cable being strung along a road, a railroad under construction, and a cellphone tower being erected. Two others show recently constructed residential housing. One image shows a road being built, and another shows cars and trucks on a (recently?) finished road snaking through a valley, captioned 'Traffic jam in Salang, Parwan'. Another image within the 'Reconstruction' section is of a shop with two men sitting at a table with telephones. The caption refers to the image as the 'Only public call office in Kirman area in Lal wa Sarjangle District, Ghor province'[139].

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[136] This image is also included within the image-subject ‘democratic processes’.

[137] It is included within the image-subject ‘democratic processes’.

5.2.6 Democratic processes in post-2001 Afghanistan

Among the image-texts in the catalogue *New Afghanistan*, there are five (3.2%) that refer to democratic political processes in post-2001 Afghanistan, both textually and visually. The first is the image of a dove among marching feet with the caption 'Peace and Democracy in Kabul Stadium'. Three others show Afghan women participating directly and indirectly in what might be understood as democratic politics. One is that of the woman politician already mentioned, while another shows women casting ballots. The third image-text shows women holding banners participating in a demonstration[140]. Together, these three image-texts make up the section 'Women in Politics' in the catalogue. The final image in this category, appearing within the section 'People', shows the poster of an electoral candidate on a lamppost, described above.

In four of the five image-texts in the catalogue which refer to democratic political processes in post-2001 Afghanistan, the context for each may be viewed as positive – contextualized visually through symbols such as doves and textually through that of women playing roles in politics. The fifth image, by photojournalist Najibullah Musafer, refers to the process of ‘exercising democracy’ in its caption while visually referencing the conflict in Afghanistan through the jagged metal edges of a lamppost twisted out of shape, (presumably) by an explosion. This image-text presents a more complex idea of democracy in post-2001 Afghanistan. The visual metaphor of ‘papering over’ the effects of war in the image suggests both the positive aspect of ‘exercising democracy’ as well as its superficiality, even flimsiness, in Afghanistan.

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[138] Also included within 'Afghan women as symbols'.

[139] In referring to the problems with infrastructure in Afghanistan, these last two images textually refer to the social problems in Afghanistan, so they are also included within the image-subject 'Negative Aspects' (mentioned above).

[140] Also included in the image-subject 'Afghan women as symbols'.

5.2.7 Sports and play

Among the 16 image-texts (10.2%) which pertain to the image-subject ‘sports/play’ in the catalogue *New Afghanistan*, eight show Afghans engaged in organized sporting activities. Of these, three are of skiing, football[141], and cricket respectively, and five others show sports which are traditional in Afghanistan, including Buzkashi[142], cock fighting, camel fighting, traditional archery, and traditional wrestling. A further eight image-texts show Afghan children playing in various outdoor settings. Of these, one image-text refers to war only textually – describing the image of a girl child on a swing-set, in a fairground setting, as ‘Flight after war’. The captions for the other images depicting ‘play’ refer to the images as representing ‘joy’, ‘happiness’, ‘security’, ‘innocence’, etc.

5.2.8 Landscapes and historical sites

In *New Afghanistan*, 35 out of the 156 image-texts (22.4%) show landscapes and historical sites. Of the 35, 13 are referred to as sites of historical importance through their inclusion in the section ‘Historical places’. The 13 historical sites depicted are from nine different provinces of Afghanistan. A further 22 images are landscapes whose natural beauty is referred to in the captions. These images of landscapes are from 16 different provinces of Afghanistan.

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[141] The skiers and footballers are Afghan women and their genders are mentioned in the captions as part of the subject of the images. As such, these images are also included in the image-subject ‘Afghan women as symbols’.

[142] Traditional equestrian sport of Central Asia where the headless carcass of an animal is vied for by two teams of horse-riders with the objective of placing it in a goal. It is the national sport of Afghanistan.

5.2.9 Ordinary Afghans

In the catalogue, *New Afghanistan*, 77 image-texts (49.3%) pertain to the image-subject ‘ordinary Afghans’. Only four of these images textually refer to war while describing the social ills and problems affecting the Afghans pictured – I have described these above. In the other image-texts, most of the ordinary Afghans depicted are referred to by the activity they are engaged in, and in some cases according to their age or ethnicity. As mentioned, sports and play are two such activities in which ordinary Afghans are shown to be engaged. Another 14 show Afghans at work. Thirty-one other image-texts show Afghans engaged in miscellaneous mundane, recreational, or cultural pursuits. Four image-texts show Afghans engaged in religious activities such as praying or attending religious instruction. A further 10 images are portraits of Afghan men and children. The captions refer to their youth or their smile, innocence, joy or other aspects of their demeanour captured visually. The captions of three of these portrait images refer to the ethnicity of the men portrayed, describing them as ‘Aimaqi’, ‘Uzbek’, and ‘Turkman’ respectively, while two others refer to the old age of the men portrayed.

Included in these 77 image-texts of ordinary Afghans are 23 images of Afghan women and girls. These are included here because these image-texts do not visually or textually refer to the female gender of the human referents shown in the images as part of the subject of the image in a way that is representative of larger social processes and phenomena in Afghanistan. An example where the gender is textually referred to but was not interpreted as a subject which was symbolic of larger social processes and phenomena is an image showing a burqa-clad woman on a street which is captioned ‘Tallest woman in Kunduz’. Most often, the images included here do not refer to the gender of the women depicted at all. For example, one image shows girls working as labourers at a farm whose caption only refers to the girls as ‘child labourers’. There is also a portrait of a woman who is referred to as a contestant of an Afghan talent hunt TV show and another of a woman praying. None of the captions of these images refers to their gender.

5.2.10 Afghan women or girls as 'symbols'

In *New Afghanistan*, 33 image-texts (21.1%) pertain to this image-subject. They refer to the gender of the women shown as part of the subject in a way that is symbolic of social processes and phenomena beyond the immediate environment depicted in the photograph, either visually or in the texts surrounding the images. Twenty-four of these image-texts could be interpreted as referring to the female gender of the human referent as symbols representing 'progress in the status of women' in Afghan society. Two of these 24 images show female skiers and footballers respectively while referring to the gender of the women depicted in the captions, while another four image-texts are of girls and women receiving education. Fifteen images show Afghan women working – in the handicraft industry, on farms[143], as doctors as well as trainee nurses, and one image shows a woman working alongside men as a labourer at a building site. As mentioned before, three images of women represent them as symbols of democratic politics in post-2001 Afghanistan through showing their participation in the democratic process. Other images refer to the women protagonists of the images as symbols, not of 'progress' but of cultural diversity (represented by the traditional ethnic dress they are wearing) or 'beauty'.

There are two other image-texts included here which can be interpreted as presenting a complex idea of the position of women in Afghanistan rather than using the gender of the female referent simply as a symbol of progress in women's status in post-2001 Afghan society. One such image, by Basir Seerat, shows a burqa-clad woman clutching a book on which there is a picture of a woman wearing a hijab. The cryptic caption says 'tradition & modernity'. Another such image is of a burqa-clad woman selling magazines on a street, by Farzana Sultani[144]. It shows her holding up the cover page of a magazine in front of her veiled face. As the magazine cover page features an uncovered face of a woman, the effect is visually unsettling. The caption refers to this burqa-clad woman *working* as a magazine seller on the street. I understood both image-texts as offering a visual-textual comment on both the changes and continuities in the position of women in Afghanistan.

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[143] Here I do not include the one image where the girls working on the farm are only referred to as 'child labourers', mentioned above.

[144] Farzana Sultani is now known as Farzana Wahidy. I have used here the name mentioned in the catalogue.

In summation to sections 5.2.1 to 5.2.10, through analysis of the image-subjects in *New Afghanistan*, I found that image-texts pertaining to the image-subject ‘ordinary Afghans’ (49.3%) far outnumber image-texts pertaining to any other type of image-subjects in the catalogue. Image-texts pertaining to ‘landscapes and historical sites’ are the second most present (22.4%), closely followed by images of ‘Afghan women or girls as symbols’ (21.1%). All of the other image-subjects were present in less than 10 percent of all the image-texts in *New Afghanistan*, except for the image-subject ‘sports/play’ which was present in just over 10 percent of the image-texts (10.2%).

5.3 Correspondence of Afghan photojournalists’ perceptions with image-subjects in *New Afghanistan*

The responses of the Afghan local-global photojournalists, as gleaned from the interview data, suggested that images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience – under conditions where their image production was not directly influenced by international organizational, editorial, and audience demands – would include images of ordinary Afghans, images depicting sports, images of landscapes and historical places in Afghanistan, images of reconstruction and development, and the re-introduced democratic processes in post-2001 Afghanistan, as well as images of Afghan women. The interview data also suggested that Afghan photojournalists’ images of Afghanistan for an international audience – under the same conditions – would eschew images of war and violence and foreign military personnel, political leaders, and images depicting social ills and problems in the country.

In *New Afghanistan*, the image-subject ‘ordinary Afghans’ can be interpreted as present in almost half of the total 156 images in the catalogue. ‘Landscapes and historical sites’ are the subjects of over one-fifth of the total images. The number of image-texts visually depicting or textually referring to the gender of the Afghan women or girls depicted, as part of the subject of the image and symbolic of larger processes and phenomena in

Afghanistan, also make up over one-fifth of all the images appearing in *New Afghanistan*. The more *specific* image-subjects mentioned by the respondents – subjects such as sports (extended here to include play), reconstruction and development, and re-introduced democratic political processes in post-2001 Afghanistan – were not present in as large numbers as these other image-subjects. Both the image-subjects 'reconstruction and development' and 'democratic processes' appear in less than one-tenth of all the images in *New Afghanistan* while 'sports/play' appears as a subject in just over one-tenth of all the images. I argue that even the relatively low presence of these latter group of image-subjects is also remarkable given their very specific nature.

The image-subjects – war and violence, foreign military personnel, political leaders, and negative aspects – that the interview data suggested would be eschewed by Afghan photojournalists, under the conditions mentioned above, were also relatively absent in *New Afghanistan.* Only one image-text each could be located which pertains to the image-subjects 'foreign military personnel' and 'political leaders' among the 156 images (making up less than one percent each). There were only four images (2.5%) which visually or textually referred to the place depicted in the image as where acts of violence and war were being or had been committed (understood using the sense within which the respondents described images of 'war and violence'). The image-subject 'negative aspects' appears more than these three other image-subjects, but still is apparent in less than one-tenth of all the images in *New Afghanistan*.

In sum, it can be said that the relative presence/absence of image-subjects within *New Afghanistan* largely corresponded with the responses regarding image-subjects of the local-global photojournalists interviewed for this study.

5.4 Correspondence of respondents' perceptions with image-subjects: Discussion

Within the limitations of a qualitative case study using one purposive sample of images, the *rhetoric* of the respondents I interviewed can be said to match the images of Afghanistan which appear in the catalogue entitled *New Afghanistan through Afghan Eyes*. Though not generalizable beyond this, the case study nonetheless helps to ground the preferences of the respondents in actual images produced by Afghan photojournalists. In spite of its limitations, the study helps to show that Afghan photojournalists, when not working under the direct international influences that are part of local-global news image production, *might choose* to depict Afghanistan to an international audience through largely similar image-subjects as the expressed preferences of the respondents I interviewed. These include images of ordinary Afghans, landscapes and historical sites in Afghanistan, non-conflict related active physical pursuits of Afghans (sports and play), reconstruction and development, and re-introduced democratic political processes in post-2001 Afghanistan. The study also helps to show that they *might not choose* to depict Afghanistan through images of the ongoing conflict and violence in the country, the presence of foreign military personnel, social ills and problems, and political leaders.

To understand the *possible implications* of choices to focus on the former group of image-subjects in representing Afghanistan to an international audience, rather than the latter group of image-subjects, a comparison with the observations made by Verschueren (2012) regarding international photodocumentalistic and photojournalistic representations of Afghanistan with the images in *New Afghanistan* is helpful[145].

Verschueren (2012: 129) noted, regarding images produced by international documentary photographers, that in their representations, “Afghanistan figured largely as an exotic background setting” to the war and violence depicted as “ubiquitous” in the country. *New Afghanistan* offers a very different portrayal of Afghanistan. The image-texts in the catalogue offer glimpses of different parts of the country – across different provinces, districts, and cities in Afghanistan, showing specific landscapes as well as historic sites – as well as different spheres of Afghan society – such as workplaces (26 images), political spaces (three images), public and commercial spaces (47 images), religious spaces (six images), and (secular) educational spaces (six images). As a result, a viewer is offered a heterogeneous idea of Afghanistan rather than a homogeneous backdrop for war and violence.

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[145] I rely mostly on Verschueren’s study (2012) here over the other studies done on international photographic representations of Afghanistan because his study involved both photodocumentalistic as well as photojournalistic sets of images of Afghanistan, offering a better comparison to *New Afghanistan* which is a set of photodocumentalistic images of Afghanistan. The other extant study which focuses on photodocumentalistic images from Afghanistan is that of Sliwinski (2015). However, her analysis is focused on a particular *type* of photodocumentalistic images – portraiture of foreign military personnel and Afghan combatants.

Verschueren also noted in his analysis of both photodocumentalistic and photojournalistic international representations of Afghanistan that they tended to not portray “the Afghan people as agents of their own destiny”, going on to note that “Afghan civilians mostly figured in subordinate or passive roles: as victims of the conflict or as beneficiaries of an aid program” (Verschueren, 2012: 129). In contrast, in *New Afghanistan*, Afghans – both men and women – are shown living, working, and playing as humans elsewhere in the world do, in the various spheres of human existence that the spaces described above represent. The difference of representations of Afghans in *New Afghanistan* to what Verschueren observed in international representations of Afghans is marked in other ways as well. The depiction of Afghans as beneficiaries of aid programs (Verschueren, 2012: 45) is wholly absent from *New Afghanistan*. The primacy given to foreign military personnel and other foreign actors as ‘liberators’ that Verschueren (2012) observed in international representations of Afghanistan, and the consequent tendency to “relegate” Afghans “to the margins” (p.45), is also absent in *New Afghanistan*. It is foreign military personnel who might be said to be relegated to the periphery in *New Afghanistan*. There is only one image-text of foreign military personnel, and even in this one image-text, foreign military personnel do not command the visual depiction or textual reference. The 12 image-texts within the image-subject ‘negative aspects’ might be said to refer to the victimhood of Afghans through their depiction of social ills and problems. But as I have noted above, nine of these 12 image-texts in *New Afghanistan* are of social ills and problems in connection with the lived realities of the people in Afghanistan, rather than the conflict in Afghanistan, unlike what Verschueren found.

While *New Afghanistan* depicts Afghanistan and Afghans differently than international representations of Afghanistan and Afghans (Verschueren, 2012), the same cannot be said about *all* depictions of *Afghan women* in the catalogue. Many of the image-texts tended to use the gender of the female protagonists as ‘symbols’ of ethnic cultures or social progress in the post-2001 period in Afghanistan. Thus, the representation of

Afghan women in *New Afghanistan* may be said to be similar to the trend noted in international representations of Afghan women (Fahmy, 2004; Jabbra, 2006; Jiwani, 2009; Mackie, 2012; Verschueren, 2012; Mitra, 2014).

While noting this one similarity to trends in international representations, it can be seen in the above comparison that the collection of images in *New Afghanistan* presents a very different portrayal of Afghanistan and Afghans, especially Afghan males, than what was noted by Verschueren in his large-scale study of different sets of international images representing Afghans and Afghanistan. Given the images in *New Afghanistan* were produced by Afghan photojournalists, this can be seen to lend credence to the view that Verschueren (2012: 158-159) expressed near the end of his book-length study:

> One route to addressing the issues of stereotyping, ethnocentrism, and simply access could be rethinking collaboration between Afghans and foreign journalists. The former cannot only provide an in-depth perspective of their own culture but they can also suggest new ways of photographing and representing conflict. Afghan photographers and journalists can help replace the image of Afghanistan as an empty space, a medieval realm and an oppressive zone, and they can help connect with the multiplicities of living in contemporary Afghanistan.

But Verschueren (2012) in this passage does not distinguish between photodocumentalistic and photojournalistic image production as I do here, nor does he take into consideration that direct and indirect international influences might be a factor in the image production of Afghan photographers. His statement may be read as that "Afghan photographers and journalists" *can* help "replace the image of Afghanistan as an empty space, a medieval realm and an oppressive zone" and thus *will* help "connect with the multiplicities of living in contemporary Afghanistan". I mention this passage by Verschueren here to clearly state that this is *not the argument I seek to make*, in light of my case study above.

What the above discussed findings of correspondence between the respondents' perceptions and the image-subjects in *New Afghanistan* help to strengthen – by grounding the perceptions of the respondents in actual images – is the suggestion from my interview data that *when not working under direct international influences such as* *organizational, editorial, and perceived audience demands inherent in local-global news image production*, Afghan photojournalists *might produce* images of Afghanistan for an international audience which focus largely on the lives of ordinary Afghans and their mundane pursuits. These images *may* include subjects such as sports or play, landscapes and historical places, as well as images of reconstruction and development, and democratic political processes in post-2001 Afghanistan – all of which are *not noted as often present in international representations of Afghanistan* in previous research – while also depicting Afghan women in ways similar to how they have been represented internationally, as noted in previous studies. The correspondences I found through my case study also help strengthen the suggestion from the interview data that *under the same conditions*, Afghan photojournalists producing images for an international audience *might eschew to a large extent* images of war and violence, foreign military personnel and political leaders in Afghanistan, as well as images depicting social ills and problems, particularly those caused by conflict in Afghanistan, that have been *noted as often present in international representations of Afghanistan* by previous researchers.

In sum, the case study above helps to strengthen my argument that the preferences for *different* image-subjects of the local-global photojournalists I interviewed (expressed as a reaction against direct international influences in news image production as well as because of their perceptions of having superior knowledge and familiarity to Afghanistan as Afghans) to those image-subjects that are dominant in international media (as perceived by the respondents, but which also largely correspond with findings of previous studies) can be understood as a concrete expression of the local-global tensions in the perceptions regarding image production of the respondents. Their responses can be said to have some visual-textual basis outside of their perceptions, as shown in the case study I undertook.

Whether Afghan local-global photojournalists *can produce* images of Afghanistan focused on a particular group of image-subjects or eschew another, and thus perhaps also change or challenge how Afghanistan and Afghans have been found to be represented internationally – as seems to be suggested by Verschueren (2012: 158-9) in his unqualified statement – is a different question altogether. Understanding the *images* produced by Afghan local-global photojournalists must include a holistic picture of the local-global tensions and negotiations that I have traced throughout this thesis in different aspects of their *work*.

Chapter 6

6 Discussion

In the previous chapters of this thesis, I have traced the many different ways that the interplay of ‘local’ and ‘global’ could be located in the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists I interviewed regarding their professional experiences, professional roles, and image production. I have described and discussed them separately in the previous three chapters. But the different ways that factors related to the ‘local’ and ‘global’ intersected the perceptions of the respondents are related to each other, and recurrent patterns across the three different aspects of the respondents’ work I focused on can be seen. Before I offer a broader view of the patterns related to the interplay of the ‘local’ and ‘global’ *across* the three main foci of this thesis, I re-trace my steps in the preceding chapters and offer an overview of the different local-global tensions – and a form of local-global negotiation – which I located in the perceptions of the respondents.

6.1 Overview of local-global tensions and negotiation

In their descriptions of their professional experiences, the local-global Afghan photojournalists largely focused on adversities they faced. The most often-mentioned adversity was being under threat from different sources. The threats faced from some of these sources – direct threats posed against photojournalists by the Taliban and obstruction and intimidation by government officials – were not described by the respondents as affecting them differently from international photojournalists. Two other sources of threats – dangers faced in producing images of an ongoing conflict (and the necessary proximity to acts of violence that it entails for photojournalists especially), and harassment and obstruction by Afghan military forces, security agents and police officials – were perceived by the respondents as affecting them more, compared to international photojournalists. These four sources of threats have been noted and discussed in academic research and CSO reports on journalists’ safety in Afghanistan before (Khalvatgar, 2014; AJSC reports, 2015; 2017; CPJ Report, 2016; Eide, 2016b).

