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1. Introduction

“You know, I have big boobs and I am blond, so they think I am stupid, which is good. They let me do whatever I want because they don’t take me seriously” (Patricia Khoder, journalist at L’Orient-Le Jour). War and crisis can be considered as a media event since the 20th century - at the latest (Korte & Tonn, 2007). It has never failed to catch the media outlet’s attention. War is relevant. It is the most extreme condition a society or a country can experience and more than often, war and its impacts are not limited to the war theatre itself but reach to the neighbouring countries; sometimes even beyond. However, what a specific audience thinks about a war is not only dependent on what happens in the theatre of war but also to a huge extent on how it is being reported about.

War bears characteristics that meet with a great response in the media system: They contain various factors such as negativity, conflict, or relation to elite persons – war and conflict meet with what a large audience is concerned about: violence and the existence of its limits (Eilders & Hagen, 2005; Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Wanke, 2012). War is a story that sells papers.

This is why the media presentation of war and crisis is of great importance. The pictures conveyed to a broad public are often the only information and impression the population receives about a war zone. Thus, the media presentation usually is the only access people get to this reality. The perception of war and crisis and the resulting political and social consequences are therefore strongly dependent on the field of journalism and the profession of foreign or war correspondent, which is why it is worth bringing this profession more closely into the focus of socio-scientific research.

This research aims to establish a link between the profession of journalism in war zones and gender issues. Several interesting aspects can be found therein: First of all, war in itself, which is already gendered, is still widely regarded as a domain of male agency and female victimhood, highlighting specific “male” character traits like strength and masculinity (Steiner, 2016). Moreover, the field of journalism is a contested one, in which different mechanism of power structures become effective (Dorer, 2001). The higher echelons of journalism – editors, boards are still dominated to a large extent by males, even if in recent years a development towards an increased participation of women has taken place. Because of this inequality in rank inequalities in reporting remain, and, above all, if those who have the final say about stories and reporting are predominately male, a male dominance can be demonstrated (Fröhlich, 2002). Receptiveness thus is not only an issue of the audience; it is curated by the higher echelons in the news rooms.

These two perspectives, in which gender may be relevant, are to be taken into consideration in the present research. On the one hand, attention should be paid to the processes involved in recruitment of war journalists. Which are the predominant hiring criteria? The second perspective is performance and its perception: Is there still the prejudice about the woman worthy of protection who cannot be sent to war zones?

On the other hand, the experience of male and female journalists gained during deployment in crisis areas will be discussed. How is either sex perceived by its fellows in a war environment? In summary, the aim is to clarify to what extent gender influences the work as a reporter.

In order to be able to answer the above-mentioned research questions, I conducted eight interviews with both male and female (photo)journalists, which were analysed and interpreted qualitatively in this work. This qualitative study can provide an important contribution to understanding to what extent gender differences still prevail in the field of war journalism. This work is divided into three thematic blocks. Roughly, this work consists of a theoretical part which is followed by a short overview of the used methodology and ends with an empirical one. Firstly, the connection between journalism and gender will be presented, in order to subsequently deal with the prevailing gender images in war. This is followed by an overview of the chosen method, procedure of research, and the sample. In the last part, I interpret the empirical material and derive conclusions concerning the beforehand stated thesis. A summary of my findings constitutes the final section of this paper.

