

Abstract

Since the beginning of the Russo-Ukraine War in 2022, news websites and social media platforms have been booming with powerful and distressing photographs of the war. Without a doubt, images have been playing a crucial role in this war encapsulating the intensity of destruction and tragedies caused by the Russian occupation. Despite having glorious news and research coverage of war zones, little has been talked about war journalism or the gendered aspect of it. There are gendered inequalities, damaging gendered angles aligning to war news, gendered expectations, violence, harassment (both physical and verbal), and sex stereotyping, pertinent in photojournalism that are reflected in the way visual representations of conflict are produced. Hence, the research is about the war photojournalists and the gendered aspects of their practices and journalistic perceptions and whether gender is a factor in any of them. Employing Social Role Theory as a theoretical framework, this study thematically analyses and compares the practices of 14 male and female photojournalists in conflict zones, focusing on the Russo-Ukraine war with the aid of qualitative semi-structured interviews via snowball sampling. Uniquely exploring sensitive topics such as motivation, practices influencing the encoding of images, communication with sources, the glass ceiling effect, autonomy, and working conditions, this study attempts to explore the binary (male and female) gendered differences among photojournalists who are covering a one-of-a-kind war like the Russo-Ukraine. Deconstructing harrowing experiences of photojournalists like never before, this research in a systematic, and gender-sensitive way scrutinizes a war that led to a grave humanitarian crisis modifying the geo-political landscape of Europe and having additional ramifications for the rest of the world. Findings suggest that gender is *one of the many* factors that regulate the encoding process of conflict photos in the Russo-Ukraine war.