During the interviews, a fifth source of physical threat was mentioned by the respondents that has not been extensively discussed in prior investigations[146]. The source of this threat was the general population in Afghanistan itself. There were two factors[147] noticeable in the interview data – often mentioned in conjunction by the respondents – related to the threats posed to Afghan photojournalists by the general population in Afghanistan. Some of the respondents linked their harassment – and even violence committed against them – by the general population to the societal taboo against taking photographs of Afghan women for public circulation. Some others described this threat as not always linked to taking photographs of Afghan women, but as a more widespread intolerance against photography and photographers that extended to photographing men as well. While this form of threat against photojournalists – specific to the visual medium – in itself is an under-studied phenomenon regarding news-making in Afghanistan, what is most germane to the current discussion is that some of the respondents also felt that the threat posed against them by the general population affected them more than international photojournalists.

Within the context of their professional experience, apart from insecurity, there were other forms of adversities described by the respondents. Two of these, in their view, were their lack of access to advanced training and higher education in photography and photojournalism, as well as lack of access to high-quality cameras. In their description of these two adversities, some of the respondents mentioned that these adversities put them at a professional disadvantage compared to international photojournalists. They felt that they were less ‘professional’, lacked specialization in particular areas of photojournalism, or that they took ‘worse’ photographs as a result of their lack of advanced knowledge and high quality cameras, compared to international photojournalists. Apart from this, there was a shared perception among some full-time photojournalists working for international news agencies that because they lacked international mobility compared to their international colleagues, their career prospects compared to international photojournalists were more limited. Among some freelance photojournalists who supplied images to international news agencies and organizations, there was a shared perception that they were financially disadvantaged compared to international photojournalists and, relatedly, had less ability to directly sell and earn recompense for the images they produced than an international photojournalist would, in their view.

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[146] Apart from briefly by Smith (2011: 30-31).

[147] I understand these two factors as *manifestations* of the problematic status of photography as a practice and profession in Afghanistan and not as underlying causes. Understanding the underlying causes would, in my view, require a study which seeks to make sense of all of the following: both earlier (suspicion of photography traced to the late 19th and early 20th centuries by Edwards, 2006) and more recent historical causes (ban on photography by the Taliban as discussed by Rawan, 2002; Dupree, 2002; Edwards, 2006); socio-cultural norms related to women being keepers of familial honour (as described by Dupree, 2002) and thus obligated to not show their faces in public or in photographs; and religious reasons stemming from hard-line interpretations of Islam (Rawan, 2002; Smith, 2011). While providing an understanding of such underlying causes is beyond the remit of my study, a future study investigating the underlying causes of suspicion of photography and photographers in Afghanistan can perhaps benefit from taking note of the perceptions of respondents of this study regarding *what they thought* were the *causes* for general suspicion of photography among the Afghan population. These were: lack of education (three respondents), religious conservatism (four respondents), historical factors (four respondents) such as the historical events surrounding Queen Soraya's photographs described by Edwards (2006) (one respondent), the lack of widespread photographic practice in Afghanistan and among Afghans over the 20th century (two respondents), the ban on photography by the Taliban (one respondent), and socio-cultural norms – related to religion but not only – against taking photographs (of both men and women) (three respondents).

Seen together, these different adversities expressed as disadvantages compared to international photojournalists encompassed physical, material, and intangible aspects of the professional experience of the Afghan local-global photojournalists. *Physical* disadvantages relate to their perception of being more at risk than international photojournalists. *Material* disadvantages perceived by them included both lack of access to high quality cameras as well as perceptions of facing income inequity compared to international photojournalists. *Intangible* disadvantages perceived by the respondents included both the shared perception of career prospects being hampered because of lack of international mobility as well as the perception among some of lacking access to higher knowledge in their profession which made them less professional, less specialized, and not able to produce images comparable to international ‘standards’ (in turn, linked to the lack of access to high quality cameras by some respondents). While multifarious, there was however one common feature among the local-global tensions in the perceptions regarding the adversities they faced professionally among the respondents – they were all explicitly stated and thus *overt* forms of local-global tensions.

In the respondents' perceptions regarding their professional roles, both *overt* local-global tensions and a more *subtle* interplay of the local and the global that could be described as local-global *negotiation*, could be located. In their responses as to how they perceived of their professional role, similarities to the objective/aesthetic dichotomy – that previous research has noted as central to photojournalism as a practice and photojournalists' role perceptions (Rosenblum, 1978; Newton, 2001: 49-60; Zelizer, 2004: 115-135; Bock, 2008; Ramos & Marocco, 2017) – could be seen. Most respondents described their professional role as a photojournalist to be objective recorders of 'reality' *while at the same time* some noted that individual subjectivity of a photojournalist, as well as aesthetic considerations beyond representing 'truth', were important for them as photojournalists. The aesthetic considerations mentioned by the respondents included both technical considerations as well as the need to imbue their images with a narrative value so that it 'speaks for itself'. For some of these respondents, this narrative value also had to be *culturally transcendent* to be understood beyond Afghanistan.

Within these descriptions of their professional roles, *overt* local-global tensions could be located. While a few respondents felt that the aesthetic considerations of Afghan photojournalists were different to those of international photojournalists, some respondents described themselves as being *more objective* in representing Afghanistan than international photojournalists. This latter perception could be seen as linked to another way that some respondents described their role as photojournalists producing images for a global audience – *in terms of their affiliations and affinities as Afghans*. These respondents described their role as presenting a 'true' or accurate visual account of Afghanistan and Afghan people, to the world. This role – which can be understood as being *visual interlocutors of Afghanistan* to the world as Afghans – was, however, not perceived as at odds with their role perceptions as *'objective'* photojournalists by these respondents. The two were not in *tension* with each other in the descriptions of these respondents, but rather their role as visual interlocutors was described as an *extension* of their role as 'objective' photojournalists. As such, among these respondents it was a form of *negotiation* between being local-global photojournalists and being Afghan.

Seen together, the Afghan local-global photojournalists' professional role perceptions were similar to what has been noted as central to the institution of photojournalism and noted among photojournalists elsewhere – they perceived their role to be about capturing images of 'reality' that are aesthetically 'pleasing' at the same time (Bock, 2008: 172). Some of the respondents expressed being different from international photojournalists in terms of these two central roles of a photojournalist, while their role perception of being objective photojournalists was also negotiated with being Afghan.

Within the respondents' descriptions of their image production, the tensions between being local-global photojournalists and being Afghan were also both *overt* and *subtle*. The Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions were that both international influences on their image production, as well as 'local' influences related to being Afghan – their local knowledge and familiarity in most cases, but also their affiliations and affinities as Afghans – influenced their image production. The *direct international influences* reported by the respondents regarding image production related to organizational, editorial, and perceived audience demands whose source or nature were international.

Apart from these direct influences, *forms of indirect international influences* could also be discerned in the respondents' perceptions. One of these indirect influences related to *learning to emulate* international standards in their images – from international colleagues, other international photojournalists, and websites of international media. Another form of indirect international influence noticeable in the respondents' perceptions was the importance they gave to earning *international – mostly Western – recognition* for their images. The respondents described the importance that publication of their images in Western news outlets, inclusion of their images in international exhibitions in Western countries, and their images winning international awards for photojournalists, held for them. These indirect international influences noticeable in the respondents' perceptions should also be seen in light of the shared perceptions of some respondents that, because of adversities they faced, they lacked professional 'standards' or took 'worse' images than international photojournalists. Based on this, importance of *knowing* what international news organizations, foreign editors and international audiences *want* as well as *learning* to produce internationally acceptable images from foreign colleagues and international websites can all be seen as *forms of knowledge aspired to* by the respondents, while receiving international recognition represented successfully implementing such acquired knowledge. While these ‘international knowledge(s)’ were given importance by many of the respondents, most of them also stressed that their local – geographical, linguistic, and cultural – knowledge was also an important factor in their image production. Rather than being acquired, the respondents described these forms of local knowledge as inherent to them. A majority of them also thought this was an advantage they held over international photojournalists. The dual importance of both these ‘international’ knowledge and ‘local’ knowledge for the respondents is how *subtle* local-global tensions in the perceptions of the respondents regarding image production could be located.

Within the same context, the respondents expressed other forms of local-global tensions which were more explicitly stated and *overt*. These were expressed by the respondents as *reactions against international influences* in their image production. Some respondents described meeting the international – organizational, editorial, and audience – demands as an obligation for them rather than being self-motivated in doing so. In addition, the respondents described their *reaction against* the kind of image-subjects they perceived as *most often present* in international representations of Afghanistan. This latter perception was also expressed in terms of *preferences* for image-subjects to depict Afghanistan that the respondents felt were *not often present* in international representations of the country. The respondents also linked their superior local knowledge and familiarity as Afghans – and identit(ies)-related affiliations and affinities – to their stated preferences. Additionally, the role perception of being visual interlocutors of Afghanistan to the world was also noticeable in these expressed preferences. Seen within this larger context – of both their *role perceptions as Afghans* as well as their perceptions of the *importance of local influences* in their image production – the Afghan local-global photojournalists’ preferences for image-subjects that the respondents perceived as not often present in international representations of Afghanistan, I argued, was a concrete expression of local-global tensions perceived by the respondents in their image production.

In the interviewees' responses, a pattern emerged of two groups of image-subjects which – except for one instance – diverged from each other. One group pertained to image-subjects the respondents *preferred* and the other group pertained to image-subjects the respondents *perceived as dominant in international representations of Afghanistan*. The image-subjects which were preferred by the respondents were images of ordinary Afghans and their peaceful pursuits such as sports, images of landscapes and historical places in the country, images of reconstruction, development, and re-introduced democratic processes in post-2001 Afghanistan, as well as images of Afghan women. Images of Afghan women were also mentioned by the respondents as often present in international representations of Afghanistan while *the other image-subjects* mentioned as dominant in international representations of the country were *different to their preferences*. These image-subjects, perceived by the respondents as dominant in international representations (but not preferred by them), were images of war and violence in the country, foreign military personnel in Afghanistan, political leaders, and 'negative' images of Afghanistan depicting social ills and problems in the country. This latter group of image-subjects, which emerged from the interview data, in turn, corresponds with the type of image-subjects that previous research on international representations of Afghanistan have also noted as often present (Griffin, 2004; Fahmy, 2004, 2005a; Ottosen, 2005; Zelizer, 2005; Jabbra, 2006; Jiwani, 2009; Aday, 2010; Shabbir et al., 2011; Campbell, 2011, Mackie, 2012; Verschueren, 2012; Mitra, 2014; Sliwinski, 2015) and thus could be said to be locatable *outside the perceptions* of the respondents of this study as well.

The preferences of image-subjects expressed by the respondents of this study, except for images of Afghan women, have not been noted as often present in international representations of Afghanistan in prior studies. This *difference* suggested that when producing images of Afghanistan for an international audience – *if free from the direct international influences on their image-production from foreign editors, international news organizations, and the need to cater to international audience demands* – Afghan photojournalists *might choose* different image-subjects than those noted in prior research on international representations of Afghanistan. But these preferences found in the interview data might be seen to only relate to the level of *rhetoric* of the respondents of this study and not necessarily to the *performance* (Mellado & Van Dalen, 2014) of Afghan local-global photojournalists.

As no previous research on images of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience (or otherwise) – under the conditions stated above (or otherwise) – exists to the best of my knowledge, I undertook a qualitative case study to *locate the presence/absence* of the image-subjects mentioned by the respondents, *outside their perceptions* and *in actual images* of Afghanistan produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience. Given the difficulties of locating an image-set which could meet the criteria of having been produced by Afghan photojournalists for an international audience while not under direct international influences, I chose a sample that, while not perfect because of potential international influences in its production, was best suited to the purposes of the investigation.

The sample I chose was a set of photodocumentalistic (Sousa, 1998 in Ramos and Marocco, 2017) images of Afghanistan, produced by Afghan photojournalists, and collected in a catalogue for a photographic exhibition meant for both domestic and international audiences. I identified the presence/absence of the 10 image-subjects which appeared in the interview data in the chosen catalogue through analysis of the image-texts – both the photographic images and surrounding texts, including the section headings and captions, which accompanied the photographs. The analysis showed that the image-subjects ‘war and violence’, ‘foreign military personnel’, ‘social ills and problems’, and ‘political leaders’ *were much less present* among the image-texts in the catalogue than the image-subjects ‘ordinary Afghans’, ‘sports and play’, ‘landscapes and historical sites’ in Afghanistan, ‘reconstruction and development’, ‘re-introduced democratic political process’ in post-2001 Afghanistan, and images of ‘Afghan women’. The presence/absence of the image-subjects in the catalogue thus showed a large degree of correspondence to the respondents’ statements regarding image-subjects as gleaned from the interview data.

This case study, within its limitations, helped strengthen the suggestion from the interview data that Afghan photojournalists *might choose* to depict Afghanistan differently to an international audience by focusing on different image-subjects in their representations of the country than image-subjects noted as often present in international representations of Afghanistan by previous researchers. In turn, it helped strengthen my argument that the stated preferences for certain image-subjects to depict Afghanistan over others can be understood as a concrete expression of local-global tensions perceived by the respondents in their image production.

In sum, overt local-global tensions marked the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists regarding their professional experiences, while both overt and subtle forms of local-global tensions and negotiation marked their perceptions regarding their professional roles and image production.

6.2 The complex interplay of the ‘local’ and ‘global’: Tensions, negotiation and similarities

Losing the foci on the three aspects of the local-global photojournalists’ work, as in the overview above, allows a broader picture to develop. First, a commonality *across* these three aspects that I should note is the topic of images of Afghan women which arose throughout the respondents’ descriptions of the different aspects of their work. In addition, viewing the *different ways* that elements of the local and the global intersected *across* the respondents’ perceptions regarding their professional experience, professional role, and image production, also helps build a larger, more *complex* picture. As the topic of images of Afghan women, I argue, was an *exception* to the tensions or negotiation created by the interplay of the local and the global in the respondents’ perceptions, I start with a discussion of this topic to illustrate that the interplay of the local and the global should indeed be understood *as complex* and *not only in conflict* with each other.

Consistently throughout my descriptions of the local-global tensions and negotiation in the three aspects of Afghan local-global photojournalists’ professional work, I have had occasion to bring up issues that relate to images of Afghan women. My understanding is that the interplay of the local and the global in the respondents’ perceptions regarding this particular topic was *reconciled* in the respondents’ perceptions rather than in conflict with each other.

First, photographing Afghan women was mentioned by the respondents as posing risks to them. At the same time, a number of them also felt that as Afghans, they would *prefer* to show images of Afghan women to international audiences. Some of them also felt that images of Afghan women were demanded by international news organizations and audiences. The risks (in light of the dangers described by the respondents) and benefits of producing images of Afghan women – either to meet international demands or as their own preferences – to themselves[148] were, however, not *weighed together* in the responses of the local-global photojournalists.

Second, among the respondents who mentioned photographing Afghan women as their preference[149], the implicit rationale noticeable in their perceptions can be summed up in the following words: people in other countries *need to see* images of Afghan women. *How* or *why* international audiences needed to see images of Afghan women differed within this broader rationale. Some mentioned showing images of Afghan women to people in other countries as stemming from the need to shed light on their oppression in Afghan society, some particularly mentioning that images referring to domestic violence[150] against Afghan women should be shown internationally. Others expressed their preference to show the 'progress' in the status of Afghan women in post-2001 Afghanistan in their images to represent progress in post-2001 Afghanistan in general. The *agency* of the Afghan women photographed was not an issue these respondents discussed as the reason why their photographs needed to be seen and shown internationally. The same trend in representing Afghan women as 'symbols' –

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[148] On the other hand, the respondents also described that not only did photographing Afghan women pose a risk to themselves but also posed risks *for the women photographed*. The risks and benefits for the women photographed were mostly not linked to each other in the respondents' perceptions. There were two exceptions. Respondent 11 described taking care not to expose the identity of the women he photographed, while Respondent 4 described that as an Afghan woman herself, she felt the need to warn the women she photographed as to potential consequences and sought to shield their (and her own) identity.

[149] All respondents apart from Respondent 20 who, other than Respondent 4, was the only other Afghan woman local-global photojournalist I interviewed. Respondent 20 did mention a preference for showing images of Afghan women but for *domestic audiences* to make *them* aware of the oppressions faced by Afghan women in Afghanistan.

[150] Cf. Eide (2016b).

representative of larger social processes and phenomena in Afghanistan, mostly of their ‘progress’ – was also present in the purposive sample of images I analyzed.

The respondents’ descriptions of how and why images of Afghan women should be shown and seen internationally is remarkably similar to how previous researchers describe Afghan women to have been represented internationally. Representations of Afghan women’s oppression (Jabbra, 2006; Mackie, 2012; Verschueren, 2012) or their progress (Fahmy, 2004; Jiwani, 2009; Mitra, 2014) in Afghan society have both been noted in international representations. These researchers have also discussed such representations as highly problematic in light of the framing of the post 9/11 war in Afghanistan by the US administration as a war to ‘liberate’ Afghan women (Fahmy, 2004; Jiwani, 2009; Mackie, 2012) and as a continued justification of foreign military presence in the country (Mitra, 2014)[151]. What has been noted as missing from such international representations of Afghan women is their depiction “as agents of their own destiny” (Verschueren, 2012: 129).

In sum, the respondents’ *preferences regarding how and why* images of Afghan women should be seen and shown internationally – locatable outside their perceptions in the image-set I analyzed as well – *to how and why international media has represented Afghan women*, as noted by these researchers, were similar and was not an area where the interplay of the local and the global coalesced as *tensions* in the perceptions of the respondents.

This exception shows that the interplay of the local and the global did not necessarily give rise to tensions but could also be understood to effect similarities and identifications. This provides an entry point into my understanding of the *complex* interplay of the ‘local’ and ‘global’ in the respondents’ perceptions *across* the three different aspects of their work discussed in this thesis.

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[151] See also Bergner (2011: 95-116) and Ahmed-Ghosh (2003).

Elements of the ‘local’ can be seen as pervasive across two aspects of the local-global photojournalists’ perceptions regarding their work. This can be seen firstly in how, in some respondents’ perceptions, their *role* as objective photojournalists extended to being visual interlocutors of Afghanistan, this latter aspect being related to their *local* affiliations and affinities. Another element of the ‘local’ recurred in the respondents’ perceptions regarding image production in the form of the importance they accorded to their ‘local’ knowledge as Afghans. It was seen as an advantage[152] over outsiders in producing images of Afghanistan by the respondents, and also appeared in the responses of the local-global photojournalists regarding their preference for image-subjects which were, with the exception of images of Afghan women, different from international representations of Afghanistan. These preferences, in turn, were also expressed in terms of their local affiliations and affinities. But, while most respondents perceived that as Afghan photojournalists – because of their local knowledge and familiarity *and* local affiliations and affinities – they sought or would seek to take *different photographs* (except in the case of images of Afghan women) of Afghanistan to international representations of the country by international media and international photojournalists, they did not mention seeking to take *photographs differently* from them.

My understanding of this latter is based on tracing the elements of the ‘global’ that striated the local-global photojournalists’ responses regarding their professional experiences, professional roles, and image production. The adversities in their professional experience regarding lack of access to higher knowledge in photography and photojournalism and to high quality cameras were often linked by the respondents to not being able to produce images that would be acceptable internationally. This same importance for their images to be accepted and recognized internationally (in the West) was expressed in terms of the importance of *emulating* international (Western) images in their image production by some respondents. Within the descriptions of the aesthetic considerations important to them as photojournalists, the importance given by some respondents to imbuing their images with *culturally transcendent* narrative values can be seen as related to the importance for their images to be accepted and understood internationally. Again, within responses regarding role perceptions, elements of the global can also be seen in the importance expressed by some respondents to be visual interlocutors of Afghanistan *to the world* and in the similarity of the respondents' dual role perception of being 'objective/aesthetic' photojournalists, which has been discussed as central to the institution of photojournalism by scholars (Newton, 2001: 49-60; Zelizer, 2004:115-135; Ramos & Marocco, 2017) and noted among photojournalists elsewhere (Rosenblum, 1978; Bock, 2008).

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[152] This view itself was not unequivocal for all respondents – some felt that familiarity to Afghanistan made their perspectives stale and was an impediment to producing ‘good’ images, though cultural knowledge was an asset.