2. Gender in Journalism - an open field with equal conditions?

Gender, like other categories such as social status or ethnicity, is a distinctive factor that plays a leading role in the competition for recognition and position in a contested field. Gender is above all, a socially constructed category that is used to produce and justify asymmetries and inequalities. As in other areas, in the field of journalism, which is to be addressed in this work, differences still exist today that can be traced back to gender (Fröhlich, 2002), even though some scholars anticipate a structural change, since the profession of journalism was opened up and the proportion of female journalists has increased (Lünenborg, 2012). However, this leaves little hope for equality, considering that the field of journalism is a contested one, which is still dominated by male actors. Despite of the improvement in the proportion of women working in the field, they are often only represented in midfield and not in leading or management positions. In addition, the inequality that still exists between male and female journalists is highlighted by the unequal pay journalists have to face (Fröhlich, 2002; Lünenborg, 2012). In the context of this research paper, this above-mentioned general situation in the field of journalism is additionally also negatively influenced by several factors. First of all, it should be added that the gender issue is doubly evident in the case of war correspondents. Since the emergence of this professional field, a myth of masculinity has been communicated with it - through both fictional products, such as books or films, and professional self- and external conceptions (Lünenborg & Bach, 2010; McLaughlin, 2002). The concept of the war correspondent as a fearless adventurer and hero who puts his own life in danger to serve a greater purpose - the information of the public - does not fit the "typical" female characteristics of being weak and worthy of protection (Fröhlich, 2002; Lünenborg & Bach, 2010). This implies that the historical discourse is supported, in which women are less able to be a (good) reporter in areas of war and crisis.

Another factor, that is relevant for the developments in the field of journalism is the dual nature of media offerings. Where they have a public mission, they are also goods that must be profitable. This problem is exacerbated by the current economic situation of the media system. These times are characterized by a crisis of the media, in which media companies have more and more problems to finance their media servings. The readership's willingness to pay money for short-lived news is declining, financing media outlets is heavily dependent on advertising revenues. Due to this lack of financing possibilities, the trend of media concentration can be observed (Meier & Trappel, 2006). Previously independent press companies are merging forces to operate more efficiently and profitably. The growing competition often goes hand in hand with a reduction in personnel. All these factors contribute additionally to the fact that the field of journalism is contested (Röper, 2005). To sum these arguments up, the current situation is tense for journalists in general and for female journalists in particular. Lack of funding and prevailing gender stereotypes are likely to contribute to the fact that existing inequality will not be resolved in the near future either.

3. Gender in war - men as perpetrators, women as victims?

Not only the conception of the field and of the professional role mentioned in the previous chapter are relevant for the actual work of a war correspondent, but also the perception of gender roles in war zones in general. Especially in times of social crisis and conflicts, a strong polarizations of gender images can generally be observed (Schroer- Hippel, 2016). Here masculinity and femininity are juxtaposed dichotomously and linked with certain attributes.

War itself, and all kind of hostilities are basically linked to keywords such as weaponry, violence, and aggression, which are considered to be typical masculine characteristics (Fröhlich, 2002).

Women, on the contrary, are often assigned to a passive, suffering part in acts of war (Fröhlich, 2002). They are related to attributes such as peaceableness, emotionality and powerlessness (ebd.). The status of a victim is also particularly relevant in context of gender images if one takes into consideration that sexualised violence against women is often used as a special kind of weapon of war (Virchow, Thomas & Thiele, 2010). However, this stereotypical image also contributes to the fact that women are not perceived as warring parties and thus as a danger. This naturalizing connection is also passed since socialization processes are still enabling this stereotypical picture of being male versus being female:

„War can be regarded as the cornerstone of masculinity. Boys become men through, among several things, military service and by participating in war. By contrast, participation in war or military service is not normally considered a significant event in the social identity construction process of women. For girls it is often other events that mark the transition from girlhood to mature womanhood“ (Skjelsbæk, 2001, p. 61).

These constructions of gender images do oftentimes not correspondent with the distribution of opinions that prevail in reality (Hamann, 2010). The ascription that women are war opponents and men are war advocates is thought too simply. Moreover, when considering the gender perception within acts of war, the increased opening of the military to female actors should not be ignored. The image of war as an only male dominated domain is getting more and more resolved as women are increasingly deployed in war zones as soldiers (Eifler, 2010). This can be shown in the Israeli military where women are more and more often involved in military missions or the female Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, who are of a great influence in the fight against the IS in Iraq. War is no longer a purely male construct (Friedel, 2010). It remains questionable in the following study to what extent female reporters in war zones are perceived as an actual danger or whether the long-standing stereotypical perceptions continue.

4. Methodology

To answer the research questions, qualitative guideline interviews were conducted with war correspondents. By conducting these systematizing interviews, the aim is to fill the gaps in the existing knowledge in a comprehensive and structured way (Bogner, Littich & Menz, 2014).

In total I talked to eight interviewees of different positions, ages and gender in order to answer my research question. I have included both journalists and photographers, who were mainly responsible for photo coverage, in my sample. Partly because there was an easier access to these and partly because I assumed the experiences in war zones of those two professions to be relatively similar. The interviews conducted are based on a sample that is too small to produce representative results. However, due to the given processing period, a larger sample would have been hardly feasible. Furthermore, due to my lack of further language skills I could only include journalists who were capable of speaking either German or English. Recruiting journalists was proved to be extremely difficult during the course of the research. On the one hand, this is because journalists are often subject of empirical research and therefore it existed a great demand for expert interviews with them, and on the other hand, some journalists were also not allowed to talk about their work or were simply too much involved in their working life. However, with the support of Heinrich Böll Foundation Middle East, I was able to get into contact with a variety of journalists. An overview of the interviewees, the languages they are able to speak, and their covered countries can be seen in table 1:

name & date of interview	gender & nationality	languages	covered countries
Ammar Abd Rabbo, 31.05.18	male, Syrian & French	English, French, Arabic, German* ¹ , Spanish*	Bosnia, Lebanon, Libya, Iraq, Syria
Diana Moukalled, 24.05.18	female, Lebanese	Arabic, English	Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Algeria
Dirk Emmerich, 17.05.18	male, German	German, English, Russian	Syria, Russia, Ukraine, Libya, Israel & Palestine
Lea Frehse, 22.05.18	female, German	German, English, Spanish, French, Arabic*, Hebrew*	Israel & Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, Saudi-Arabia, Jordan, Kongo, Egypt, Tunisia
Lizzie Porter, 01.06.18	female, British	English, French, Arabic	Lebanon, South Turkey, Greece, Serbia, Iraq
Luna Safwan, 29.05.18	female, Lebanese	Arabic, English, French	Lebanon, Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt
Patricia Khoder, 31.05.18	female, Lebanese	Arabic, French, English, German*	Lebanon, Iraq
Patrick Baz, 28.05.18	male, Lebanese & French	Arabic, French, English	all of Middle East, & North Africa, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Somalia

Table 1: Overview of interviewees

The interviews were conducted both face-to-face and via Skype, depending on the area the interviewee was currently living in. The location of the interviews was chosen by the interviewees, mostly in cafés or restaurant in Beirut, the Heinrich Böll Office or the journalist's offices. The interviews lasted between approximately 40 min and 57 min and were conducted in English and German.

¹ Marked with a *,*: only minor knowledge

5. Findings

The purpose of the following part is to present the results that were obtained from a qualitative analysis of the transcribed interviews in a systematic way. For a clear design of the results, the context of the native country should be dealt with first, in order to discuss the experiences in the war zone in a second step. When looking at the results, the subjectivity of the evaluation process must always be considered – even though this effect was attempted to be limited by following a theory-based approach.

5.1 Journalism in the context of the native country

5.1.1 Getting the job – barriers and obstacles

One of the central questions that should be answered in this research is, whether anticipated gender stereotypes still create obstacles in the hiring process. Both male and female journalists were asked about perceived advantages and disadvantages that come with being male or being female. Knowing that the answers are biased as they are the subjective perception of the interviewees the following results could be found.

Some female journalists reported that the idea of gender differences affecting the field of employment still prevails strongly, especially when working in the Arab context: *“I always felt like the male journalists were chosen to be sent on the ground, so we would be sitting in the office, writing amazing stories, doing interviews around, editing pieces and all of that, but the people on the ground were males”* (Safwan, female). Above all, the stereotype of a vulnerable, weak woman, who is in need of extra protection is used in the common discourse: *“They don’t trust women enough to send them on the ground, they think we are going to collapse”* (ebd.). This leads to the conclusion that the masculinity of war reporting explained beforehand in the theoretical part still plays a relevant role in recruitment processes. Male journalists are thus presumed to have greater competence, which is characterized by a toughness and the ability to deal with a hostile environment, which female lack of.