Seen together, these similarities and identifications – in their preference for showing images of Afghan women as 'symbols' of oppression and progress in post-2001 Afghanistan, in their role perceptions as objective/aesthetic photojournalists (though negotiated with their local affiliation and affinity as Afghans), and in their global focus in *where* and *by whom* they wanted their images to be seen, understood, accepted, and given recognition – point to the complex picture of the interplay of the 'local' and 'global' I found in my study. In sum, elements of the local and global in the perceptions of the respondents not only created tensions and negotiations but also similarities and identifications between each other.

On the other hand, such similarities and identifications did not negate the local-global tensions and negotiation in the perceptions of the respondents of this study. In particular, their preferences for image-subjects (with the exception of images of Afghan women), which were different from those noted as often present in international representations of Afghanistan, I argue, was a concrete expression of the local-global tensions in the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists. My interviews with Afghan local-global photojournalists, supported by the case study I undertook, suggest the possibility that Afghan photojournalists depicting their country *might* present a different representation of Afghanistan to international audiences under certain conditions.

That is not to say that they *can* and *will* represent Afghanistan differently, as Verschueren (2012: 158-159) seems to suggest in his observation regarding the positive role that "Afghan photographers and journalists" can play in helping audiences "connect with the multiplicities of living in contemporary Afghanistan". Verschueren's (2012: 158) call for "collaboration between Afghans and foreign journalists" does not address the possibility of local-global tensions within such a 'messy', 'transnational collaborative process' (Palmer, 2016, 2017). In light of the findings of my study, it might be understood that in taking into account elements of the local – the "in-depth perspective of their own culture" of Afghans – Verschueren neglects to consider elements of the global within such collaboration. While he mentions (2012: 158) "professional constraints" and "market demands" as factors in the images of Afghanistan *produced in international media and by international photojournalists*, he doesn't mention that these factors might also affect the "Afghan photographers and journalists" collaborating in producing images of Afghanistan for global audiences. My study suggests such factors – the direct international influences of organizational, editorial, and audience demands – might not be conducive to Afghan local-global photojournalists helping "connect with the multiplicities of living in contemporary Afghanistan" or, indeed, help "replace the image of Afghanistan as an empty space, a medieval realm and an oppressive zone" (2012: 159). In addition, apart from professional constraints and market demands, the identifications and similarities created by the interplay of elements of the local and global I found in my study points to other ways that such a possibility is rendered problematic.

In light of the local-global tensions within image production, as well as the negotiation, similarities, and identifications I found between elements of the local and global in the Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions regarding different aspects of their work, there are conditions that must accompany the possibility raised by Verschueren (2012: 158-9). To sum up, first, the possibility of Afghan local-global photojournalists producing images that *change or challenge* international representations of Afghanistan might not extend to representations of Afghan women. Second, such possibility can be seen as negated by the direct international influences within news image production. Third, such possibility is further problematized by the *indirect international influences* I found in my study, which point to the Afghan local-global photojournalists' aspirations for their images to be seen, understood, accepted, and recognized internationally. Such aspirations, arguably, makes challenging the norms of international representations of Afghanistan *difficult*, though perhaps *not impossible* (as can be seen in my case study) for Afghan local-global photojournalists.

6.3 Limitations of the current study

The charge of ‘parachute research’ (Pedelty, 2004) would be a justified one for the current study. I am an outsider to Afghanistan, spending a brief stint of one month in Afghanistan collecting data through interviews with Afghan photojournalists. My data gathering was limited to Kabul, and I was not able to interview photojournalists working in other provinces of Afghanistan. Thus, the perceptions of Afghan photojournalists who produce images for a global audience while based outside of Kabul, are missing from this study. As such, it can be said that a whole tier of Afghan local-global photojournalists – whose professional experiences, role perceptions, and image production may be different from those who are based in the capital – is not part of this study. The differences in professional experiences can be indirectly understood from the perceptions of the local-global photojournalists I did interview, who perceived that the security situation in the provinces outside of Kabul can be much more dangerous (Respondents 10, 13, 16), that the distrust of photography and photographers might run deeper in some of these provinces (Respondents 6, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19), and that opportunities for advanced training were even scantier outside Kabul (Respondent 4). The differences in perceptions about professional disadvantages compared to international photojournalists among the local-global photojournalists outside of Kabul, if not the local-global tensions in their perceptions about their professional roles and image production as well, could thus have been important for this study. This is one of the most significant limitations of the research I present in this thesis.

Secondly, a study based on direct observation of local-global photojournalists in Afghanistan would have better served the purpose of understanding the local-global tensions in their work. Ideally, this would have taken the form of participatory observation of the Afghan local-global photojournalists while they were at work. Unfortunately, the dangerous environment in which they work, as well as the worsening conflict situation in Afghanistan in the recent years, did not allow me to conduct such an in-depth investigation. As such, in this study, I have been acutely aware of precisely what I can claim and cannot claim. In the analysis of the interview transcripts, I have restricted my role as a researcher to observing and describing the shared patterns in the *perceptions* of the respondents, rather than reporting their statements and observations as faithful informants. Furthermore, all aspects of this study – both the interview-based findings as well as the findings of the case study I present in Chapter 5 – are not based on representative samples and are qualitative in design. As a result, I do not claim generalizability of the findings in this thesis, but offer it as an exploratory study to understand facets of the interplay of the local and the global in the professional work of Afghan local-global photojournalists.

6.4 Contributions of current thesis to research on local-global journalism

While acknowledging the lack of generalizability of this study, I offer that my exploration of the interplay of the local and the global within local-global *photojournalism* helps to add to the growing, but still nascent, body of research on local-global journalism.

Local-global tensions arising within the professional experiences of local-global journalists and fixers, stemming from facing more risks compared to international journalists, have been noted in previous research (Tumber & Webster, 2006: 106-115; Bunce, 2011; Khan, 2011; Palmer, 2016, 2017). The same form of local-global tension – heightened perceptions of insecurity compared to international photojournalists – could also be noted in the perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists I interviewed in this study. Other researchers have pointed to tensions arising out of local-global journalists and fixers facing material disadvantages (Bunce, 2010; Khan, 2011; Murrell, 2015; Seo, 2016; Palmer, 2016) compared to international journalists. Local-global tension related to perceptions of being materially disadvantaged to international photojournalists could also be seen in my study.

Murrell (2015) has noted that local-global fixers' role perceptions are largely similar to international journalists' perceptions of being objective in their news reporting, but prior research on local-global *journalists* has hinted at possibilities of such adherence to the principle of objectivity being affected by the local affiliations and affinities of local-global journalists (Bunce, 2011; Khan, 2011). Khan's (2011) study is the most geographically proximate to mine. He (2011:92) observed that "in addition to the obvious problems that are inherent in the misrepresentation of the events of the Afghan conflict," such misrepresentations of the conflict in international media, as perceived by the Pakistani Pukhtoon local-global journalists, had "destroyed their faith in the ideal that in the marketplace of ideas, truth will prevail". My explorations of the professional role perceptions of Afghan photojournalists did not show evidence of such loss of faith in objectivity. Thus, the findings of my study regarding professional role perceptions were closer to Murrell's findings among the six fixers she interviewed. But at the same time, local affiliations and affinities were not wholly absent in the role perceptions of the Afghan local-global photojournalists I interviewed: my findings point to a negotiation among the respondents between being objective photojournalists and *being Afghan*.

Prior research on local-global news production (Murrell, 2015: 148-50) has also discussed the role of local – linguistic, geographical, and cultural – knowledge within such news production. Studies that have sought to make sense of the importance of local knowledge among fixers from the perspective of the international journalists they worked with, have noted that international photojournalists tended to view such local knowledge suspiciously (Tumber & Webster, 2006; Palmer & Fontan, 2007). On the other hand, Palmer (2016), in her recent research conducted with fixers from different countries in the Middle East, found that the fixers she (2016: 3) interviewed, "take issue" that,

> visiting correspondents – especially, though not exclusively, those hailing from North America or Western Europe – can sometimes reveal a marked lack of awareness on proper cultural mores while newsgathering, as well as betraying a notable lack of background on the stories they intend to cover.

Khan (2011) also noted that the Pakistani Pukhtoon journalists working for international news media resented "the tendency to develop opinions based on extreme generalizations" (p. 93) among the international journalists they worked with.

In light of these studies that have observed how local knowledge (or lack thereof) not only plays a role but can also create local-global tensions[153], it is important to note first that the data I gathered for this research also suggests that local knowledge was seen by the respondents as an important factor in the work done by them as local-global *photojournalists*. This bears repeating here because the work done by photojournalists is liable to be seen less as that of "visual authors" and more as that of "craftsmen and simple technicians" (Pedelty, 1995: 155). In other words, the work of photojournalists is sometimes disregarded as a type of knowledge work.

The current study also extends the understanding of the importance of local knowledge and familiarity within local-global news production. I have pointed out how local knowledge and familiarity was one half of the local-global tensions locatable in the respondents' perceptions regarding their image production. It is the interaction of their perceived importance of local knowledge and familiarity with their perceived importance of international influences which gave rise to the local-global tension I observed in the respondents' perceptions regarding image production. Murrell (2015), though she used a different theoretical framework than mine, can be said to have studied these international influences in her study on fixers as well. But in her discussion of the importance of objectified and institutionalized capitals within local-global journalism, it may be said she emphasized the *indirect* international influences in the work of fixers. This is perhaps because of the more limited journalistic role that fixers play compared to local-global journalists. In this study, I found that direct international influences – the influences of foreign editors, international news organizations, and international audience demands – on the local-global photojournalists’ image production were also perceived as important by the respondents. I also found that both of these direct and indirect forms of international influences interacted in the respondents’ perceptions with the ‘local’ influences of ‘being Afghan’, not only in terms of their local knowledge but also in their local affiliations and affinities.

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[153] Not including Murrell's (2015) exploration of the work of fixers. Murrell (2015), while noting that "local knowledge of dangers" (p. 148) and "access to local stories" (p. 150) of the fixers were essential elements in the work they do, concluded that such local knowledge was a form of 'embodied' cultural capital that they needed to be employed as fixers (p. 148). But she is also of the view that such local knowledge may not actually be considered 'local' given the "march of globalisation" and concomitant spread of Western cultural norms in developing countries (Murrell, 2015: 151).

The possibility of local-global journalists, photojournalists, and fixers changing or challenging how international news media reports on local issues has been discussed within studies on local-global journalism since its very inception (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004: 315; Bunce, 2011[154]; Paterson, 2011: 99-100; Murrell, 2015: 150[155]), and has also been raised in the most recent academic discussion (Palmer, 2017: 2-3) at the time of writing.

My study is not able to answer this question, which speaks to the possibilities of counter-flows within international news made possible by the increasing importance of local-global journalism. However, in this thesis, I have further extended the current discussions by noting how a concrete expression of local-global tensions by the respondents came in the form of preference for certain image-subjects which were different to those noted in international representations. This suggests a possibility that such local-global tensions *might* have an impact on the actual images produced by local photojournalists for a global audience, but *under certain conditions*. These conditions, in turn, are not always prevalent within local-global journalistic or photojournalistic production given the influence of international organizational, editorial, and audience demands (Paterson, 1997, 2011).

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[154] Bunce (2011), in her study, found that local-global Sudanese journalists’ reportage of the conflict in Darfur showed differences to the role perception of international journalists and that this extended to the *actual* news they produced.

[155] I have noted in Chapter 1 how Murrell, while pointing to the possibility that fixers engaged in local-global news production could have “a positive impact if it brings into the Western news agenda (and public sphere) a localized, non-Western view of the issues concerned” (2015: 150), felt that potential for such ‘positive impact’ was limited based on her findings among the six fixers she interviewed.

6.5 Current study in light of previous studies on international news and conflict journalism

The findings in this study must also be made sense of in light of the extant academic discussions on international news-making, particularly of conflicts. I have noted, while describing the perceptions of the respondents regarding their image production, that the pattern in their responses regarding which image-subjects dominated international news media's representations of Afghanistan closely corresponded with the trends noted in previous research on photographic representations of Afghanistan in international news media. This suggests a level of *awareness* among the local-global photojournalists I interviewed about the biases and distortions in international news media's so-called 'accurate', 'impartial' or 'objective' representations of Afghanistan.

The implications of this self-awareness of journalists of biases in so-called 'objective' news, have been noted by journalism studies scholars as a first step towards more bias-free news coverage. Entman, in his influential study on the theoretical and methodological understanding of pre-existing 'frames' in news coverage, called for "liaison editors" (2004: 165) to be employed by news organizations who could analyze news coverage and alert staff as to their own biases. Researchers have also noted that such awareness is important particularly when reporting on conflicts. In his in-depth study on war correspondents in El Salvador, Pedelty (1995) noted the importance of awareness of biases in his discussion of the need for "self-conscious journalism" (p. 226-227). Researchers within the sub-discipline of Peace Journalism[156] have also repeatedly pointed to the importance of journalists' "critical self-awareness" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: xvi-xx; Lynch, 2008: 10-14; Hackett, 2011: 42) to correct the imbalances in representation of conflicts in news media. In this study, the respondents' perceptions of which image-subjects dominated international news media's representations of Afghanistan, with close parallels to the biases noted by previous researchers, suggest that most of the local-global photojournalists I spoke to shared such awareness of the international news media's representational biases[157]. But such awareness did not always lead to *critical* awareness in all cases – as can be seen in Afghan local-global photojournalists' responses regarding images of Afghan women, discussed above. In addition, the importance the respondents placed on being Afghan did not negate their role perception as 'objective' photojournalists but was *negotiated* with this role perception.

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[156] See Lynch and Galtung (2010) for an exposition on this particular sub-discipline of journalism studies located at the intersection of peace and conflict studies, international journalism, and conflict journalism.

Thus, one of the dichotomies in the work of the Afghan local-global photojournalists that I found in my study is that while the perceptions of the Afghan photojournalists showed both their awareness of biases in international news media's representations of Afghanistan, as well as their reaction against such biases *as Afghans*, their awareness did not lead to criticism or questioning of the core principle of the institution of journalism and photojournalism. While this provides further support[158] to the observation by Hanitzsch et al. (2011: 287) that journalistic 'objectivity' can be *interpreted differently* in different geo-cultural contexts, my findings are also in line with the observations by Kunelius and Ruusunoksa (2008) that core principles of journalism such as objectivity do not shift in journalists' imagination.

Furthermore, similar to my findings, previous research on international news about conflicts have noted that the identities of journalists – their national, ethnic or other affiliations and affinities – is a factor in news production. The inferences some researchers have drawn from noting the influences of different affiliations and affinities of journalists in news production can be summed up as the following: the influences of journalists' affiliations and affinities in their professional work *problematize* the claim of 'objective', 'accurate', 'balanced' or 'impartial' reporting of conflicts by international news media (Gitlin, 1980; Hallin, 1984; Allan and Zelizer, 2004; Bromley, 2004). But this is often extended to the understanding that influences from national or other affiliations and affinities, *distort* factual reporting of conflicts by news media. Based on a wide-ranging review of previous research, this latter view was summarized by Cottle (2006: 85) as distortion created by "[n]ationalism and patriotism of journalists who become caught up within the rising tide of national sentiment and patriotic fervour when reporting war privileging 'our side'". Such distortions have been examined in the context of studies of news image production of conflicts by Fahmy (2005b) among American photojournalists and photo-editors.

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[157] Khan (2011) also briefly noted such awareness and a reaction against such biases among the Pakistani Pukhtoon local-global journalists he studied (p.93), while Brown also found in her study that "Afghans and Pakistanis [journalists] do not appreciate the recurring picture of them as failed states seething with violence and instability" (2013: 284).

[158] While also extending their observations to the case of photojournalistic role perceptions.

This understanding of affiliation and affinities of journalists as a *distorting* factor in international news of conflicts has also been applied in non-Western contexts (Ibrahim, 2003; Nossek, 2004). Notably for the context of the current thesis, in her comparative study on Pakistani, American, and Afghan journalists, Brown (2013) argued that the 'national frame' of these different groups of journalists dictated their news production in ways that impeded the fostering of understanding "between nations" via exchange of news (p. 297). However, the way the Afghan *local-global* photojournalists in this study expressed their own negotiated professional role between being Afghan and being photojournalists was through the intention to correct what they perceived were distorted representations of Afghanistan being presented to audiences elsewhere (except in the case of images of Afghan women). In this way, they hoped to foster better understanding of Afghanistan and Afghans outside Afghanistan.

While my study does not disprove the findings and arguments of the earlier researchers, or Brown's (2013) arguments in particular, the perceptions of the local-global photojournalists as found in this study, I argue, serves as a reminder that national or ethnic identities, or local knowledge and familiarity, need not be automatically assumed to be factors which distort international news. A critical approach which is open to the possibilities for *different* – and possibly even progressive – depictions of conflicts by local journalists and photojournalists for a global audience might be needed. This brings me to what I believe future research on local-global news-making should focus on.

6.6 Future research

Based on my findings as well as the findings of previous researchers, I would like to offer future researchers the following hypothesis to investigate, to test its conditionalities and contexts. I offer that:

Local-global fixers', journalists', and photojournalists' roles within international news and image production *of conflicts* will have a positive impact *if they are allowed* to bring into international news a localized view of the place and people affected in a way that changes or challenges the existing representations of the conflict in news and news images[159].

I must make clear here that this hypothesis is not based on an assumption of higher truth-claim of local journalists and photojournalists to represent their own countries to global audiences. I hope this can be seen in my critical discussions above, regarding the Afghan local-global photojournalists' perceptions regarding images of Afghan women. In addition, while the Afghan photojournalists said that they as Afghans preferred not to represent war and violence and foreign troops in their images, the ongoing war and the foreign military presence in Afghanistan are undeniable facts[160]. Instead, the hypothesis regarding the potential for a 'positive impact' on international news about conflicts through inclusion of localized views is informed by Durham's (1998) arguments for re-conceptualizing journalism through the lens of 'standpoint epistemology'[161]. She (1998: 132) argued that,

> If all reporting began from the perspective of those whose lives are impacted by events and by the reporting of events, the unrecognized

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[159] Here I am indebted to Murrell's (2015) phrasing of her own conclusion (p.150).

[160] Throughout this thesis, I have stayed away from inferring any higher truth-claim to represent Afghanistan for the Afghan local-global photojournalists.

[161] In her discussion, Durham (1998) does not engage directly with the phenomenon of local-global journalism or photojournalism but has the same 'outsider' journalists in mind who Sontag, in the context of conflict reporting, called the "professional, specialized tourists" (2003: 17). Durham's departure point is "[w]hen outsiders are part of a news story, they are almost always objects of scrutiny; this position works to delegitimize their knowledge claims" (1998: 129).

> weight of the socially dominant "insider"[162] positions would be counterbalanced. In other words, a critical examination of the journalist and the journalistic institution from the perspective of the most marginalized "object" of investigation would be at the core of every news story.

Based on Harding's discussion of re-formulating objectivity in scientific methods[163] (Harding, 1991, 1993 in Durham, 1998: 127), Durham called for a 'strong objectivity' in journalism which makes "no claims to universality, but is clearly connected to an ontological, social, historical, and economic position" (Durham, 1998: 128-9). "The difference" in such journalism, she goes on to say (1998: 138; emphasis added),

> would lie in the re-examination of journalistic practices with the explicit goal of redistributing the normalized power relationships inherent to current reporting methods. This redistribution would give relative weight to hitherto underrepresented sources of information so as to re-examine information from those positions. *The truth claims of the socially marginalized would be centered and foregrounded*.

My hypothesis of how local-global journalists and photojournalists' representation of their own countries can enhance international news about conflicts stems from these arguments of Durham's (1998). Local-global fixers, journalists, and photojournalists might be said to be 'insiders' to their own culture and their 'truth-claims' may be said to stem from 'under-represented sources of information', while at the same time, being part of the society that is, and the people who are, the marginalized 'objects' in international conflict news. Thus, I argue that inclusion of *their* truth-claims can serve to enrich international news and news images of the 'others' embroiled in 'distant' conflicts. As such, I believe future research that tests the conditionalities and contexts of such a possibility of inclusion of 'marginalized' views within international news would be fruitful.

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[162] Here, 'insider' is meant as outsider journalists who *claim* insider knowledge.

[163] For an account of the emergence of journalism as a populist – 'low' – offshoot (Keeble & Wheeler, 2007: 6) of the positivist traditions that emerged in the late 19th century, see Keeble and Wheeler (2007: 1-14).