However, this view on the recruitment process was only confirmed by a few interviewees in this clarity. The majority of the interviewees considered rather other factors that were particularly relevant for the decision making of media managements than the gender. By grouping the material, three relevant factors could be identified: Motivation, experience, and availability.

Motivation

The vast majority of respondents in this research reported showing exceptional interest and commitment to the profession of a war and crisis reporter, which helped them to set foot in the sector: *“I had to proof myself. I had to take risks [...]. It was a matter of choice, it was a matter of commitment”* (Moukalled, female). This includes a great interest in a specific area and the will to work without financial or physical security: *“I think the main reason [for being hired] was, that I had a huge interest in the topics and that I am doing this because of this interest and not only because I want to have a successful career²”* (Frehse, female). It seems that showing an extraordinary motivation is a factor that signals the employer a greater readiness to work in a war area, and thus is able to ultimately limit the influence of anticipated lack of skills based on gender, at least to a certain extent.

Experience

Moreover, the experience journalists gained beforehand was considered to be a crucial factor that would undermine the effects of gender stereotypes:

“If you have two people who are very new, and you don’t know their work and you don’t know how they would react, probably they would rather go for a man. But if you already did some coverage, [...] if you know what to do, that would be on the balance more than if you are a man or a woman” (Abd

² translated from German, original quote: *“Ich glaube, der Hauptgrund war, dass ich dieses Interesse habe. Dass ich das wirklich mache, weil mich das interessiert und nicht, weil ich eine Karriere aufbauen will”*.

Rabbo, male). Through prior jobs, journalists can prove their skills and gain the trust of media organisations. On the one hand this raises the hopes to reach gender equality, since prior experience is able to annul the differences. But on the other hand, this also means that female reporters have to proof their ability to work in this field and gain the trust of media outlets whereas employers don't ask men to do so.

This fact especially implies to women that have just began their career, many with initial difficulties: *"It was really hard at first to get commissions [...]. I had one outlet that supported me and gave me commissions, partly because they wanted coverage on the ground and had not many people going"* (Porter, female). In the previous quotation, the last relevant factor is also already mentioned: availability.

Availability

The number of journalists who agree to work in war and crisis zones is extremely limited, according to the interviewees' statements. The willingness to report from dangerous areas is therefore a decisive criterion, which also limits the effects of possible gender stereotypes: *"If someone would ask me whether I would go to Beirut tomorrow, then my answer would be `yes of course`. I am not afraid of that, I feel comfortable [...]. I think this is something that costs some people quite an effort to do. And I think this is the reason why they are sending me"*³ (Frehse, female). Especially when one takes the financial changes in the media sector, which were mentioned earlier above into consideration, this also means that only people who are ready to work in precarious working conditions and oftentimes without the much-needed safety support of media outlets, are applying for the work as a war journalist. Media outlets then oftentimes don't have the chance to choose the most capable journalist.

5.1.2 Researching for the job –a hostile environment already?

Although most of the interviewees did not regard their gender as a decisive factor for their employment as a correspondent, gender inequality still seems to be of great relevance during the work in the home country. A young female German foreign correspondent reported on the experiences she gathered during her research for a report in Germany: *"I am facing [...] the problem of completely outdated role models and ignorance"*⁴ (Frehse, female). She then continued talking about the issue of not been taken seriously by male colleagues when having business appointments: *"The two of us [her and her male colleague] came in the room and the important men wearing suits didn't shake my hand, they didn't give me a business card, they didn't talk to me, they would only talk to my male colleagues [...]. They obviously thought I was the intern"*⁵ (ebd.). It seems that linking the gender and the age to the professional status of a person is still a dominant strategy people are applying in order to assess the status of the other. Here too, gender stereotypes and unequal treatment that do not only relate to the field of journalism but are still prevalent in many business sectors are transported on in society. Masculinity is directly associated with competence, whereas femininity is not taken seriously in its professional role.