However, it would be important in such work to be nuanced. Durham (1998: 133) noted that journalism from standpoint ‘epistemes’ “should not be misconstrued to indicate a unified, stable subjectivity or an essential, ‘marginalized’ experience”. Based on Harding’s discussion of ‘experiential foundationalism’ (1991: 269 quoted in Durham, 1998: 133-4), Durham called for a more problematized view of the relationship between *knowledge* and *experience* in journalism. Palmer (2017), in her recent study on fixers, has noted the same need for “cautious consideration” (p.3) of what should be understood as ‘local’ and ‘global’ within local-global journalism.

Based on Durham’s (1998) and Palmer’s (2017) arguments, I offer that in future research exploring the hypothesis I posit above, the understanding of ‘standpoint epistemology’ that Durham (1998) argued for, may be better conceptualized through Haraway’s (1988) further conceptualization of standpoint epistemes as ‘situated knowledges’. The latter I understand as knowledge which is valuable not for its ability to “theorize the world” or its claim to truth but for its “ability partially to translate knowledges among very different and power-differentiated communities” (Haraway, 1988: 579-80). Such a conceptualization will make clearer the positive role that local-global fixers, journalists, and photojournalists *may play* in bringing marginalized views into international news – while keeping in mind the tensions generated by their *claim* to have objective universal knowledge as journalists on the one hand, as well as their *claims* of their situated knowledges as locals[164] on the other.

One way of carrying out such research would be through linking the perceptions of local-global journalists and photojournalists to their news and news image-texts respectively, with more representative samples of the same than was possible in the case of Afghan local-global photojournalists in this thesis. I believe that exploring, investigating and locating the “textual effect” (Pedelty, 1995: 56) of tensions between universal and situated knowledges on the news and images produced with the help of local-global fixers and by local-global journalists and photojournalists will pave the way for clear, critical understanding of the counter-flows within international news production that the rise of local-global journalism, within the shifting landscape of international news-making in recent years (Cottle, 2009; Bromley & Clarke, 2012; Palmer, 2016, 2017), might create.

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[164] This is not to be confused with my discussion at the end of Chapter 4 of the local-global tensions within image production of the Afghan local-global photojournalists as tensions between forms of knowledge represented by the direct and indirect international influences on the one hand and local knowledge and familiarity on the other.

Apart from further investigations of the hypothesis above, I believe that future research on local-global photojournalism can also benefit from a study design which adopts a more balanced, comparative form. Previous studies on the work of local journalists and fixers have tended to either be based on interviews with the local journalists and fixers (Khan, 2011; Palmer, 2016), or focus on international journalists' perspectives to make sense of local-global news production (Tumber & Webster, 2006; Palmer and Fontan, 2007; Murrell, 2015). My own study belongs to the first group. I did not conduct interviews with international photojournalists regarding their professional experiences, role perceptions, and image production, and instead relied on extant research on these aspects of international photojournalists' work and images to offer counterpoints to my observations where necessary. Future research projects on *local-global photojournalism* would be better able to offer insight into local-global tensions within it, by including the perspective of international photojournalists. That said, the focus of any future study should not rely too heavily on the international photojournalists to make sense of local-global photojournalism, as past studies on local-global fixers have been wont to do.

Research to date has also not offered a gender-based analysis of local-global journalism. My own study did not include enough female local-global photojournalists to allow for observing gender-based distinctions between the male and female respondents' perceptions. One reason for the lack of gender-based analysis or non-inclusion of female respondents in studies on local-global journalism may be due to the fact that fixers in conflict zones tend to be male[165]. Yet, when it comes to local-global journalists and photojournalists, including female local-global newsmakers within future studies and identifying how local-global journalism might be further striated by gender identities and gender-related affiliations and affinities, will be, in my view, essential. This is especially so because a recent study based on interviews with local women journalists from conflict-affected countries by Orgeret (2016) has suggested that the work of these local female journalists is influenced by their gender-based perceptions of the conflicts they report on.

Another observation I would like to offer to future researchers is in the context of *photojournalistic practice* within the larger context of international news production. One of the intriguing findings of this study is the perception of six Afghan local-global photojournalists, in the context of the importance of local knowledge and familiarity in their image production, that *unfamiliarity* to the place a photojournalist is working in was a favourable factor for photojournalists. In contrast to the views of these six respondents, parachute journalism – the practice of travelling from one conflict and crisis zone to another by foreign correspondents, and the unfamiliarity to the local context that it entails – as a practice has "mostly been derided by scholars and commentators" as "derivative and ethnocentric", says Murrell (2015: 18) in her review of the academic literature on the practice[166].

Mark Pedelty's (1995:110-112) discussion of parachute journalism within his study on foreign correspondents in El Salvador is the most well-known of such criticism of the practice. "Parachuting tends to be superficial and susceptible to propaganda", Pedelty concluded (1995: 112). But the responses by some of Afghan photojournalists I interviewed point to a qualitative factor specific to the visual medium which has not been discussed in academic literature before: the possible importance to *photojournalists* of being unfamiliar to a place, in order to ‘see’ it from a fresh perspective. I offer that future research focused on parachute *photo*journalism may add a new dimension to the existing academic understanding of international news about conflicts and crises.

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[165] Among the three female respondents in my study, one respondent mentioned having worked as a fixer for an international female photojournalist in Afghanistan. Though I cannot be certain, I find it hard to believe that all fixers in conflict zones are invariably male, everywhere.

[166] Murrell (2015: 16-7) notes that scholars have also sought to defend parachute news-reporting as a practice because of the quantity of foreign new-reporting it allows, while perhaps compromising the quality of such reporting.

Local-global journalism as a practice and form of news production within international news-making is only set to grow. This thesis represents only a small step in the long road ahead to form a thorough, rigorous, and multidisciplinary understanding of local-global journalism. My hope is that this thesis will help bring into focus, for the community of academic scholars interested in journalistic representations of conflicts and crises, the importance of understanding the work of and images produced by the local – often precariously-employed – photojournalists who daily feed ‘scoops’ of the misery of their own country to the ever-hungry beast of the global demand for images of conflicts and attendant human suffering.

6.7 Final word

I am loath to end on a pessimistic note and yet can find no words which can serve as an optimistic *mot juste* to end this thesis. In spite of the trials and tribulations they spoke of, the Afghan photojournalists I interviewed also had words of hope and aspiration. I borrow from them.

Respondent 10:

> *To be honest, photojournalism in Afghanistan is a very complicated or tough job. There are many, many positive side*[s], *many negative side*[s]. *On the positive side, Afghanistan is a collection of subjects. Everywhere you see is a subject itself. You can never miss the subject you are looking for. Every step you follow in your entire career, you can find something to photograph. You can find something that is still, they need somebody to tell their stories. There are many, many hidden stories in Afghanistan.*

Respondent 4:

> [I have] *kind of* [a] *wish and …kind of* [a] *hope, that the photographers of Afghanistan never let Afghanistan forget again, forget photos. Because that’s happened before. Taliban time. We forg*[o]*t. Yeah, I don’t wish that to happen again. I wish to have Afghanistan with picture*[s].

The combined threat of the Taliban and so-called Islamic State looming large over Afghanistan at the time of writing cannot stop either the ‘hidden stories’ of Afghanistan from being told to the world or Afghanistan from continuing ‘with pictures’ so long as the brave and dedicated Afghan women and men I met, as well as the others I did not, continue, and are able to, do their work. Wish them well.

Nil intentatum reliquit.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Guiding schedule for interviews conducted with Afghan photojournalists

1. What was your motivation behind becoming a photographer?
2. As a photographer, what would you want to do? Shoot beautiful pictures or true pictures?
3. What are the essentials you are looking for in such a photograph?
4. When you go to shoot for the purposes of news coverage, what images are you looking for?
5. As an Afghan, what kind of pictures do you think need to be seen by people in Afghanistan?
6. What kind of pictures do you think need to be seen by people abroad?
7. When you are at a location, do you take additional pictures on top of what is demanded from you from your editors?
8. Do you have a personal website or other method of circulation of such photos?
9. For a certain event, how many Afghans and non-Afghans are there on location to take photos?
10. Do you think as an Afghan you do anything different than international photographers?
11. Do you think that your photos – the ones you take for your employer or the ones you take for yourself – are different from what international photographers would take?
12. Can you tell me in more detail about this or maybe give me some examples of this difference?
13. Do you think you feel closer to the subjects and issues you cover than international photographers in any way?
14. Do you think that as an Afghan you are in a better position to understand certain situations and thus take better photographs than others?
15. When you are in a certain situation do you have any previous ideas about what images you are looking for?

16. How far does this idea of what to shoot depend on who the pictures are meant for?

17. What is the audience in mind while shooting? Your editors/domestic audience/global audience?

18. Other than news events, do you shoot stock photographs for quick use in case of a breaking story as part of your work for your employer?

19. What kind of stock images do they want?

20. Are there set locations that you visit more often than not e.g. hospitals, aid camps etc.?

21. Would you say you generally cover organized press events more than others non-organized ones?

22. What were the biggest obstacles you would say you face while working in the field?

23. What are the biggest obstacles inside the office?

24. What is the editorial policy of your employer about shooting blood and gore, wounded or maimed people, dead bodies and other "horrors" of conflict?

25. Other than these guidelines, are there any other unwritten rules about the kind of photos that your employer wants?

26. How does this demand influence the kind of pictures you take?

27. Are there any other influences or considerations on the kind of photos you take?

28. Do you find working in Afghanistan as an Afghan photographer more demanding or easier because you come from the region?

29. What are the major differences in day to day work that you do from what international photographers do?

30. Are there any differences in what you think should be covered and what is actually covered in news in Afghanistan?

31. Do you think news photography can be taught or is it learnt only 'on the job'?

32. What is your opinion about the various media development organizations working in Afghanistan?

33. Do you think the work they do helps in creating a group of competent news professionals in Afghanistan?

34. Did you receive training in any form from a media development agency or organization?

35. Did you work for a news outlet before receiving training for your news photography work?

36. Does the training you received help you in your day to day work?

37. How different is the training you receive for your work from the actual work you have to do eventually?

38. Do you have to often take pictures of women as part of your work?

39. Do you face any problems while taking pictures of women?

40. What are your ideas about the position of women in Afghan society today than before?

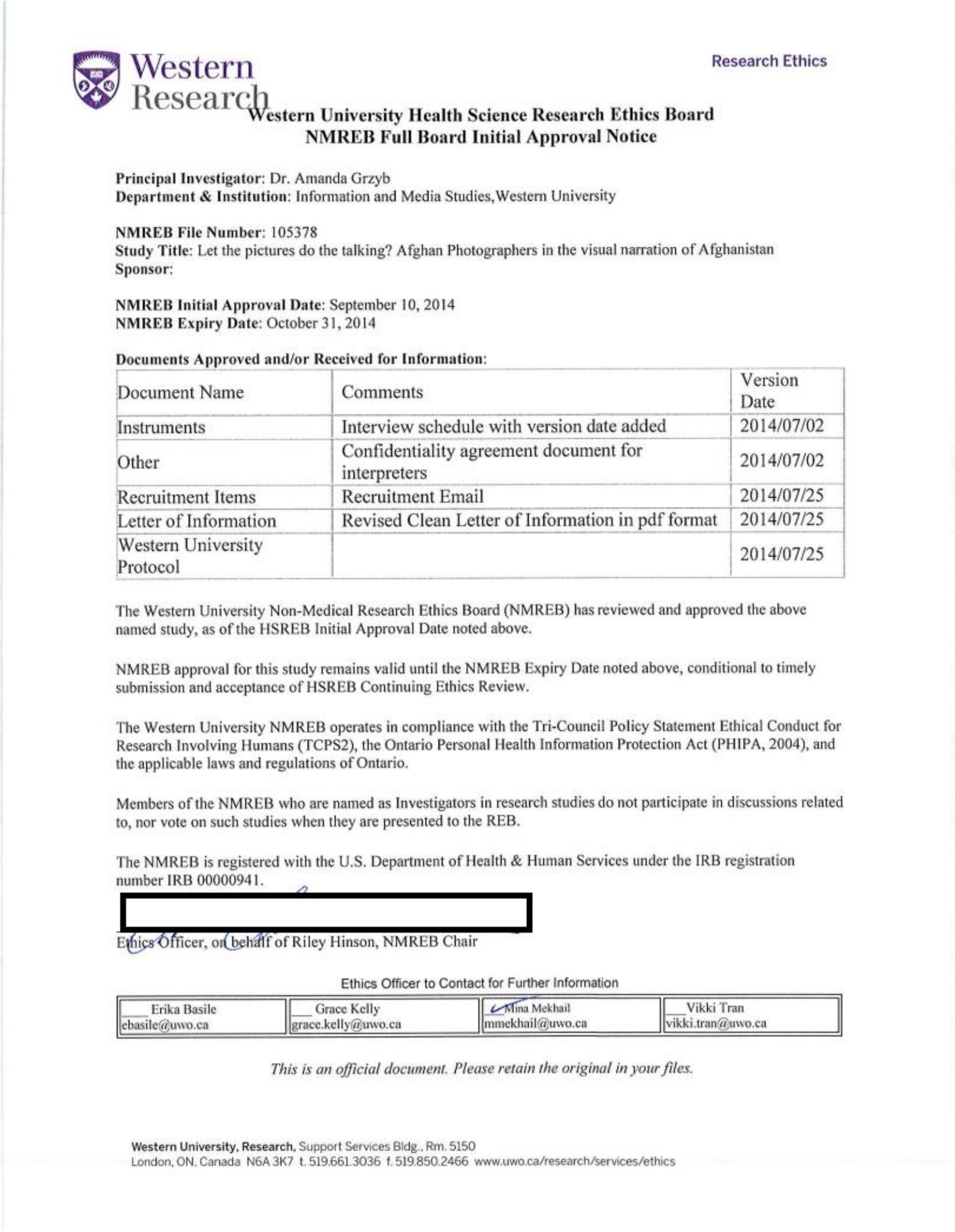
41. Is there any attempt to specifically capture women either in traditional or modern roles?

42. Did you see any changes in the position of women before and after the fall of the Taliban?

43. Do you see any changes in the position of women since the issue of the presidential decree banning acts of violence against women – the EVAW law in 2009?

44. Do you think the media plays an adequate role in making the public aware of this law and its implications like reporting instances of violence against women to the authorities?

Appendix 2: Ethics Board Approval Notice



Western Research

Research Ethics

Western University Health Science Research Ethics Board
NMREB Full Board Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Amanda Grzyb
Department & Institution: Information and Media Studies,Western University

NMREB File Number: 105378
Study Title: Let the pictures do the talking? Afghan Photographers in the visual narration of Afghanistan
Sponsor:

NMREB Initial Approval Date: September 10, 2014
NMREB Expiry Date: October 31, 2014

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Instruments	Interview schedule with version date added	2014/07/02
Other	Confidentiality agreement document for interpreters	2014/07/02
Recruitment Items	Recruitment Email	2014/07/25
Letter of Information	Revised Clean Letter of Information in pdf format	2014/07/25
Western University Protocol		2014/07/25

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the HSREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of HSREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

[redacted]

Ethics Officer, on behalf of Riley Hinson, NMREB Chair

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

___ Erika Basile ebasile@uwo.ca	___ Grace Kelly grace.kelly@uwo.ca	✓ Mina Mekhail mmekhail@uwo.ca	___ Vikki Tran vikki.tran@uwo.ca

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

Western University, Research, Support Services Bldg., Rm. 5150
London, ON, Canada N6A 3K7 t. 519.661.3036 f. 519.850.2466 www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics

Appendix 3: Information Letter and Consent Form

Letter of Information

Research Project: Let the pictures do the talking

May 15th, 2014

My name is Saumava Mitra and I am a PhD candidate at a University in Canada called University of Western Ontario. This letter is to invite you take part in a research project on the professional work of Afghan photojournalists. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information you require to make an informed decision about participating in this research.

General Information

This research is funded primarily by the researcher himself and in part by the faculty of information and media studies of University of Western Ontario. Additional logistical help is being provided by Afghanistan Journalist Safety Committee by providing office space and interpreters to conduct the interviews. The information gathered will be published either in an academic volume or journal article. The final research findings will also be made available to Afghan Journalist Safety Committee to inform them in their future work. If at any time – before, during or after the interview you wish to find out more about the nature of the research or withdraw from the research you can contact me, Saumava Mitra. My email is smitra7@uwo.ca, phone number 0015197027125 and address: North Campus Building, C/O Faculty of Information and Media Studies, University of Western Ontario, N6A5B7.

Purpose of this Study

The research project is to gather information from photojournalists about how they view their work and what they feel about the photographs that they take to understand if photographers from different places in this world approach their profession differently from each other. Additionally, the research will try to see how the professional training in photojournalism available in Afghanistan helps or does not help the working photojournalists themselves.

Procedures of this Study

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured, open-ended, audio-recorded interview at the offices of Afghan Journalist Safety Committee in Kabul at a certain date and time in October, 2014 which will be communicated to you as soon as it is finalised if you consent to taking part in the interview. It is expected that the interview will not take more than 90 minutes and you will be asked a few questions regarding your professional work to which you will be free to answer however you choose. The audio of the interview will be recorded if you consent to it. You will also be asked for your consent to use your identity before the interview and you are free to either allow your name to be used or to ask for this information to be omitted from appearing in the research. Your identity and any personal information you share will be kept in a master list at a separate location from the recordings and transcripts.

The only people who will have access to information collected will be the researcher and the interpreter present. The interpreter will be a staff of Afghan Journalist Safety Committee who will be known to you and if not you will be introduced prior to the interview. You will be free to withdraw from the interview if the interpreter concerned is not trustworthy in your eyes. I will keep the information gathered from the interview confidential by keeping the audio recording and transcripts of the interview in encrypted laptops stored in locked cabinets at my place of stay in Kabul and off-location in secure and password protected databases of the University of Western Ontario. At the end of the interview you will be asked again if in the light of the answers you have given, you want to withdraw your participation, withhold your identity from appearing in the research or have certain parts omitted from the interview transcript. At any point during the interview, you are free to stop the researcher, withdraw or refuse to answer any question or line of enquiry. In no way is the purpose of the research to glean information which is personally or professionally sensitive to you and as such, you are free to omit any information that you are not comfortable with sharing. There are no foreseeable physical risks to taking part in this interview and if you think at any point that taking part in the interview is causing you mental harm, stress or otherwise causing you discomfiture, or for any other reason, you can withdraw promptly without any prejudice shown to you. Please also note that by consenting to participate in the study, you will continue to reserve the rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

Potential Benefits of the Research

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this research. There will be no monetary compensation for taking part in this interview. Indirectly, the potential benefits to you of participating in this research is that as a working photojournalist in Afghanistan you will have helped the researcher in forming as complete a picture as possible about the working conditions of your fellow-photojournalists in Afghanistan.

Contact Information

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical aspects of the research and wish to contact somebody outside of the research team, you can contact the Dean’s office, Faculty of Information and Media Studies, North Campus Building, Room 240, The University of Western Ontario, London, ON, CANADA, Post Code N6A 5B7, email: mediastudies@uwo.ca and phone: 001519-661-4017. You can also contact the Office of Research Ethics of the University of Western Ontario directly: Room 5150, Support Services Building, Western University, London ON N6A 3K7. Email: ethics@uwo.ca and Phone: 001519-661-3036.

If in the light of the above, you are willing to participate in the interview on a voluntary basis, kindly provide your written consent to that effect by signing the declaration below and returning the signed document to the representative of Afghan Journalist Safety Committee who has conveyed this to you. Please retain a copy of this letter.

'Let the pictures do the talking? Afghan Photographers in the visual narration of Afghanistan'

Researcher: Saumava Mitra

CONSENT FORM

I have read this Information/Consent Document, have had the nature of the study explained to me, and I agree to participate.

All questions have been answered to my satisfaction. YES/NO

I consent to a recorded audio interview. YES/ NO

Name: ______________________________

Signature: _______________________________

Witness (if required): ____________________________

Date: ___________________

Appendix 4: List of Respondents

Respondent no.	**Gender**	**Occupation at the time of the interview***	**Relevant previous professional experience described by respondent***
Respondent 1	Male	Employee of the Government of Afghanistan	Full-time photojournalist for Afghan news agency with international client news organizations
Respondent 2	Male	Full-time photojournalist for Afghan news agency with international client news organizations	Same
Respondent 3	Male	Full-time photojournalist for Afghan news agency with international client news organizations	Same
Respondent 4	Female	Self-employed documentary photographer as well as manager at International NGO	Freelance and full-time photojournalist for international news agency
Respondent 5	Male	Self-employed documentary photographer	Freelance photojournalist for international news agencies
Respondent 6	Male	Full-time photojournalist at international news agency	Photojournalist at Afghanistan-based news photo agency with international client news organizations and freelancer for various international news agencies

Respondent 7	Female	Full-time photojournalist for Afghan daily newspaper	Same
Respondent 8	Male	Aspiring professional photographer/trainee at photography training institute	Freelance photojournalist for Afghan news magazine
Respondent 9	Male	Self-employed in non-photography related business	Full-time photojournalist for Afghan news agency with international client news organizations
Respondent 10	Male	Self-employed documentary photographer; photojournalism trainer; employed at international community agency	Full-time photojournalist for internationally-funded news publication in Afghanistan as well as freelance photographer for international news organizations
Respondent 11	Male	Full-time photojournalist at international news agency	Same
Respondent 12	Male	Freelance photojournalist for international news organizations; self-employed documentary photographer; photojournalism trainer	Same
Respondent 13	Male	Freelance photojournalist for international news agency	Same

Respondent 14	Male	Self-employed documentary photographer; photojournalism trainer	Self-employed documentary photographer; freelancer for international news organizations
Respondent 15	Male	Self-employed documentary photographer; photojournalism trainer	Self-employed documentary photographer; freelancer for international news organizations
Respondent 16	Male	Not employed	Freelance photojournalist for international news agencies
Respondent 17	Male	Full-time photojournalist for international news agency	Driver for international news agency/freelancer for international news agency
Respondent 18	Male	Full-time photojournalist for international news agency	Interpreter/fixer for international journalists
Respondent 19	Male	Full-time photojournalist for international news agency; self-employed documentary photographer	Freelance photojournalist for international news agencies
Respondent 20	Female	Full-time photojournalist for Afghan news agency with international client news organizations	Same

*Identifiable information removed

Appendix 5: Sample Interview Transcripts

Sample interview transcript 1

Interview with Respondent 6

At first it would be really nice if you could tell me, why you became a photojournalist? What motivated you?

Yeah, thank you for coming to Afghanistan and focusing on Afghan photographers. First of all, I would like to introduce myself. My name is -------- -----------. I am --- years old. I am from Kabul, Afghanistan and I have a bachelor degree in agriculture and yeah from 2007, I started photography. I came to this field. At that time I was in high school and it was my last year of high school and then I found out that there is a French media centre. They provide professional photographic trainings. So then I joined there and was there for six months training. First of all, I couldn't make it to go to the class because the class was full. Then someone just help me to stay in the class and just be a student. At that time, I became eager for it because there were many limits to education, I mean training places for photographers. In Afghanistan, you can say, we are the first generation after the civil war. That kind of thing, so we have many limit for professional photographers. Then there are no special or governmental schools or training centres for photography. So that was a golden chance for me when I found out about so I tried to get in. And I studied there for six months and after that I start to work in this industry. First time I had no idea I would make a living with that as a professional and I would stay with it. So I went to just get it and if you can do some good photos of your family, friends, just starting like that, you know. Then the photography class ended and there was a entry exam for the university. In the exam, I got the stream of agriculture so…there is a problem that in Afghanistan, there is a shortage of capacity in the education service so you cannot go by your option. Like one hundred thousand, for example, one hundred thousand students try for the exam and then twenty thousand are accepted and eighty thousand are just failed on that. Yeah. By the time I found out that I got in the stream of agriculture, I went there so because for those four years, I just forgot photography. And I went there and for two or three semesters, I studied agriculture and then I got a call from my teacher. My teacher was an Iranian, and he was travelling. He told me that there was a job opportunity in ---------------- [international community organization], for three months' photography. I said I am doing my study and I cannot take it. Then after fifteen days, we have vacation, between semesters, then I met again my teacher, he said there is opportunity if you want. So you can go for it. Then I say yeah, fine, I am going to do that. And at the same time, I continued with my lessons, in agriculture also. So when I went there, sorry I am going into sidelines…

Not at all. No problem. I am here to listen.

When I went there, the contract was for five months, I said no, I am not going to take it because then I face problems with my studies in agriculture, then I saw the salary, the salary was good. So then I say, ok. Then I start working in the profession and ----------

----------- was maybe 2008. Yeah, I work there for five months and then they extend the contract for three months more and three months more so one year and six months, I work for ---------- -------------. And I could travel a lot to the provinces with the high official, yeah, governmental officials, ministers, presidents or that was something new for me and it was a good experience so I thought this is a good profession, you have to go with it. At the time I was doing my agriculture studies and then I graduated from school, sorry, university. I got my diploma and then I start to make photo just because then the job was closing. It was closing in the -------- ---------. So I just spoke with two other colleagues, two other photographers who were with me in the -------- -------- and say, ‘let’s make a photo agency.’ Something very new in Afghanistan. If we can make a photo agency, it has good money and its good for Afghanistan because we have no photo agency. In other countries, they have like hundred photo agencies, they have unions of photographers, this kind, so let’s do it. Some of my friends told me some negative points, ok, this is going to cost you a lot and we may not get (inaudible), but I was… no, I am going for it. So here’s one person, --------- ------ he work for ----------- news agency [international news agency], he said, ---------, let’s do it. Then we went to the ministry of culture and it was three months for us to get the license for our agency and then we made a photo agency and we bought a domain to make a website for it. It was three months past so then we got the news that -------- [national news organization], it was a German, you know about it, that we… we need photographs from here. For example, we have contract that in one year, one Afghan agency should deliver for us one thousand photos for our publications. So then I wrote a proposal for them. It took me till one o clock, two o clock to do so it was very new for us because we were very eager to get that, so tomorrow, no it took like two days, after two days, I was just working and I got a call from Germany that you are accepted, your photo and let’s do it. So the price for per picture was like fifteen dollars, and they said, actually we are filling our promise for fifteen dollars and the good point was that they were transferring the money in one time in advance, so twenty thousand dollar was the total and they send it to our bank account, so they are sending us the money so that we can invest. Actually it was the total price of this one thousand pictures, and when we got twenty thousand dollar in our budget, then it was something, we are not going to believe it, in short time we made, this much money. In Afghanistan, twenty thousand dollar is too much. If you work for governmental offices, and if you have a good salary, in two or three years, you cannot make this much money. So then we got money and we start work for them, and we were sending the pictures. Yeah, the pictures were news pictures, picture stories, this kind of thing, so that was a good experience for us. At the same time, my father told me that you have your bachelor in agriculture, so you should leave photography and you should go there but I said no…I have a bachelor, I will keep it as a score or as a back up but for now this is a good field for me because we have no professional photographers in Afghanistan. We may have a thousand engineers, doctors and agriculture but we don’t have photographers so now I have my clients, I am familiar about this. So I am going to get this. So my father said you have your freedom, decide which is good for you because you have to make your own future. And then we got another projects, another projects, and then I work for ------------, --------- --------, [international news agency] for a short period, then ----- [international news agency].

What was your photo agency called?

It was ------------ ----------- ---------- ------------…And then we start work and even we made training classes for other Afghans who were eager to come to this field. In the provinces, we organize some classes for them and most of them are now working. They have some job and they have good salary.

Were you funded by someone for these trainings?

No, actually, by the time we make the website, the website, the domain, the office, the internet, everything, transport, we were paying by ourselves. Sometimes, I was going to my friends to get loans from them. And then when I am getting a project, then I am paying them back the money. We did it all ourselves so but we never ask for fee from the students who are studying in the class because we said that ----- ---------- [international community organization]. We had an advanced class at ---- --------- as well, I just forgot to tell that. It was like for four months, it was for advanced photography class. They invited Kim Page. You may know him. He is a famous Australian photographer, he was covering Cambodia war for like twenty years. So he really trained photographers and we learn about from him. So we thought, they invest on us so we learn some things. So it's our duty to transfer this to others. There are other people who need to get this trainings. Because even in Afghan journalism faculty, in one semester, there is only one chapter it is about photojournalism, they taught few things and it is very old, even not update.

Kabul University?

Yeah, Kabul University. It's a very…it's a huge gap, you know. So this is why most of the people are very eager…sometime on facebook, we are finding questions about when you are having your next class because we want to attend there. So this is the story how we made it. Then I work for ------, ------ ------ [International news agency], for ----, ---------- -------- which…you may know ------, ---------- [international] photographer who was ------ in Afghanistan, his colleague was just --------. She just found me according to my class activities and said just come work with ----- ------ [international news agency] because their photographer, for some kind of reasons, left ----. Yeah, I work for few months and there was some problem with their bosses. They had a fight about (inaudible) their photographers. Because their big boss had in mind to bring an Iranian photographer, and then the --------, ---- said no I am keeping ------. Because of the fight, I couldn't make it to stay there. Another guy just came, not Iranian… and for three months, I join with ------ [international news agency].

Are you freelancing with them or are you hired full time?

No, now I am hired and have fixed salary. So before, I was just freelancer.

This is extremely interesting, I wanted to ask you, the photojournalistic training that you received at the beginning, the things you learnt, do you apply that in your job?

Actually, first time that we, when I joined French media training centre, it was started by ---- -------, famous photographer who worked for national geographic. And I studied there, actually ---- ---- was not our teacher but another photographer. At that time, I was not very good in English, I could speak but catching words were, I mean, very difficult for me. Especially, the Australians, they are coming. Very hard, you know, they have accent. And then when they show us the professional camera, something very new for us, it was…completely new. So we started from zero, you know, and we learnt a lot of things but when we go to the field, for the first time that I get my project, it was for four days, and it was a conference, I cover that and now when I am thinking that all those photographs, I am ashamed that I make that… worse…you know because I was so new and…when you graduate from a training centre, you think that now you are full, you can go. When you go to the field, you don't know anything, and now you are starting. So most of the trainings, that we studied there, when we were working in the field, I implemented those theory in the practical field so…yeah, yeah.

Is there something different about working in Afghanistan, which is not taught in these training centres?

Sorry, I couldn't get that.

Working in Afghanistan, it's something different?

Yeah.

Than working in Iran or India, for example, so are these trainings that you personally received, were not from people who were from Afghanistan, so that did that make a problem? Other than the accent and language etc,?

At that time, we thought there was lack of internet, it was not international photography, that we see other photographers, and watch their work. Photography is not something that you adjust your camera technically and then you are done. You have to see other photographers or you have to meet others. You have to have exhibition abroad and you can train, you have to travel. For example, there is an event which is called Perpignan, in France, and photographers around the world they go there and they meet each other and take tips from each other. So, these problems are all with us. So we, for example, many times, we have exhibitions abroad. We were invited for trainings abroad, but due to security reasons because they are not trusting Afghans, we couldn't get the visa. Because some Afghans who went there, they haven't come back because of security, war, we have problems so we are not willing to come back to our country so this makes huge problems for guys who are going for their work and even they want to come back, there is lack of trust. So these are the problems and next, equipments, is also a problem we have. No professional equipments, it was very, I mean, for example here in Afghanistan, if you want to buy two cameras, one with zoom lens, I mean professional camera. So with that, you can have your wedding, even you know. So I mean it is very difficult to buy equipments. So these were all challenges for us and I am sure most of the photographers, they have the same problem. But due to low, low economy, economic position we have here, it was much bigger challenge for us.

You must have worked right next to international photographers…

Yeah, sorry, I just interrupted you, I just want to add something more about your previous question.

Yeah.

In other place, like Iran, Pakistan, other countries where I have not gone there but as I know, there are associations, unions which every month or fifteen days they make sessions, and photographers just taking their photographs and others are looking to their work and giving their comments, this kind, that kind, it was something we didn't have here in Afghanistan while I was studying and we have this gap here. But your question…

Right. So people who trained you and when you train, are you different?

Actually, the basics are something, which you cannot change. But we are…some other thing, because, for photography I just entered the media world and I met people, foreigners and I saw what they are doing and what we are doing so these are different. Yeah, definitely, because our teacher, who studied photojournalism as a bachelor and he had main and from the school, the university he was studying about photography, about colours, about dark room, about…many things. We just studied for three months. If you look at three months and six years or seven years that some are studying for degree so there is a big change you know. They are very different, maybe there will be, there was problem when we became. But as we studied lots from our practical work, so we just convey those lessons, things to our students. We were getting good feedbacks from them. For example, the way in which we studied the technical about the camera, we made it very easy for our students, to catch it. The next good thing was that they were getting their training by their speaker, by Persian speaker, which we get it from English speaker. We definitely missed a lot of points while studying but they didn't miss because it was spoken clearly. So that's a change.

Right. Other than the techniques of the camera, functions of the camera, button functions, focus etc., what else do you teach?

We teach for example, about the security, of the own, of the photographer. So photography, especially in Afghanistan, is not just taking the picture. Its caring about yourself. While you going to the field, you face different kind of people, different kinds of threats, sometimes, police officers might stop us, we are teaching to the students how to handle it, how to solve the issue. How to prepare for that yourself, to keep low profile to not attract people, to have professional cameras and so the same thing, but different…. Because, the target is for Afghanistan and the students are preparing for Afghanistan, things which might work in other countries, might not work here, so we are focusing on those things.

Do you think you take different pictures to an international photographer?

Actually, the first time we were assigned or something, there was a difference. Even sometimes, we are taking thinking our cameras are not very professional, that was always a reason, it still is a reason. Camera, especially the lens, it has a value on the quality of the pictures, yeah. That might be one reason. But when we got the training from the, Kim Page, advanced training, then we found out that this is not the camera which makes the picture. It's the person behind the camera who are making the picture. So we were experiencing, experience, experiencing…sorry, we were thinking that there will be a change and exactly there was a change. But after, two or three years, as we adopt ourselves, as we saw their pictures, we just made a looking schedule for us, we checked websites, by professional photographers as well. So these things, lead us to take good pictures. For example, I see my pictures now and compare it with photographer from Reuter, AFP and other photographers, I see no difference, it's the same one.

So am I correct in understanding that you said you adapted your photos to what the agencies wanted, am I correct in understanding that?

Sorry, I couldn't understand.

So what I mean to ask is, do you think you use your creativity more or did you adapt and change yourself to what the agency wanted?

You mean ---, --- or ---.

Whichever agency?

Actually we had the lessons which come from training centres. But then maybe we saw the other photographers, who are good, and we are not good, so we were getting less clients. The others were getting more. So this made us to make a change in our work. We did both change. As we practiced…

Can you tell me what these changes were?

For example, the main thing is the photo composition. Colour, lighting, and the subject, the subject is very important. So we experienced these things were very important. And we were not getting these pictures so we were getting less clients. So we just try to improve us and we found out that now, our work is getting well. And this was the reason that I, specially myself, I got offer, I mean, job offer from international agencies. It was the reason of this change, you know, you work is weak so nobody is kind to you but when you have good work then you don't have to run for work, others are running after you.

So what were your subjects, and how did they change from when you started from where you are now?

The subjects which we were covering are ordinary subjects like mostly I was targeting kids, taking photographs of children is an easy way for photographer. But international agencies, they are not using many child photos because child is something that every person who is looking at it, is going to, he or she is going to like the child because child is something cute. I mean taking a picture of child is something that is easy, so now you have to make a composition, you have to take a subject else to showing cute child. This is a little bit difficult, you know. I go to take picture, for example, of this flower, you have to put something else, you may add some beauty on that so. These things were the subjects that which we changed, for example, when it came to feature, I mean the topic before, for example, migrants who were living, I mean we cannot say migrants, I mean returnees, we went there, we made stories about them, we went inside there, we work on lifestyle, which way they are living. So for other countries, specially for the international agencies, those subjects…they are interested to show Afghanistan. If you take pictures of (inaudible) like anywhere else in the world, you have to show an Afghan face, an Afghan farmer, an Afghan woman, woman situation, what challenges they are facing so, the security problem, I mean being a news photographer, it is a little bit challenging in Afghanistan, there's more risk. When there is an attack, you are escaping, you are running, so this was the shift in subject.

So you went from soft stories to hard stories, can I say that?

Yeah, definitely.

If you had the freedom to take pictures that you wanted to take, would they be the same as you take now?

They will be different because the agencies they have a target. I mean they have their own policy. They are using a type of photographs. A type of subjects. They are not interested in everything. So if I am free, and I can just take pictures of Afghanistan, I have some target places, where I am going to take pictures, from Afghanistan, what's the real Afghanistan. Because now the international agencies or the international media, they are focusing on attacks. For example, in one month, there's no picture of Kabul, there is attacks, there are wounded, there are people died so then you can see all over the world, that they are publishing the news, oh Afghanistan! They cannot see other side of Afghanistan. Everyone know Afghanistan by attacks, but the real living here, what's the real living, what's the real demand of people so for sure there will be change.

What would you like to cover?

Now we have women who are studying, who are teaching, we have farmers who are working in the field. They live like another farmer who is living like in America or who is working in Germany. He's not supporting war, he is a peaceful man but war is something…happens or forced to deal so…this is something you can show by pictures. For example, we have football teams, we have premier league, we have viewers for that, these are all things which show the people that the same thing they live, people also wish to live like that. People like internet, we have lots of training centres where students are going there, they get trainings for computer and internet and this kind of thing. We have TVs, media, I mean lots of good activities which we have, we also have to cover those things. Now the problem with the international agencies, that if you send pictures for them from daily life, or other subjects, they don't show much interest on it. They like fifteen picture of suicide attack, fourteen of them are rightaway in the website. And then you see it is published in the New York Times and so this is the problem. Sometime, I even fight with my editor, that why are you not using this picture? They just say we have other important subjects, and which is why we cannot have these kind of pictures.

Right now your agency is headquartered in Germany or?

No, actually we have several regional offices. Our regional office is in Lahore, in Pakistan. And there's a Pakistani editor we have, he is very good friend of mine, he is a good colleague but he is not the man who takes the decision but somebody else. So we send the pictures to Pakistan and then they may edit some captions, and they send the photos to Germany and in Germany they publish it. That's the system.

And ---- [international news agency] sends to New Delhi?

No, --- [international agency] sends to Cairo. Yeah and then ----- [international news agency] sends from Kabul to New Delhi.

Ok. Do you think you do something different even in those fifteen pictures of the suicide attack that you take for ----- [international news agency], than somebody who has flown in?

Yeah.

How are your pictures different?

Yeah, we are Afghan. We know people here so…these are all related things. Everyone has their own angle, for example, I am just giving you the example of the last attack, which was like three days ago or…

It was Monday.

Yeah, it was on Monday and it was targeting American convoy. So for us, civilians are very important, we are targeting civilians, we are taking pictures of wounded, of people who got casualties from those, but for person who comes from America or somewhere, they target on their soldiers, how many soldiers are being killed and how many wounded, only cover the soldiers. Because their soldiers are very important for them, so that might be a change. Another example, we might go to the victim's house, because we are Afghan, we can easily access to their house, or we can chat and explain why we are taking these pictures, but a foreigner if is going there, then there is lot of tension working for them because of the past civil wars, there are foreigner countries so the intelligence was working here and then they are playing with the politicians here so people have not good memory from them so I mean I am not saying people are against foreigners, they may welcome if foreigners come from everywhere, Afghans are hospitable and they have their hospitality. But for us, we have our culture here, the culture also, it's a Islamic state, so taking pictures from foreigners might not be very pleasant for people to allow.

As an Afghan photojournalist, working here, what are the biggest obstacles you face?