In order to deal with the issue of not being taken seriously, strategies are then developed to prevent such occurrences: *"It is the small things. Who is entering the room first, who is putting forth one's hand first, who is saying `Hello` first [...]. At the beginning I did contain myself because I was insecure. But this is not working, as a woman you have to prove security twice as much [...] and show people that*

³ translated from German, original quote: „Wenn sie mich fragen, kannst du morgen nach Beirut fahren? Dann würde ich sagen „Klar!“ . Ich habe keine Furcht davor, ich fühle mich wohl hier [...]. Ich glaube, das ist etwas, das vielen Leuten eher Überwindung kostet. Ich glaube, das ist etwas, weshalb man mich schickt“.

⁴ translated from German, original quote: „Was verbreiteter ist, sind komplett veraltete Rollenbilder und Ignoranz“.

⁵ translated from German, original quote: “Wir kamen zu zweit rein und jeweils die wichtigen Männer im Anzug haben mir nicht die Hand gegeben, haben mir keine Visitenkarte gegeben, haben nicht mit mir gesprochen, sondern nur mit meinen männlichen Kollegen [...]. Die haben offensichtlich gedacht, ich wäre die Praktikantin“.

they have to talk with you. This is not my nature way of acting, but I know that I need to learn this⁶ (Frehse). It becomes clear here that an adaptation to the given milieu has to take place in order to be recognized as equal. This means that, a strong, demanding appearance is equated with competence and is the only way to be recognized as a professional. Here again, it is mentioned that women have to show this behaviour more often than men, as they are fundamentally assumed to have lower abilities.

5.1.3 Coverage - females doing "female stories"?

The last sector that should be discussed in this chapter is the topics dealt with in the articles. When it comes to the choice of topics female reporters are often confronted with the stereotype that war isn't a topic women are able to cover: *"They think all women are weak and this is also when you are a journalist. You know, like you should be writing about gentle stuff and home stuff, home décor and all of that"* (Safwan, female). This statement confirms once again that the link between war and masculinity is still strongly present in society, whereas women, are considered to be the gentle sex, which is only interested in soft news.

Also, with fact, the surveyed journalists developed strategies to deal with this prejudice. In order to be taken seriously as a woman in their work, typical "female" topics were often not addressed: *"Now I am free to write about what I want, I can write about gender etc. But five years ago, I would never write an article about that because I wanted to be treated equally with men. Once you are in a newspaper and you are going to write about gender or anything similar you are doing "women articles"* (Khoder, female). Here, too, it is evident that the existing prejudices had a strong influence on the behaviour of female journalists. In order to be taken seriously they stopped doing "typical female" topics and started to write about topics that are considered to be male topics. This can be seen as an adjustment to the male dominated field of journalism.

5.2 Being on ground – journalism in the context of war and crisis

5.2.1 Exploitation of power- the issue of sexual harassment

When it comes to reporting in war and crisis zones, women in general are often exposed to greater dangers than their male colleagues: *"Women are one of the first victims of wars. Whether by rape, by kidnapping, by imprisonment. The Syrian regime and other militia have used women as a bargaining tool to people they want to arrest or to humiliate"* (Moukalled, female). As already explained in the theoretical part of this work, sexual violence against women is oftentimes used as a weapon in war. This doesn't only affect journalists but also the "normal" female members of the population in an area of war or crisis. The sexual harassment both male and female interviewees mentioned during the interviews is of great relevance, since it has its origin in two different sources: the general population and the working partners. The harassment often does not refer to the professional interlocutor per se, but to the population in the country of reporting: *"You often have the problem of harassment on the streets in some countries. I've already been touched and asked to come to cars"*⁷ (Frehse, female). Male reporters on the other side, do also realize this existing problem, but are not affected by it: *"There*

⁶ translated from German, original quote: "Es sind die Kleinigkeiten. Wer geht als erster durch die Tür, wer streckt zuerst die Hand aus, wer sagt das erste gute Tag. Am Anfang habe ich mich da ein bisschen zurückgehalten, weil ich unsicher war. Das geht halt nicht, du musst als Frau nochmal doppelt die Sicherheit darstellen [...] klar machen, so Leute, ihr redet mit mir. Liegt so nicht in meiner Natur und ist eine Sache, von der ich weiß, dass ich sie lernen muss".

⁷ translated from German, original quote: „Du hast in einigen Ländern schon echt oft ein Problem mit Belästigung auf der Straße, also ich wurde schon angefasst und in irgendwelche Autos gebeten“.

were mass rapes at the central square in Cairo, at Tahrir Square. And of course, as a man, you're not affected by it, in doubt, you don't even notice it ⁸" (Emmerich, male).

The issue of sexual harassment becomes particularly problematic when existing power relations are exploited to oppress or influence women in their behaviour: "Sometimes it is very complicated in countries where the person who is harassing is very important. I had some colleagues who had to leave the country very quickly because otherwise they wouldn't be able to leave the country at all. They got harassed by someone who is the chief of the army. If it is a simple soldier you could stop him. But if it is like the big chief and everybody would obey him, he would just rape her. It is better to call her TV station or publication and get her out as soon as possible" (Abd Rabbo, male). Especially when working with the military or civil servants in a war zone, female journalists are at increased risk. They are indeed relevant interlocutors for journalistic work, however, they are also in a strong position of power, which can be used to enforce their own interests. If there are no functioning restrictions, this power can be exploited to the full and put journalists in great danger as the quote shows.

Here too, female interviewees developed strategies that could partially protect them from the risk of sexual harassment: "You know I've come up with a certain way of deflecting it, saying I have a boyfriend, saying I have a husband, making a very convincing story about my boyfriend" (Porter, female) or "You can avoid it a little, it's not your own responsibility, but it matters where you are at which time and how you behave. Whether you walk fast and determined, whether you look people in the eyes. You get used to little tricks like this automatically at some point, but you can't always avoid sexual harassment"⁹ (Frehse, female). Wearing headscarves or long and loose clothing is also one of the strategies that are applied in order to be able to provide more security for oneself. To what extent one should change one's person and behaviour in order to obtain information and protect oneself, is whatsoever critically examined within the community: "It is a controversial thing...how much would you change to get access to people? Still many journalists are doing it, they are wearing scarves, they are being disguised [...]. It really depends on the context of the story and on what would you do with it" (Moukalled, female). This consideration seems to be particularly relevant. Where, on the one hand, from a self-determined perspective, a strong adaptation to the rules of conduct prescribed by male interlocutors violates one's own principles, on the other hand, exactly this adaptation is necessary in order to protect oneself during reporting. Constant consideration must be given here.

5.2.2 Getting Information – females talking to females or a game of seduction?

A main issue all of the interviewees mentioned while being asked about gender differences concerning their work is the access to information. When considering this aspect, it is relevant to look at the existing advantages and disadvantages for both sexes.

Especially in more conservative areas, it seems to be much easier for female journalists to reach out and cover topics related to women than it is for male journalists: It is easier to do "female sexual violence stories. You can talk to women whereas they might feel less comfortable sharing this story with a man. So that's a real big thing" (Porter). However, the effect of gender is additionally reinforced by a common language and cultural background: "For me it was a plus to cover this area from a woman's perspective. It gave me access to women. I belong to the same culture and language of women who were raped in Algeria or women who are being suppressed in Yemen. I could communicate and relate to them. I was able to talk and understand. The language, the culture. It played a major role" (Moukalled, female). Another central factor has already been addressed in this quote: cultural and linguistic proximity. It seemed like, that journalists who were able to speak the language of the people

⁸ translated from German, original quote: "Am zentralen Platz in Kairo, am Tahrir Platz, gab es Massenvergewaltigungen. Und natürlich bist du als Mann davon nicht betroffen, du kriegst es im Zweifel nicht mal mit".