We…the biggest obstacle is security, first. There's no security, and that's general, not just for photographers, I mean you just have your camera, and you are trying to go somewhere to take pictures, you are not comfort inside your car because every minute you are thinking of a suicide attack that might happen next to you and you don't know. There is a war and you know that's the frontline and I cannot go there but here the frontlines disappear, it happens every minute so it's very disgusting and sometimes it makes us very disappointed. The next thing is the culture which we have because sometimes it happens when we take pictures of women, we face different clashes, even from police officers, asking why you are taking picture of woman, its not allowed and this kind of thing. And then we show our press card to them, we are journalists and we are not taking the picture for fun or somethings, we are going to show their own problem, it's for their own benefit, so mostly we avoid taking pictures of women because, because of the cultural problem. Because two or three times, I went to jail. I mean jail for many hours, because people attack me that you are taking pictures. Even the woman in burqa, you know their face was not in view but so they attack on me and in one case, they wanted to break my camera, so I survived from that. The next thing is economic problem as well, generally in Afghanistan not only for photographers but when you see that the foreign photographers comes with updated equipments, good quality equipments they have and they make good pictures in different light, so then you see you don't have money to have those equipment so it is not possible here to get it. So these things are challenges that sometimes we face.

You must have people in mind while taking pictures, who are these people, are they the editors or are they the clients or are they the final audience?

When I go out, I make photo for hours, you know to make an archive. Our target is audience, people because mostly we think about exhibition or website or we share that picture on social media, so that's the people. Because we get feedback from people and we get likes or comments on the photo in our website and our facebook page. So those photographs are mostly targeted for people but when I am working for my agency or clients, mostly my target is my editor. Because I see which type of photo is good for him, it's pleasant or not, you take care, you are on a story and you have experienced in the past that the story was not used so again, why are you going to take that picture. So for our official work, it's the editor and for ourselves, its people, yeah.

So what does your editor want?

Actually, it's not very specific, as I mentioned because according to their policy, composition and technical issue, that's always there. You try for good composition, good colour and these kind of things but on subjects, it depends on the policy, as I mentioned, that mostly they are targeting shots which are news pictures, specially suicide attack and these kind of things.

The media development organizations, you know the ones which provide journalism training, photojournalism training, do you think they are helping create a competent group of photojournalists in Afghanistan?

Actually they are good especially for beginners, you learn many things from them. But in advanced, they are not useful, because they cannot provide advanced trainings. And they cannot provide scientific training. The lack of education centre we have, for example, as I mentioned in photography, in other media, graphic designing, you have all type of school in other country, but here we don't have. As I mentioned about photography, that even in Kabul University, in journalism faculty, they are not still updated, sometimes when we talk to their teachers, about photography, about techniques, about what we have learnt, we just find out that the teacher is very out of date and they don't know what they are talking about. So they try to learn something from us, even the teachers. Still the department, I mean the ministry of higher education, they are trying to work hard but still we have lots of challenges, and in my opinion, these training centres, for basic training, they are useful but for advanced learnings they are not useful, you have to learn on the job and to be more professional, you have to study in a scientific I mean in a University somewhere. So then you will be more professional and your work will be in a international standard. Still my work, I am not comparing my work with other photographer because they have studied and the way I have studied, here there's lots of change. There's things they know that I might not be aware of. So these are the problem and the challenge.

You already mentioned the problems with taking pictures of women in Afghanistan, so I wanted to ask you whether you in the last years seen any change in the position of women in Afghanistan?

Yeah, in the last few years, I have seen a change. Yeah, for example, when the Taliban here, I was like in seventh class of school, the women were all in burqa. All. Burqa. There were special cars for women, for example there were, we had during the Taliban era, we had two types of transports, one bus special for women, one for men. So this was a problem and women were not allowed to go out alone, she must have company of a man. So when the new government came, we saw that one woman not wearing burqa and people were just staring at the woman. It was very new for them and sometimes young boys were teasing them. It was interesting for them to see a woman. But now we see that…maybe in Kabul…ten percent of women will be in burqa and people have their own veil and hijab but its not the same that you have, must have the burqa. And they are working in different international organizations, and they have good salary, and they are teachers in universities and schools, they are going to study by themselves. And we see lots of women are driving in Kabul, and these are all changes, that we had in the last ten years past. So there are lots of change but for sure, we need to bring more change.

And…do you know about the EVAW law? What role do you think the media has played in making people aware of this law against violence against women?

Yeah, actually in the last four or five years, media has I mean Afghan media has lots of programmes about women, awaring women about their right, they just explaining about the international, UN, I mean materials about women. They say according to this article, or according to this law, they can demand for justice. For example, before, in Afghanistan, we had no, I mean, penalty for those people who are hitting women or who are forcing their daughters to get married but now we have law and if you are forcing your daughters to get married then he can go to prison, according to law, she can ask for justice. And the same thing, if a woman is beaten, she can go to ministry of women, and according to that, they can follow up the case. So these are the things, which, now…and there are lots of organizations, civil society organizations, they are working on this…

And does media play a part in this too?

Yeah, yeah.

Ok, I think I have come to the end of my questions. Thanks so much for your time.

I wish I have said what you wanted.

No, no, you should tell me what you think I need to know, not what I want to hear.

I talked a lot. When Kim Page, our teacher was here, he for example, he gave us homework that go do this assignment and then bring the photo and then talk about photos. We were bringing like fifty pictures and then he would say, oh no I am not going to see all that. So like that I should have talked less, but as I talk more, you get more details.

Thank you for that.

Interview with Respondent 11

I want to begin at the beginning as they say, what was your motivation behind becoming a photographer? How did you become a photographer?

Well, I was in Iran as a refugee and life in Iran was really difficult and I was studying and according to this society, I was an educated person so I was thinking what should I do for my society? Because nothing was available to do in Iran, it was very difficult, everything was forbidden. So I kind of start doing photography but not about Afghanistan society, about freedom in Iran. But after that I finished my high school and I just…was like…jobless, like other Iranian and Afghans. So I slowly try to come back to my society. Till the finishing the high school, I had never been with the Afghan society. So after that I slowly came back, it was the normal to come back because of the families and politics and I slowly find out I was kind of blind about the Afghan society in Iran. They were really poor, I mean really bad situation in the life and they were living in the suburbs of the cities and they were so bad places, really dirty, which I never, never think about that before. I thought everybody was living like me but huge number of the Afghan refugees was living in the really really bad situation, no water, no power, no gas, nothing. And I realise that this is part of my history. First of all, I tried to write something. But I feel, felt that writing was including a lot of, I mean part of my own emotional. And any word I was using in my language had a lot of emotional on it. And that was not the history, not the real history. So I definitely thought that photo would be the best, just to show the reality, to show the real life of these people. And I had to go and work as a tailor for nine month to buy a camera. And I bought the camera and it was really difficult because it was manual camera, it was negative and it was really expensive. But I have to do it. It was like, I was working as a tailor, but whatever I was earning, I was using, I mean, learning photography, taking pictures. And that was the start of that. When in 2002, I came back to Kabul, I met ------- ------------, one of the famous ----------- ------------- photographer, and he is ---------, he is ---- - -----------. So I had some pictures and I just met him in the street. And I run to him and say, hey, Ustad (teacher; expert) -----, I know you. Would it be possible to just look at some of my pictures? And he just saw some of my pictures and said, 'yeah, that's really good.'

(Interruption and brief conversation in Dari)

And he said that he is going to make a training centre for photojournalism which ---------- --------, who's like my godfather, mentor, great teacher, whatever you say, everything I learn is from him and ------- say we are coming to Kabul and make a photojournalism course. So I have to wait. But when I came to Afghanistan as normal, I didn't have money, you know, and what should I do with like…I go to some peoples and I had a camera which at that time, nobody had, Afghans in Kabul.

Which camera was it?

It was Canon FTB. It was really old, I have it even now because that was my first camera. And I went to some newspapers, and told them, see, I have a camera, I am a photographer and I can take picture for you. And with the different deals, I had all the time these…

(Interruption. Tea is served.)

I had these like…one paper told me, which is closed now, it was the -------- paper, he said that we give you one roll of film, thirty-six, and you go and take thirty-six kind of pictures, mostly social…social matters. And you bring it to us and we will pay you one thousand Afs. That was one deal. And I accept that because here I came back from Iran and I didn't have money. There was no job, you know and then I went to -------- newspaper and I just writing for them and I bought after like four months, it was really difficult time here in Kabul, after four month, ------- gave me, this is a ---------- paper, so the paperwork is too long. After four month, they paid my salary. And with that four month salary, I bought a bicycle. And then, with that bicycle and then also ------ photo [training centre] was started so that was the time, I just improve my photography a lot.

You mentioned that you started taking some pictures in Iran, but do you didn't have any training…

No, I…what I start is I had a really old book. Really old book, as I told you it was really difficult to buy books in Iran and I didn't have money. It was not difficult but I didn't have money. And it was really expensive for me as a refugee. So what I did, it was a really old book, between the, I mean, my big brother books, my older brother. So I saw that and I read that book only. That was the, I mean, the idea. When I got the idea, I said alright, it should be easy because my point of view is just recording the history. I didn't want to be a really really professional art photographer. I just wanted to take pictures of… important topic. So the subject was really important for me, not the photography and art part of the photography itself, in the first stage. But when I start, I realise now that everything comes together. What kind of pushed me to have a good picture was that I was taking pictures and then I print them, right? And then I was watching myself. If I really like that, right? I putted that to one side. The other one I didn't like, I say, ok I never repeat this picture. And these pictures I saw like…I mean every photographer like girls. My best pictures was beautiful girls and social kind of like…matters which was about the freedom of the girls and women in Iran. And then, the behavior of the Iranian police with the society, the people. These kind of pictures, I mean, were really important for me. But when I came into the refugees of Afghanistan, I saw a lot, let's say, beauty of the life, I mean, the poor life. Like they didn't have power, they didn't have nothing in the room so that bring me the good light, you know plus a really, really better subject. So that was something like I had to push myself, I had to, I mean, like learn myself about the photography but to be honest, it was a difficult time, because there was no internet, I couldn't compare any of my photos to anybody else. In my city that I was living, there was not a lot of photo exhibition and whatever it was, I didn't know because I was in a really really old, I mean, poor part of the city. And everything happens like, one or two exhibitions that, I remember, when I was informed…it was finished. You know? That was all the like problems, but I could read the magazines and newspapers and I was watching those pictures that I could. It was also…I mean when I take the photos of the refugees in Iran, I tried to send them to some of the Iranian newspaper, because I believe because I grow up in Iran, Iranian school with Iranian friends, children so I really didn't think that the society and government of Iran do not know anything about this. So I sent these pictures to them to just let them know that ok, you don't know that there are some people, human, living in this country in this situation. And then it was two-three, I mean, newspapers, they were from the reformist party, they like my pictures but they say because you are Afghan, according to law, we cannot buy the photos and we cannot also use your pictures at all. What we will do is send two professional photographers, you will be the fixer, and they will make exhibition about their life. That was something that I really want. So these two professional photographers came to my home in Masha and I really like them and learnt from them a lot. They were professional and they had really good equipment. And when we went, I went as a fixer with them. And then they start picturing everything and then they make a photo exhibition in Tehran and they invite me and that was like the first photo exhibition that I saw in Iran which I was fixer for that. In the exhibition, they couldn't put any of my pictures because of the law but they just print my small pictures on the desk. So some people and then a lot of people coming to me like, Iranian, from Tehran and it was capital and I was from the small city, it was really exciting for me. And they were talking to me, 'you are Afghan?' Yes, I am. 'You photographer?' Yes, I am a photographer and then whenever I learnt some of those girls, I say, ok, can I take your pictures? And they say, yeah, why not? And here I am with hijab, let's go somewhere without hijab. And then I took those pictures, and then I sold them (laughs). So that was all the, I mean, the start of my photography.

You mentioned that when you started out you wanted to make a historical record, rather than being arty, do you still do that or has your focus changed?

Well, actually, you know still I am in that part because, you know, I was always with the news, I grew up with the news. And I was, always, listening to the, I mean, the BBC and VoA, and these kind of things. Everything I imagine and everything that make my imagination is completely with news. When I just came here and I study with ----------, ---------- was a war photographer and he cover a lot of wars, I mean, in the world. So I really wanted to be like him. And then my point of view and my style went exactly like -----------'s style. So I really tried to cover war in Afghanistan and I became successful for that. When I joined in ------ [international news agency] I could go easily with the US troops, and I could see the like wars in the South of Afghanistan. Plus other troops as well.

So you were embedded?

Yeah, embedded. And this become my style that I am only, that I am really very good in clash, and war and conflict. Now, all part of this, I can do that really easy because I am really excited about that. Plus some of the artistic pictures, they are also very good, but I am never…famous with them. Whatever I am famous is war photography, in conflict, violence but I am not I mean famous with those. I do art photography with my Instagram. I sold one of them also with I mean publishers but it's not really…I am good with the Instagram and the people in the Instagram but not I mean, out of the…

But what's your heart's wish?

From the first moment, I wanted to show what war was doing to the people, to the life, to the society, to the children. And this is a really big story, actually. You have to follow the refugees, you have to follow the victims, you have to follow the disability people from the war, follow the widows, I mean like orphanages. War itself. What the war is doing. And all these kinds of things are things I really wanted to show. All…always I want to show I mean what is the real face of war. I wanted to show that war is ugly. Please do not make it, do not start it. I do…one of the reasons I join ----- [current international news agency where he is employed] was that they offer me the Middle East, I mean, the contract. So then, I wouldn't be only for my society, yeah? Because I believe that I do photography for all the world, not for my people. Now. One time when I start, it was really closed, small kind of goal, you know. But now, it’s not. Because I now saw that I could do it. So in one time, all the world saw a picture that I took. So now I have to go out. Now I have to cover other countries. Other wars. But it depends. It depends to a lot of complications. That I have to follow. One of them is passport. Like if I go to Syria, its not like this (snaps fingers), foreigners, westerners, it’s really easy to go somewhere, but for me, no, I have to wait two weeks for visa. Maybe, everything being finished so I have to see that what can I do for the next option. I mean to follow my goal.

Do you think your personal experience, being an Afghan, growing up in Iran, has affected your photography?

Yes, definitely, definitely.

Do you take pictures differently, from somebody, say from Sweden?

I think so, yeah, yeah…I mean my view and my vision is completely different to that of a Westerner. As an example, the photo that I got ----------- [international photojournalism award] with, well…we were like several photographers there. When explosion happen, so I was the closest one. I was fifteen metres away from that but the others were not really faraway too. But the Westerners and other photographers ran away, they save their life. But there, I was the only person, I think who…no, whatever happens, I have to record this, this moment. First of all, I didn’t think it was explosion. I ran and when I saw it was explosion, I decided to stay. I knew that it is possible to happen the…second explosion or gunfire…or lot of things…or people attack. But I say, no, I just stay and I cover this. And I did it. And that was, for sure, the difference with the other guy, I mean, I will be the same when I go to Syria. I will be the same if I go to Iraq. You know. Because I grew up in this situation. And to be honest, showing the face of war is much more important as a life for me. It means that I prefer showing that, I do my responsibility to be alive. So that’s why I did that.

So would you say that your goals, ambitions are a little different from somebody from a more affluent part of the world?

Lot of people, doing this, I mean, photojournalism. For money, for fame, for, maybe, a lot of other purpose.

Adventure?

Adventure, yes but for me it’s not, no. For me it’s my responsibility for life. I could do it. I have means, I have knowledge, I have like ability, and experience and I have to do it. That’s… I mean, the thing…I…for example, I never try to have a website. Yet. Because I believe that I should follow the news and I should kind of follow my goal, not show it on the website and then sell it, whatever the people say, just imagine, if I was a Westerner, I could sell my --------- [international photojournalism award] pictures a lot and get a lot of money. But I never get even one dollar because of that picture because that was not my goal. My goal was to show it, ----- [former international news agency where he was employed] was a means for me to show it.

They offer me, ok, so do you want to have some percentage of this sale? And I say I have my salary and this is my contract. You didn't mention in the contract so I cannot accept that money. Whatever I want to do, if you wanna do, change my contract first, because I don't want to be part of those people who sell the pictures, I mean sell to a lot of people and take money. No, I just want to show the face of the war, violence and show to the people what's going in this part of the world. And I believe that Afghanistan is part of the world, right? It's like a member of the body. If here's pain, then all the other members of the body should, I mean, feel the pain. And that's my goal, I mean that's my purpose. And I did it, with one picture, I did it. I just took…I went to Norway, two female photographer came from Finland, we met each other in exhibition and then one of them said, 'I know you, who are you?' I said I am -------- ---------. 'Oh did you take that ------- [international photojournalism award] picture?' Yes. And then they start crying. They hug me and they start crying. So I just reflect the pain. I reflect just…I mean the reality to them too. Even in Finland, which…you never know about Finland in Afghanistan. So that's part of my purpose and I am doing it.

You just mentioned that ----- was the means for what you want to do as a person and as a photographer, so how much are you able to put your own perspective into the photos you take?

…

I can rephrase the question in another way too, when you take a picture, is it your audience who is in your mind, is it your editors or is it your peers, the people you work with…who are in your mind?

Well, definitely, the audience. I never take the pictures that my editors would be happy about that. No. What I take the pictures is something that the audience should know. And you see the reality, as much as they can. In many ways, I mean, in many of my photographers, I mean pictures, I didn't try to show it exactly as other westerners' composition is.

Can you tell me the difference in composition?

So you know…I mean most of the Westerners use the…a lot of cropped shots for the…I mean, when they take pictures, they crop some of the…like this part of the child, and on the rest of pictures, this part of the background. Or some..some kind of hand inside the frame, or showing different thing…no, no, I am not doing that. What I do is show, more information as possible, you know, I never try to crop them, I mean, for the composition. No, I never do that. And also some of them, they use a lot of the, I mean, the wide lenses. Wide lenses make the pictures different. Some people like that difference, but for me it's not, because I don't want to change any size, any shape, right? So I never use any lense less than twenty four or thirty five. I never use those kind of…I know that they are the best lenses but I never use them. And also I never try to kind of…set up, like some of them do. Right? Ok, I do portrait sometimes which I really need to talk about one person. When I am like really…I mean, in my story, I never even try to take portraits. Because then you stop somebody, he pose for you and then you find a good light, no. I just wanna show them, the reality of their life. Whatever they are doing, in any light, whatever they are doing. And that's kind of like difference. And plus that I know the culture here so when somebody's doing something, that has a meaning for me, but that doesn't have a meaning for Westerners. So maybe it's different for them to take pictures.

Can you give me an example?

Like for example when we go to the old part of the city of Kabul. So the people are different, they live different. Right? So they can go, the foreigner can go, I mean, go inside the houses like we can go too, but they really don't understand some part of the…I mean…the culture. Like some part of the cultural symbols in our life is different from a guy, like Westerners do. As an example, we went, me and one other Western photographer, we went to a really poor part of life, and then he was taking picture of some of this like fabrics, which was they using and that subject had some kind of like Westerner's symbols on it, like, you know like painting. He was trying to take that picture. But what I was doing…I went to the kitchen, and I was taking picture of a girl, who was trying to light up a kind of like traditional fire thing, to make, I mean, food. And that was the difference. He was trying to do that because his audience, he thought that his audience know that fabric, and that symbol but for me, no. I was just showing the reality, whatever they know about…but they have to know. I can explain it with the caption but then they have to know that this is the people.

Do you think winning the ---------- and gaining international recognition has given you the freedom to do these things?

Well, definitely, it was useful, really much. But I told you that there is a lot of complication in our life anyway. So…but definitely yes. Recognition, international recognition helped me be in the new myself first and then whatever I take will be a lot I mean in the public eyes first, you know. Compared to before. If I go to Syria, right? And I start my photography, and then I show it. I use twitter to just let them know and lot of people try to know that 'ok, -------- from Afghanistan, ------------ [international award], going to Syria, what kind of picture he want to show?' So that's a big help. But as I told you, there's a lot of complication anyway, like passport, like nationality…

When you go to a news event, be it a press conference, or explosion, do you try to take two different kinds of pictures, one for yourself and one for what the news agency wants or have a balance?

Actually, never I try to take something that news agency wants. But for sure if I go to press conference, I have to do some symbol that I have to do in photojournalism. It doesn't matter if it is ------ or ----. You know? But I have to show it to some people who don't know. But it's different, I am trying to show more of the…kind of like the…space of things. And I try to show more of the symbols related to the culture. Even in the press conferences. Which is different with the others who were doing it here before. What I kind of realized myself is that kind of picture affected a lot of the photography of the other photographers. …Like the Afghan photographers here, when

I start and bring change in the boring press conferences pictures, I saw that they also realized to do something like that. And also when I am going to the religious ceremonies, because I know more, I come from a very religious family, and I know really much about that. So when I was talking pictures, the other…the local photographers, was influenced by those pictures. They said, ‘ok, this guy knows this religion better. So let’s go and find the details.’ And that’s kind of the development of the…

Style?

Style, yeah. Let me just show you from here…

(flips through cellphone, looks for a photo, comments on the bad internet)

Yeah, look here, I tried to include with this picture, one of the Afghanistan important picture. (Photo of a handshake between the rival Presidential candidates agreeing to a Unity government, long shot, showing a rather big traditional Afghan painting hanging above the long press conference desks)

I took these pictures too (flips through to other photos) which ---- uses but at the same time I know that they need this kind of close picture too. Right? So I do. I do both of them. When in the press conference, I am also trying to…(swears at internet)…. And this is not something that when I go to press conferences, I just show the face, or I show just one action, I try to find like more interesting thing. Like this here (shows another photograph on phone), this was not really interesting anyway but just as an example…like here, this Karzai picture. This Karzai picture as example. You see I don’t take only kind of like the face. I try to play a little bit with…light, architecture…. But to be honest, this place that they were making was made by China and it is so ugly, to be honest. Really must, I really hate that place…

The (Presidential) palace?

This place that they made in palace. Only good thing is that painting and I play with that painting in thousand picture because I couldn’t do anything more (laughs), you know.

So you say that you do things which are sometimes taken up by others, do you feel a sense of responsibility to other Afghan photojournalists?

Well, I did a lot and I am doing a lot, yeah. I train a lot of students, I mean, they are working right now in this field. And I also post a lot of photography works in twitter and facebook, which everybody can follow it. Even from India, I mean a lot of friends from India, they wanted to be my friends on facebook just to see those posts. For the photography. And now, even twitter. I do this and same time whatever news about photography comes I share with them. That’s not something I should do, right? I am normally a news guy, but I do these kind of things just to improve them, you know? We kind of jumped from a really low knowledge photography country to, I mean, really high places. Like in ten years we got -------------, -------------, (international awards) we got several other prizes, not only me, I mean, ok I got ------ of them but ----------- won the first award in photography. Then we went to really big festivals like Peripignan, which never, people were really thinking like, you really Afghan? You know? These kind of questions. I did this but unfortunately we make a photojournalism union in Pakistan, which I became the president of that, it was India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan…and these South Asia countries, and these shows that we had a really big jump in photography but unfortunately, inside there is a lot of difficulties, like the funding…money going out of Afghanistan, foreigners are going out. And its really difficult to transfer the knowledge that I have to the others, because first of all I am busy with the job. At the same time, we are really trying this. As you saw, --------- has a really big project about photojournalism. And I am volunteering inside so I do my best so that those guys, those students need. Then I have two, I mean, courses in Goethe Institut and several other places as a volunteer for them. And whenever, anybody want to have the presentation, about Afghanistan, I freely go without money. This is different in other countries, in other countries, photographers need to find money to do this job but I don't do it. I just try to transfer the knowledge and the maximum knowledge that I can transfer about photography. Like in few weeks, we will have a summit about social media which I go again and just teach them about the facebook photo, Instagram, Twitter. How they should use the picture and why. So that's the only thing that I can do.

I get a feeling from talking to different photojournalists that your generation who started right after the Taliban regime, were the real hard scrabble type to learn photojournalism, what do you think the photographers now…

Definitely, whenever I am going to teaching people, I definitely tell them when we start, you know it was really difficult and even when we came to Afghanistan, we started with camera, with Zenith camera, a really old Russian camera which was famous in Afghanistan, because there was no other kind of digital possibility here. And for the first time I saw a digital camera here. I heard about that in Iran. But I never see it. I saw it in Afghanistan, the small Sony digital camera. And then it was really amazing that…----------- came and said, 'do you know this camera?' I said why this camera so small? Where do you put the roll of film here in this camera? He say, 'no, see, this is digital', then he brought the chip out and said 'all the pictures are here.' Ok then, how you print these pictures. And then he explain me, 'you put it in the cardreader and then inside the camera'. Then I understand that this is the digital. And before that we had to spend a lot of money for that. We have to spend a lot of time. I am just doing the photography in one day, and then at the end of the day, I mean in 2002 and 3, all shops were closed in four o clock. But we never finished in four o clock. Right? Then I would just go to this photo shop, and told them, listen, you just give me one office that at the end of the day, whenever we finish, we bring the rolls to you and you kind of like develop it in the early morning. And our time wouldn't be killed. And he says, 'ok, no problem.' And I was doing that, you know, it was really difficult. I didn't have car and I didn't have money to have taxis so I had a bicycle. So when I finished, I put all the pictures in my packet, and then I am biking, riding to the office and then gave them, and then early morning I had to go back and take them. And then bring all of them, put them on the files. Right? Then I start selecting, we made a lightbox for example here. That takes one week to be built. And then we didn't have those things to watch the close pictures, somebody brought it for us from French for us. What we did was really difficult. And whenever we mark the pictures, we have to scan that. First of all, we didn't have a good scanner. We were not happy with it, you know, in the picture, quality that you take the picture is very important. Then somebody after a while, somebody brought a good scanner. And then we scan that…everybody had to scan their best pictures for himself or herself. And that was taking a lot of time. So what I was doing was just staying in ----- (training centre) overnight. And every scan takes like five minutes because it was really good scanner, and we didn't want to mess that. So then I have to stay like every night till two or three in the morning. And then sleep there. But now, everything is different. I mean finding, earning thousand dollars now is not a problem. But that time, finding fifty dollars, for a month was really difficult, right? Now we don't have to buy the camera from US or something, right? You go to a shop and buy really good camera. Or if you needed really really good camera and it's not here then you can order it here in Dubai. But that time, no. We bought our first digital camera, me and ---------, from US and then the lens was from in another shop online, right? And then gave to one American guy here the money, he went there, he gave that money to another person who was coming. He went and bought the body of the camera. And the second person brought the lens of the camera. And we couldn't use the mail because here too expensive for us. And thousand dollar that time, that was like seven month of our earning. Lot of money.

(Phone rings, respondent answers and talks on the phone).

And now, that, those camera that we bought, now the iphone has that quality, right? Which is much more easier. You can do everything here and then you can send it from here. And that's the difference, so whoever's learning photography now, if they don't practice, they don't come up now from Afghanistan, I should tell that they are so… I mean lazy and stupid. Yeah. If they love it. Somebody doesn't love, ok, we don't care. But if somebody loves it, and they don't exercise, they don't work on it, so I think they are crazy.

(Phone rings, respondent answers and talks on the phone).

How long have you been in photography now?

Let's say…well, my professional assignment was in 2004, right? So as a professional photojournalist, let's say its ten years. But for sure, I start photography when I was eighteen, and I am ------ now.

So after ten years let's say, do you know already the kind of pictures you need to take?

Well, as experience, sometimes yes, you know. So when we go, for example, before that I arrive there, I know which kind of pictures are really important. And which kind of pictures tell all the emotional in that kind of suicide attack or anything that happened there. So when we arrive there, we already made the mind, right? And we are just looking for it. If it is existence, then we take it, if not then we try to take as close to those mind that we already built, you know, we already thought. And these is going to be happening in all kinds of news too. Like I told you, you should know the news. If it was a concert, the first concert only for girls, then there was -------------, I am always slightly, I am always thirsty, waiting to know, waiting to hear something important. So that's why I find out about that. Other photographers didn't know about it. So I went there. I made a really big, I mean made a really good photo story about that, right? First of all it was about girls, they put make up, they didn't put hijab, they were dancing. And a lot of happiness around for them. Their face was like, really happy. Which never, I mean, outside of Afghanistan, saw it before. But I knew that, I had the knowledge about that. So I took that and that was published, I mean a lot of places in the world. And the funny thing is this happening was a few months before the attack. It means when I put these two memories together, I am showing Afghanistan. One day you had a really good fun, a lot of beautiful things, smiles, happy face, make up thing and then few months after, I was a in a big explosion that I was close to lose my life. And this is Afghanistan. And I show in general in all of my pictures, I show what's going on in Afghanistan.

Right. But what are the kind of pictures that you have in your mind?

Well, I told you, showing the reality is first in my mind. And showing the much more effective realities comes first. When explosion or anything happens, I definitely think about the casualties. The civilian. I mean the…whatever. So if I…when I arrive in the good time, so I tried to do that first. And I don't use any limitation and I don't stop myself for any reason even if the police beat me up. If I see, I mean, these bodies, I just go. And I try to take pictures. Sometimes police beat me, you know, sometimes they even put something in our camera, sometime broke the camera. But I try to have that picture. But when I arrive and I saw that ok, the bodies are already out so don't go really close to do it, you know, because there is no necessary. So I take the whole scene, wide shot of the whole scene. And the detail, what's the police doing, what's the army doing, the US army is doing? You know these kind of things. So the important thing, first come to my mind, is this casualties and then try to show the casualties as much as clear as I can. Right? So that's the first image that come to my mind.

What do you think is the biggest obstacle you have when working in Afghanistan? Not when you are travelling, that I am sure has its own obstacles but inside Afghanistan…

Oh my God, a lot of things. Security first. You know. That's the big problem. And then in some places, people do not like Afghan photographer because they believe that the photograph will be inside Afghanistan. And everybody will see it and it will be a shame. And sometimes, in some places, the officials don't want to let the photographers into some places because they maybe show their weak part of their job. And for sure, for security, the Taliban, they hate photographers. Yeah, these are the main problems.

You know the basic idea in the West is that because of Islam and tradition in Afghanistan, image is hated in Afghan society, is that a problem for you?

Some people as I told you do think like that. As I told you. But it is not really about the hate of the…picture in the culture. It has a really old history. Maybe nobody told you.

You can tell me.

We have a King. Amanullah. He brought a really modern society to Afghanistan. Although he had a lot of mistakes, let's say he brought modernism here. And he took the independency of Afghanistan, from the British. But British were for sure not happy. So they wanted to get rid of this King. Because he went to Germany, had a lot of influence from Germany, he came here and built the Dar-ul-Aman in German ways (palace on the outskirts of Kabul). German architecture. And the British were not happy about that and they say we have to get rid of this kind of King. So what should we do? Britain had a lot of study here before and they already knew what is the society look like. So when he went to Germany, his wife took a picture, so what they did because there was no hijab in that picture. (Queen) Soraiya was like sleeveless, really good fashion which was completely, kind of bad for afghan society. The queen of the country is like that. And everything like King is the shadow of the God and should be like really really religious person and they believe that because all King before him was like that. They called him (inaudible), shadow of the God, blah, blah, blah, all bullshit. And the…then the British thought that we can take this picture, print it out and take it to tribes, Pashtoon tribes and show that, see this is your King…uh, Queen. And they did it. They show and 'oh, this is Soraiya? Why doesn't she have hijab? Because she is in Germany' and blah, blah, blah…and they say, 'ok, this King is kafer (infidel) and then another guy from North of Kabul was pushed by British and so…Kala Kauni…so he came, he made an army with tribes and everybody. And he said because you are not Muslim, we have to get rid of you. Then they attack and they finished him. So the picture hate come from that, not from the religion, right? And everybody think, 'ok, if somebody take my picture, or my wife picture, so maybe it goes everywhere, and it's a shame'. They don't think more. Like when I was in Herat. The example, I am telling you, I was working for this self-immolation story. Self-burning, the girl doing it. And I went inside the hospital and they said, no, these girls don't like a man come in. I said, well, I am Iranian. I came here for like two days. I am not an Afghan so I take some pictures and I go. And I am living in Canada. Then I had to do that, you know, to take the picture. They said alright, no problem. I went inside and I explained to the mother of the girl, with Iranian accent, yeah, I am Iranian and I take this picture to show your pain and don't worry about it, I am not going to publish this picture to every paper. Nobody from your relatives will see it in the paper. It will be maybe in internet but it will be just about your pain. And I don't want to show anything, like you are naked or something…and then I took a lot of pictures…right? And I show it. But if I tell them I am Afghan, because of this problem, they think that 'ok, every local paper will print it and everybody of our relative will see it and it's a big shame' and they wouldn't let me. But I have to do that, I have to just say this. This is the thing. And when I finished, and I take all the pictures, and I finish it, and then I went again to her father and her mother and said, listen I am Afghan, I am working for -------, it's a --------- news agency, mostly our client is outside. The pictures will be in internet. But I don't think your relatives… wouldn't see it. But if you want, I can even put that out of our website but it will be printed in the Europe and US. And they said ‘no problem’. But in the first time, I had to use a strategy. Not lying, strategy. That’s always sometimes the case that I have to do it. I have to explain them a lot and I have to show them, I have to use a trick to take pictures in the moment and then after I ask their permission.

What do you think is being covered about Afghanistan and what in your personal opinion, should be covered?

Before, till the finishing of Taliban, you see whatever’s covered is about war and conflict and violence. Which I do it the same way as now but the important part of life of Afghanistan, is being victim of the violence. This problem should be focused a lot but in the same time a lot of the westerners, I mean the Westerner photographers, do not go the life of Afghan people, I mean do not know about the life. What we create after the Taliban. These daily life pictures in which we show all part of the life of Afghanistan. Concerts. As I told you, young girls, beauty salons, weddings, shoppings, Eid, a lot of these kind of things…we start doing these too. And we were able a lot to do this and nobody of the foreigners was coming for this kind of pictures. Because they already knew that we were doing it. So they don’t have any business here. At the same time, we tried to take the business out of the foreigners as well. Ok, whatever the foreigners were doing, now we are doing. And we are doing more. We put a lot in the wire, we sell it to a lot of the places. Like --------- was doing a lot of women photography, for any kind of women magazines in Europe, so then nobody of the female photographers was coming any more. So we built this and we took everything. And right now I am telling you, Afghan photographers are be able to show everything, all part of the life and we are doing it. So I don’t see that any side that we should work on it. Ok, we don’t have some ability to be inside the Taliban and some of the foreign photographers, probably in complication way, some money or whatever, they can go inside. But as we are Afghan, we can be followed by Taliban so we don’t do that sometimes. But the others, we do it a lot. Like anything happens right now, according to spot news, we are there and the foreigners don’t think they can be there.

As quickly?

As quickly as we are. And that’s the ability that we are doing it right now. But still I think, still we have to work on the modern part of the life of Afghanistan. The new generation. I am working on it, I know several other photographers are working on it too. And it is easy for us to be contacted because we are from that generation. And there is no any limitation for me to go to any party or anything if I ask. And they know me after ten years, they know me that I am professional. That I don’t like publishing like girls drinking in a party in a public, no. ‘Who’s this guy who has the camera?’ ‘Its ---------.’ ‘Oh ok, -------- -----------, ah no problem, he is professional’. I heard this a lot. So this is a big part that I follow and show the modern part of life of Afghanistan, you know, the new generation. And as I told you to just show to the world, that we are normal people as well. Only problem we have is political or military problem that we have with somebody, like stupid Pakistani people (laughs).

Thank you so much ---------.

Appendix 6: Confidentiality Agreement for Translators

‘Let the pictures do the talking? Afghan Photographers in the visual narration of Afghanistan’

Researcher: Saumava Mitra

PhD candidate

Faculty of Information and Media Studies

Western University

Ethics Review file no. 105378

Version Date: 02/07/2014

Agreement of confidentiality for interpreters

I have read the letter of information, have had the nature of the study explained to me, and I agree to the need to keep the identity of the participants confidential and not disclose to any third party under any circumstances. As such, I agree to participate as an interpreter for this study under the following agreements of confidentiality between the researcher and myself.

All information I will be privy to as an interpreter during the research interviews will be kept confidential by me under all circumstances. YES/NO

I consent to faithfully translate and interpret what will be said by the respondents without imposing my own personal views on their responses. YES/ NO

Name: ______________________________
Signature: ______________________________
Witness (if required): ____________________________
Date: __________________

Appendix 7: Details of Images and Image-subjects in catalogue New Afghanistan Through Afghan Eyes

The catalogue *New Afghanistan Through Afghan Eyes* contains a total of 156 images. Table 4 below numbers the image-texts in order of appearance and also notes the sections and page numbers in which they appear in the catalogue. It also gives a brief description of the images and reproduces the captions accompanying them. In the column to the extreme right, the image-subjects I interpreted the image-texts as visually and/or textually referring to, are noted.

Of the 156 images in the catalogue, four images appear as small or very small images (see no.s 69, 110, 127, 129 in Table 4 below). These are not referred to in the visual table of contents of the catalogue and so are not captioned in the catalogue. I do not know whether this is by accident or by design and also do not know whether they were part of the exhibition or not. Given their ambiguous status within the catalogue, I did not interpret these images for their image-subjects. Another two images (see no.s 20 and 22 in Table 4 below) are visually not attributable to any of the ten image-subjects gleaned from interview data. Their presence within the sections they appear in or their captions also do not provide enough information[167] for them to be understood as pertaining to any of the ten image-subjects. As such, I did not assign any image-subjects to these two image-texts. A further two images (see no.s 81 and 83 in Table 4 below) show and textually refer to Afghan National Army soldiers. These image-texts also did not fit any of the ten image-subjects – specifically they belonged neither to the image-subject ‘foreign military personnel’ nor to ‘ordinary people’.

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[167] One other image-text (no. 125) was also unclear to me – but only as to whether it could fit the image-subject ‘negative aspects’. The surrounding texts are ambiguous whether it is the ban on logging causing people’s livelihoods to suffer (“*despite* the dense forests” in the caption) or whether it is deforestation (“nature disaster” in the section heading) that is the social problem being referred to in the image. As such, I did not include this image-text within the image-subject ‘negative aspects’. But I do include it within ‘ordinary people’ because it visually depicts ordinary Afghans at work.

However, in calculating the percentages to denote the presence of each image-subject within the catalogue – which appear in Table 3 in chapter 5 of this thesis – these eight images *are included* to understand the presence/absence of the image-subjects within the whole catalogue.