⁹ translated from German, original quote: „Man kann es ein bisschen vermeiden, nicht dass es die eigene Verantwortung wäre, aber ein bisschen spielt es eine Rolle, wann du dich wo bewegst und wie du auftrittst, gehst du schnell und zielstrebig, wem guckst du in die Augen, solche kleinen Tricks arbeiten sich automatisch irgendwann ein, aber du kannst es nicht immer vermeiden“.

they are interested in and who come from a common background would be granted broader access and got more information.

On the other hand, it is also important to see that, many women were denied access to certain people and stories due to their gender: *“In Jordan I tried to meet a very famous radical Islamic cleric who was in house arrest. [...] He refused to meet me, despite what I all tried so, because I am a female, he would rather talk to a male reporter”* (Moukalled, female). This shows clearly that a big difference is made between male and female journalists by some people. Especially when it comes to very conservative or religious topics the gender seems to play a major role.

Even if an interview has been approved, the perceived inequality between man and woman is often still communicated: *“I have interviewed on guy, he supports al-Qaida [...]. I did an interview with him and had to put a scarf. During one hour he managed not to look at me once. Because I am a woman. During the whole the interview he looked away”* (ebd.).

Male respondents in particular reported that female colleagues' access to information was also expanded because male interview partners use their power and knowledge in order to try impressing females: *“A chief would be very excited to show a female what he is able of, how he can work with his men. Really a game of seduction. Which is totally understood or accepted from both sides. Some colleagues had access we (males) couldn't have at all. Because the minister was really wanting to show them things he wasn't interested in showing to men. To show off, to say I am commander, I am a man, let me show you. You want to spend two days in the frontline with the soldiers? Of course, I go with you, I show you. While we were asking this for two weeks as men, and they are like, it is dangerous, it is complicated. [...] Most women who are on the front know that they can do this. Some of them joke about it. They say, oh I will ask for this but before I will arrange my hair, because it will be easier to get the answer. It is a game.”* (Abbd Rabbo, male). What can be seen here is that female journalists specifically use their femininity to obtain further information. Since they are not perceived in their professional role by their interlocutor, but rather as a target of sexual activities, they accept this new role and use it for their own benefit. Using the stereotype of being weak and in need of help, a male photo reporter also mentioned that the willingness to help women out is higher than the one towards men: *“Males talk easy, they start helping. There is a kind of protection”* (Baz, male). But this in turn transports the image of a woman worthy of protection, who must be specially treated by male care.

Another aspect mentioned by the interviewees is the fact that they could also use the initial problem of not being taken seriously in favour of their own work: *“On the field they think I am stupid. And sometimes they don't even notice me. [...] Especially in combats and explosions. I would overhear the police because since you are a woman, they would talk in front of you about the inquiry. If I was a male journalist or even just a male, they would not say this in front of me. They don't take women seriously, which is good. So, you have more information”* (Khoder, female). The prevailing gender stereotypes in society cause that women are perceived as less of a danger than their male colleagues, even though they are in their role, which ultimately facilitates their access to information.

5.2.3 Male & Female - A working team?

One fact reported by both male and female reporters is that work on ground changes as soon as men and women are involved in reporting as a team.

An issue that female foreign reporters had to face was the difference in treatment and lack of respect, once they were with a male colleague: *“I don't like working with male colleagues [...] because if there is a man involved in the work, I am facing the problem that people only look at and talk to him, even though I am answering [...]. It is an automatism¹⁰”* (Frehse, female).

On the contrary, male journalists reported that it would often be a gain for them to have a female person on their team. The main motive here is, that male authorities e.g. soldiers behave in a different

¹⁰ translated from German, original quote: „Ich gehe nicht gerne mit männlichen Kollegen los, [...] weil sobald ein Mann im Spiel ist, ist es ganz oft so, dass der Mann angeschaut wird, mit dem Mann geredet wird, auch wenn ich dann antworte [...]. Das ist einfach so ein Automatismus“.

way towards women than they do towards men: *"I like to work with women because I feel it is kind of protection in war zones. It is a protection towards men. Because there is no aggressivity towards women. [...] They diffuse testosterone"* (Baz, male). However, this quote must be assessed very critically since the reported experiences with sexual abuse and the exploitation of power structures show a different picture.