Table 4: Details of image-texts and image-subjects in purposive sample of images used in thesis

Details of images in New Afghanistan Through Afghan Eyes			
Section Heading**: SPORT		Page numbers: 1-4	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
1.	A female skier is shown in the foreground and two other female skiers in the middle distance. Ski slope in the background.	The first female skiers in Bamiyan Province	sports/play; Afghan women
2.	Man is shown on a rearing horse in the middle of a crowd.	Buzkashi, national sport of Afghanistan, Mazar-e-Sharif	sports/play; ordinary people
3.	Male players are shown playing organized cricket.	National Cricket Team: a source of pride for all Afghanistan	sports/play; ordinary people
4.	Female players are shown playing football; crowd watching. Foreign soldiers are visible in the crowd.	Match between Afghan girls' football team and ISAF team in Kabul	sports/play; Afghan women; foreign military personnel
Section Heading**: RECONSTRUCTION		Page numbers: 5-14	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
5.	Two men are shown amid factory machinery.	Gas mining engineer working in Shakarak mine in center of Jawzjan Province	Reconstruction/development; ordinary people

6.	A night-lit hotel is shown; car is seen passing on street in front of hotel.	Kabul at Night	Reconstruction/development
7.	Two men are shown sitting at a desk in a shop; one is making a phone call.	The only public call office in Kirman area in Lal wa Sarjangle District, Ghor province	Reconstruction/development; ordinary people; negative aspects
8.	Roadbuilding machinery are shown on a newly tarmacked roadway. A labourer stands to one side.	Road-construction in Shahidan, Bamiyan	Reconstruction/development; ordinary people.
9.	Trucks driving on road twisting through a valley are shown.	Traffic jam in Salang, Parwan	Reconstruction/development; negative aspects
10.	A man carrying camera sitting on railway tracks is shown.	Reconstruction of rail road in Balkh Province	Reconstruction/development; ordinary people
11.	A man stringing cables on a cellphone tower is shown.	Media’s new step in Kabul	Reconstruction/development; ordinary people
12.	A man is shown atop a pole stringing cable; small crowd below is seen watching.	Local electrical cabling system, Lale Sare jangal, Ghor Province	Reconstruction/development; ordinary people
13.	Wide view of residential housing	Golden Town in Karte Now, Kabul	Reconstruction/development
14.	Silhouette of steel trusses of building under construction	Construction in Paawane 3, Kabul	Reconstruction/development
Section heading**: LIFE IN CITIES		Page numbers: 15-23	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
15.	Horse-pulled carriage decked with flowers is	Decorating a carriage horse for the Nawroz Feast, Kunduz	ordinary people

	shown carrying men on a city street.		
16.	A man is pictured next to bunches of flatbread hanging.	Tasty “non” bread, a staple food in Afghanistan	ordinary people
17.	Burqa-clad women walking in a file with children, reflected on body of water, are shown.	Culture and Democracy, Kabul	Afghan women
18.	Wide view of town in a valley next to a river	Badakhshan Province	landscape/historical sites
19.	Mosque in the background of a city street; man pushing woman in a trolley and car is seen in the foreground	Mosque in Heart	ordinary people
20.	View of a clock-tower with a flag flying in a traffic roundabout	Mokhaberat Intersection in Nangarhar Province	not included
21.	Wide view of city. Mountain range in the background	Bird’s eye view of Kabul from Wazir Akbar Khan Hill	landscape/historical sites
22.	Intersection of boulevards in city.	Helmand City	not included
23.	Khaki-clad feet marching in lockstep with a dove walking on the ground in the foreground is shown.	Peace and Democracy in Kabul Stadium	democratic processes
Section heading**: PEOPLE		Page numbers: 24-53	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
24.	Portrait of a man	Face of an Aimaqi man, Chighcharan district, Ghor province	ordinary people

25.	Group of men is shown at picnic.	Hospitality in Mazar-e-Sharif	ordinary people
26.	Children are shown playing in snow.	“May Kabul be gold-free not snow-free”, Kolola Poshta Hill, Kabul	Sports/play; ordinary people
27.	A woman and a child are shown feeding doves.	I’ll always remember the happy moments I have, and the moments of optimism for a better tomorrow	ordinary people
28.	A toddler is shown walking among doves which are taking off from the ground.	What’s the secret behind the whiteness of all pigeons at the Blue Mosque? Mazar-e-Sharif	ordinary people
29.	A child is shown carrying blue and white flags.	Welcome to Peace, Nader Khan Hill, Kabul	ordinary people
30.	Election poster on a lamppost twisted and torn out of shape by explosion is shown.	Exercising democracy	war and violence/democratic processes
31.	A burqa clad woman is shown holding up magazine cover with a photograph of a smiling face of a woman.	Female magazine-seller	Afghan women
32.	Silhouette of children playing is shown.	Youth’s holyday entertainment, Kabul	sports/play; ordinary people
33.	A burqa clad woman shown walking on city street.	The tallest woman in Kunduz, Afghanistan	ordinary people
34.	A child is shown splashing water in a waterbody.	Entertainment in a security environment, Bamiyan	sports/play; ordinary people
35.	A woman is shown shopping in a	Modern clothes in Kabul City	Afghan women

	clothing store. The clothes are Western clothes for women.		
36.	Portrait of a woman wearing jewellery and sequined clothes	Fashion for a wedding day, Kabul	Afghan women
37.	A burqa clad woman is shown carrying a book with a photograph of a face of woman wearing hijab.	Tradition & Modernity	Afghan women
38.	Two burqa clad women on a semi-open animal drawn carriage are shown.	Transportation problems in Tashqorghan Bazaar, Samangan	negative aspects; ordinary people
39.	A child is shown holding a white cloth over her head	If we be a symbol for peace, we will live in peace	ordinary people
40.	A burqa clad woman with a dove sitting on her head is shown.	Symbol of Peace, Mazar-e-Sharif	ordinary people
41.	A woman and a man are shown carrying children eating bananas.	Family picnic, Mazar-e-Sharif	ordinary people
42.	A child is shown leaning out of a window.	Joy of play	sports/play; ordinary people
43.	Portrait of a woman	Female fortune teller, Mazar-e-Sharif	ordinary people
44.	A man is shown selling beverages.	Using natural resource to freeze drinks, Salang, Baghlan Province	ordinary people
45.	Portrait of a man	A Turkman portrait	ordinary people
46.	An older man is shown sitting on the ground holding a walking stick.	I get old & you become the young man I once was, I die & you will become the hope I once was.	ordinary people

47.	A child is shown on a swing in a fairground.	Flight after war, Kabul	sports/play; ordinary people
48.	Portrait of a child smiling	I have no tension but a real world to live in	ordinary people
49.	A child on a swing in a playground is shown; she is tilting her head backwards towards the viewer.	Looking at the world topsy-turvy, Baghlan Province	sports/play; ordinary people
50.	Portrait of a child with sunflower over one ear, smiling	Farmer boy from Soomara Valley, Bamiyan	ordinary people
51.	Two veiled women in ethnic headgear are shown.	Turkmen women and maintenance of native culture in Aqcha District, Jawzojan	Afghan women
52.	Portrait of a woman	Patient in a hospital, Chaghcharan, Ghor province	ordinary people
53.	Portrait of a woman	Maintanance of native culture in Shoghanan, Badakhshan	Afghan women
54.	A child wearing a colourful cap is shown from behind	Life is colors	ordinary people
55.	Portrait of a child smiling	Immanent smile, a youth in Shoghnan district, Badakhshan Province	ordinary people
56.	A child is shown hugging a goat tightly in a field.	Childish passion, Parwan	ordinary people
57.	Children, squatting on a field gathering sheaves of cereal crops in their hands, are shown.	Child laborers working on the farm, center of Faryab Province	ordinary people
58.	Portrait of an older man	Regret over a life that Past quick	ordinary people
59.	Portrait of a man	Portrait of an Uzbek man, Mazar-e-Sharif	ordinary people

60.	Portrait of a man smiling	A real smile realizes a real life.	ordinary people
61.	Portrait of a man	A portrait from Mazar-e-Sharif	ordinary people
62.	Portrait of a woman	Colorful relish of girls, Kabul	Afghan women
63.	A girl is shown with an ambiguous expression on her face.	The mysterious look of the mistress	Afghan women
64.	A woman is shown wearing ethnic headgear and jewellery smiling.	Beautiful of Bamiyan	Afghan women
65.	A woman in hijab is shown at a shop, shawls are hanging in the background.	A woman wandering the Titanic Bazaar of Bamiyan	Afghan women
66.	A woman wearing ethnic jewellery is shown.	Women handicrafts worn at parties, Jaghuri, Ghazni	Afghan women
67.	A girl wearing ethnic jewellery balancing a number of hats stacked on top of each other on her head, is shown.	Cultural diversity, Kabul	Afghan women
Section heading**: AFGHAN WOMEN HANDICRAFTS		Page numbers: 54-60	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
68.	A woman wearing ethnic headgear is shown knitting.	Hand-weaving in Shahristan District, Daikundi	Afghan women
69.	A smaller image showing a veiled woman carding wool.	No caption	Not included
70.	Two women are shown in a shop with embroidered carpets. One is unfurling a carpet, the other is holding a small digital camera.	Women handicrafts, center of Faryab Province	Afghan women

71.	A woman embroidering is shown at a shop with ethnic jewellery and embroidered clothes on display.	Women handicraft from Shahristan district, Daikundi	Afghan women
72.	A woman is shown working on a sewing machine.	Handicrafts production in center of Faryab province	Afghan women
73.	A woman is shown working at a handloom.	Women handicrafts using traditional techniques	Afghan women
74.	A man is shown working on a powerloom.	Textile productions in Baghlan factories	ordinary people; reconstruction/development
75.	A road is shown being built. Four men labourers are shown. One veiled woman labourer squats near a pile of stone. The other burqa clad labourer is wielding a shovel.	Women laborers working together with men in reconstruction of the city, Kabul	Afghan women; reconstruction/development
Section heading**: Religious		Page numbers: 61-65	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
76.	A woman is shown praying in darkened room.	Prayer, Mazar-e-Sharif	ordinary people
77.	An older man is shown sitting in the middle of children reading. Book-holder used for holy texts is visible to the side.	Learning religious-based lessons, Sar-e-Pul Province	ordinary people
78.	Men are shown from behind praying at a mosque	Prayer, Samangan	ordinary people
79.	Children are shown reading.	Madrasah in Deh Sabz District, Kabul	ordinary people
80.	View of a hilltop temple	Sultan Holy Shrine	Landscape/historical sites

Section Heading**: Security		Page numbers: 66-68	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
81.	Portrait of a soldier carrying gun	A soldier of National Security, Baghlan	Not included
82.	Soldiers carrying guns in front of a charred building are shown.	Prosperity after war, Afghan Super Market, Kabul	war and violence
83.	A soldier is shown with cars and the Afghan national flag in the background.	Afghanistan National Army, Chighcharan district, Ghor province	Not included
Section heading**: WOMEN IN POLITICS		Page numbers: 69-71	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
84.	A woman is shown holding up a red card in a parliamentary setting.	Women participation in politics, Kabul	Afghan women; political leader; democratic processes
85.	Two women standing next to (ballot) boxes are shown, a third is sitting at a table with a paper in front of her she is writing on. A baby lies on the table.	Democracy and women participation in election, Kabul	Afghan women; democratic processes
86.	Two women are shown holding up banners, one with fist raised smiling at the other. More women are seen in the background.	Active participation of women in Kabul	Afghan women; democratic processes
Section heading**: AFGHANISTAN’S NATURE		Page numbers: 72-90	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
87.	Wide view of valley with wooded hills rising in the background	Welang Valley, Salang, Parwan Province	landscape/historical sites

88.	Wide view of trees and greenery with hills and mountains in the background	Beautiful view of Jighatu district, Ghazni province	landscape/historical sites
89.	Wide view of rolling green hills	Spring in Sar-e-Pul Province	landscape/historical sites
90.	Wide view of farmed land with river in the background	Agriculture in Kapisa Province	landscape/historical sites
91.	Wide view of town from hilltop with mountain range in the background	A panorama from Maiman, center of Faryab Province	landscape/historical sites
92.	Wide view of trees and houses with mountain in the background	A view of Samangan's beautiful city	landscape/historical sites
93.	Wide view of houses on a hillside	Houses made of wood and stone, Pashaki Village, Nooristan Province	landscape/historical sites
94.	View of a garden	Evergreen Nangarhar	landscape/historical sites
95.	Wide view of a valley with roses and road passing through	Red Rose in Ishkashim District, Badakhshan Province	landscape/historical sites
96.	Wide view of snow covered ground in the foreground; trees and a house in the middle; snow-capped mountain in the background	Winter is the beginning of a new life in Nooristan province, Barge Metal	landscape/historical sites
97.	Wide view of snowcapped mountains overlooking a village	View of a remote village, Panjab, Bamiyan Province	landscape/historical sites
98.	Wide view of a half-frozen waterbody and snow-capped mountains in the background.	Band-e-Qargha in Winter, Kabul	landscape/historical sites

99.	Wide view of a riverbed. Houses and trees in the middle distance. mountain ranges in the background	Aziz Khan Village, Laghman Province	landscape/historical sites
97.	Wide view of a river valley with farmed lands on both sides. Houses in the middle distance. Mountain ranges in the background	Panjshir valley	landscape/historical sites
98.	Wide view of houses overlooking a river valley. Hills in the background	Dahane Abdela, Behsood, Maidan Wardak Province	landscape/historical sites
99.	Wide view of waterbody at the foot of mountains	Haibat Dam, Band-e-Amir, Bamiyan	landscape/historical sites
100.	Wide view of river and trees. Bridge in the distance	Helmand River	landscape/historical sites
101.	View of waterbody surrounded by city. Mountains in the background	Kool-e-Hashmat Khan-where Zahir Shah used to go hunting, Kabul	landscape/historical sites
102.	View of waterbody on a plateau. Snow-capped mountains in the background	Band-e-Amir (Gholaman, Haibat, Paneer, Pudina and Zolfaqar Dams in one photo)	landscape/historical sites
Section heading**: ART AND CULTURE		Page numbers: 91-102	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
103.	A woman is shown leading two camels laden with goods with children riding. Another is woman following the camels.	Kochis (Nomads), Ghorband Valley, Parwan	ordinary people
104.	Women and girls are shown carrying	After washing the dishes, Bamiyan	ordinary people

	stacked utensils on their heads		
105.	Two children are shown flying a kite while a man watches.	Father's entertainment with his sons, Nader Khan Hill, Kabul	sports/play; ordinary people
106.	Cockfight is shown in progress. A man is shown standing near the birds while a crowd watches.	Chicken fighting in Baghe Babur Shah, Kabul	sports/play; ordinary people
107.	Two men are shown wrestling as a crowd watches sitting on raised earthen seats.	Local wrestling, Mazar-e-Sharif	sports/play; ordinary people
108.	Camels are shown with their necks entangled with each other. Man standing nearby. A crowd watches.	Camel fight in Mazar-e-Sharif	sports/play; ordinary people
109.	A man is showing drawing bow and aiming arrow. Other men carrying bows seen standing behind him.	With the arrival of the fall season, archery tournament starts, Paroon center of Nooristan Provinces	sports/play; ordinary people
110.	Smaller image shows archers standing in a row with drawn bows.	No caption	Not included
111.	Un-focused image shows three women dancing.	Dance "atan" at a wedding party, Kabul	ordinary people
112.	A man is shown up close, singing (a microphone in front).	Wali Fath Ali Khan, Classic Singer, Kabul	ordinary people
113.	A woman is shown singing accompanied by male musicians (with microphones in front) on a raised dais.	Ms Zarsangah, local singer, Kabul	ordinary people

114.	A man is shown standing on stage singing (holding microphone). Two male musicians accompanying him, are seen.	Growth of Western Music in Kabul	ordinary people
115.	Portrait of a woman	Elaha Soroor, one of the participants of the Afghan talent hunt “Afghan Star” programme	ordinary people
Section heading**: AGRICULTURE		Page numbers: 103-109	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
116.	A man tilling soil with cattle-drawn plough is shown. A child looks on. A woman follows behind with a bucket. Another man sits on the ground. In the background is a mountain with one the empty rock enclave where the Bamiyan Buddha statue stood before being destroyed by the Taliban.	Potato, the most productive agricultural reaping in Bamiyan	ordinary people
117.	A man is shown pouring grain out of a metal vessel. Two women are partially seen below him.	Harvested what was cultivated, Bamiyan	ordinary people
118.	A man is seen winnowing chaff from drying crops. Woman is shown stooping towards crops lying on ground drying.	Women’s participation in agriculture, Bamiyan	Afghan women
119.	Two men are shown spreading	Harvesting, Parwan province	ordinary people

	hay with pitchforks. Four other men are seen with cattle-drawn ploughs and cattle.		
120.	Wide view of a town nestled in a valley, overlooked by mountains, with a road curving through it.	Panorama of Chardeh, Ghorband district, Parwan Province	landscape/historical sites
121.	Four women are shown gathering sheaves of cereal crops on a mountainside.	Bamiyan female famers	Afghan women
122.	A child is shown riding on a donkey following a flock of sheep.	Young shepherd in Lal wa Sarjangle district, Ghor province	ordinary people
Section heading**: NATURE DISASTERS		Page numbers: 110-113	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
123.	Man is shown walking near toppled cars half-buried in snow mounds.	Tornado and avalanche in Southern Salang, Parwan	negative aspects; ordinary people
124.	Wide view of obscured city skyline	Kabul's air pollution	negative aspects; ordinary people
125.	Three men are shown sawing tree trunks into planks in a forested area. Two tree trunks lie in the foreground.	Despite dense forests, cutting and transporting trees are forbidden, Paroon, Nooristan Province	ordinary people
126.	A child is shown carrying a jerry can up a steep street. City in the background.	Water access problems in the capital of Afghanistan	negative aspects; ordinary people
127.	Very small image shows individuals walking on a show-covered landscape.	No caption	Not included

	One is on horseback.		
Section heading**: HEALTH		Page numbers: 114-117	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
128.	A woman in white scrubs is shown checking the pulse of another woman lying in bed in a health facility. Another woman is seen sitting on a bed in the background.	Most physicians in Badakhshan are female	Afghan women
129.	Smaller image shows a man wearing white overalls, painting a prosthetic limb.	No caption	Not included
130.	Nine women are shown sitting in a row on a bench. Two of them are holding babies. On the wall is a mock-up figure of a pregnant woman.	Women receiving health training in Department of Public Health, Jawzjan province	Afghan women
131.	Three women are shown conducting surgey on another woman in an operation theater.	Surgeons in operating room, Department of Public Health, Jawzjan province	Afghan women
132.	Three children and a man are shown sitting at a meal. Bowls of liquid in front of each and broken bits of bread are spread on a fabric in front.	Will poverty be eliminated? Shoghnan District, Badakhshan	negative aspects; ordinary people
Section heading**: EDUCATION		Page numbers: 118-123	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject

133.	A child is shown reading by candlelight.	Lack of electricity in most provinces of Afghanistan - where is the 21st century?	negative aspects; ordinary people
134.	A child is shown with a book in front.	Education in a secure environment, Baghlan Province	ordinary people
135.	Four girls and two boys shown sitting near a low table.	Most students in Shognan schools are girls	Afghan women
136.	Two women in hijab are shown sitting in front of computers. A man stands in the background.	Use of modern technology, Jawzjan province	Afghan women
137.	Girl children are shown leaving school.	Students on their way to their homes	Afghan women
138.	A woman is shown teaching a class of boys and girls	Band-e-Amir School, Bamiyan	Afghan women
Section heading**: EFFECTS OF WAR AND POVERTY		Page numbers: 124-128	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
139.	A woman wearing a burqa is shown sitting on the ground with her prosthetic legs stretched out in front.	Beggar, Kabul	negative aspects; ordinary people
140.	Close view of individual walking on prosthetic legs	Impacts of war, Kabul	negative aspects; ordinary people
141.	Two children are shown holding a doll. One is crying, the other looks at her.	Refugees returning, Kabul	negative aspects; ordinary people
142.	Close view of a man wearing sunglasses shading his eyes with his palm. Parts of face	Addiction in Kabul	negative aspects; ordinary people

	and the visible hand are dirty		
143.	View of buildings seen through a hole in a bullet-riddled tin wall	Kabul after war	war and violence
Section heading**: HISTORICAL PLACES		Page numbers: 129-141	
Number*	Brief Description	Caption***	Image-subject
144.	A large wall with architectural features is shown with a hill in the background.	Bost Gate: a historical heritage site, Helmand	landscape/historical sites
145.	Wide view of houses and a fort on hillsides shown reflected in a body of water	Bala Hissar Fortress, Kabul, Afghanistan	landscape/historical sites
146.	Wide view of an ambiguous square structure on a crag cut off from the rest of a plateau. A bridge spans the chasm on one side.	Panorama of Takht-e-Roshtam, Samangan Province	landscape/historical sites
147.	Wide view of buildings on a plane and buildings on a plateau. Ramparts surround the plateau.	Bala Hissar, Ghazni Province	landscape/historical sites
148.	Wide view of archaeological remains on a rocky hillside lit by fading sun.	Gholghola City, Bamiyan	landscape/historical sites
149.	Wide view of a town and farmlands. In the background are the mountains with empty rock enclaves where the two Bamiyan Buddha statues	Bamiyan city after Shamama and Salsal’s flight, Afghanistan 2011	landscape/historical sites

	stood before being destroyed by the Taliban.		
150.	Child is shown balancing a wheel on a low fence. In the background is the ruins of a palace.	Entertainment after war, Kabul	war and violence; sports/play; ordinary people
151.	Wide view of a vehicle and a motor bike passing in front of a rocky outcrop possibly with ruins on top, some ramparts visible around the base of the outcrop	Old city of Kandahar	landscape/historical sites
152.	View of a domed building	Ahmad Shah Baba's Tomb in the center of Kandahar Province	landscape/historical sites
153.	Wide view of an ornate minaret on the bank of a river	Monare Jam: Historical monuments are symbols of Afghans' identity, Ghor province	landscape/historical sites
154.	Wide view of five minarets and a domed building	Herat historical minarets and Gawharshad shrine	landscape/historical sites
155.	Men and women are shown praying in the ornate interior of a religious shrine.	Inside the Holy shrine of Hazrat Ali, Mazar-e-Sharif	landscape/historical sites; ordinary people
156.	Wide view of a mosque and its crowded forecourt.	Guests from across the country celebrate Nawroz at Holy shrine, Mazar-e-sharif	landscape/historical sites; ordinary people

*In order of appearance. **Verbatim from catalogue. ***Verbatim from catalogue

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Publications

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