5.2.4 The Media – a warring party?

However, what must never be ignored when interpreting reporters as a perceived danger, is that - especially in recent times - media has an ever-greater influence on perception and the course of war. The information societies get about a war are mainly from media outlets and the media system has the power to frame conflicts in certain ways. It is therefore not uncommon for the warring parties themselves to perceive journalists as an actively participating war party: *"In the modern world you are not just a reporter anymore. Because it is a media war, they consider you a soldier, a soldier for this side or for the other side"* (Abd Rabbo, male). With regard to the research question, this has the effect that the gender of the journalist is pushed into the background and rather his or her role as a journalist is perceived as a danger.

5.2.5 The lack of support - financial issues

When asked about possible solutions to minimize the dangers that journalists are facing in their daily work, the lack of support from media outlets was criticised several times. One of the issues is, that journalists are not supported during their stay in crisis areas: *"It is very hard to get someone to take responsibility. [...] They will only take the story when I come back, they don't want to take responsibility for it [the stay in a conflict area]"* (Porter, female). This is because media outlets do not want to be associated with deceased or injured reporters in public as this could have negative impacts on their image: *"Newspapers or agencies are much more cautious about assigning people who might die because they don't want to be linked to someone who either died or was injured. [...] They don't assign you anymore. They only want to see your photos when you are back. They don't want to say, we told him to go"* (Abd Rabbo, male). Media outlets are not ready to take full responsibility for the journalists they are taking the pictures or articles from.

In addition to the fact that journalists are often left on their own, the lack of economic support means that the safety of journalists cannot be guaranteed: *"The biggest danger that we face as journalists in this area is the money [...]. The thing that news outlets can do to most protect female journalists is to put more money in. Simple as that. It is not about training us to make ourselves more certain, no, just give us more money. Pay for our expenses, give us enough money so we can stay in the slightly nicer hotel, where the doors lock, and staff is less pervy and has a security entrance rather than sitting awake the whole night because you are worried the receptionist is coming in, attacking you"* (Porter). This allies to the financial problems of the media sector in general. If circulation, sales figures and advertising revenues fall, additional costs are avoided. The fact that the safety of foreign reporters is exposed to cost-cutting programs is to be criticised harshly. In fact, the (expensive) use of mediating persons, such as local fixers is oftentimes the only solution that can be found in order to minimize the dangers for journalists.

Discussion

Concluding this work, a reference to the research question and theory posed at the beginning should be made. In this work the question was asked, whether the gender of journalists has an impact on the work as a reporter covering war and crisis. To answer this question, the theoretical background on gender and journalism and war was outlined in the first step. Thereupon, the methodical procedure of the analysis was explained shortly in order to subsequently interpret and summarize the statements of the eight interviewed journalists.

Overall, the analysis of the qualitative interviews revealed some interesting insights in the work of a foreign reporter. What was clearly shown in most of the interviews is, that the field of war and crisis journalism is a contested one where one has to show an outstanding motivation in order to be taken seriously. Despite the gender category as an influencing factor, the factors of motivation, experience, and ultimately availability are increasingly decisive for employment as a journalist who is sent onto ground as a media company. The confidence of the media organisations is strengthened above all, through previous successful stays in crisis areas. Also, often only a few journalists are willing to travel to crisis and war zones, which is why the selection is limited to those who are willing to do so.

One of the biggest differences mentioned by almost all respondents is the difference in access to information. Particularly in very conservative or religious environments, access to female respondents was much easier for female journalists than it was for male, which also has an influence on the covered topics. But, on the other side women are often not taken seriously in their role as journalists and also still the endangered because of sexual harassment and assaults. Finally, the financial pressure that media companies are permanently suffering from due to strong competition and increasing media concentration is a decisive factor that has a huge impact on the safety of reporters. The precarious work situations in which media companies do not want to take responsibility for employees staying in war and crisis zones, as well as the lack of financial support during the stay, contribute significantly to putting journalists of both sexes at risk in their work.

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