

## **Westminster Research**

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/westminsterresearch>

### **Picturing the World's news: news photography, cultural production, Thomson Reuters and the international process of news making**

**Jonathan Ilan**

School of Media, Arts and Design

This is an electronic version of a PhD thesis awarded by the University of Westminster. © The Author, 2012.

This is an exact reproduction of the paper copy held by the University of Westminster library.

---

The WestminsterResearch online digital archive at the University of Westminster aims to make the research output of the University available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the authors and/or copyright owners.

Users are permitted to download and/or print one copy for non-commercial private study or research. Further distribution and any use of material from within this archive for profit-making enterprises or for commercial gain is strictly forbidden.

---

Whilst further distribution of specific materials from within this archive is forbidden, you may freely distribute the URL of WestminsterResearch:  
(<http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/>).

In case of abuse or copyright appearing without permission e-mail [repository@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:repository@westminster.ac.uk)

**Picturing the World's News:**  
**News Photography, Cultural Production,**  
**Thomson Reuters and the International**  
**Process of News Making**

Jonathan Ilan

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
University of Westminster for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

February 2012

## **Abstract**

In this research the production process of news pictures at Thomson Reuters international multimedia news agency is examined along its 'local' and 'international' key moments and sites, and the career of Reuters photographs- from the moment they are conceived as ideas to their purchase- is followed and explored at the ways that at every stage they are used, chosen, sold and processed as 'Reuters' products. Based on an extensive fieldwork that includes participant observations in the field, the Jerusalem bureau and the global pictures desk in Israel, Singapore and the UK, in-depth interviews with significant Reuters pictures professionals and observations conducted at the Guardian's pictures desk in London, the findings in this project point to a wide cultural production infrastructure hidden from- and yet also nurtured by- the consumer's eye. From the camera's lens to the daily work of the photographer, the editor, the producer, the chief of the department, administrators, graphic designers, sales and marketing, the international news agency, the different news outlets, different media and other organizations and their audiences, who are all responsible for the representation of one reality and the production of another. Focusing an ethnographic eye on the production processes of news pictures at Thomson Reuters, and drawing from cultural studies and approaches of the political economy of communication, this is an attempt to uncover what news is in its photographic form, and the ways that such unique process of production illustrates the overall production of newsworthiness.

*To Lee and Danielle*



# Contents

<i>List of pictures and appendices</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Declaration of authorship</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	<i>xii</i>

## Chapter 1:

<b>Introduction</b>	13
1.1 Reutersgate	13
1.2 Methodology	21
1.2.1 Limitations	25
1.2.2 Ethnography for some, a problem for others	28

## Chapter 2:

<b>Literature review</b>	36
2.1 Political economy from below or cultural studies from above?	36
2.2 Commercial photography production	45
2.3 News production	64
2.4 The production of culture perspective and beyond	71
2.5 Media institutions and the organization of cultural production	74
2.6 Cultural production and the industry	81
2.7 Producing news pictures, making news	88

## Chapter 3:

<b>The wire and the empire</b>	93
3.1 The ‘Big four’ in a small world: An introduction	94
3.1.1 New media, old rivalries	101
3.2 Is Reuters on top of the world?	105
3.3 The story of the Reuters picture service	114
3.3.1 A ‘strong start’ and the ‘best of both worlds’	115
3.3.2 Getting ready for launch and plans on going digital	124
3.3.3 Straight into the cold waters of competition	127
3.3.4 Trying to connect all loose ends and turning digital	134
3.3.5 Same game, different settings - and what is yet to come	141
3.4 Conclusion	144

**Chapter 4:**

<b>The production process I: From story to product</b>	145
4.1 A note on Reuters pictures production and how this works	146
4.2 The Story	150
4.3 The Photography	161
4.3.1 The tools	165
4.3.2 Fieldwork	172
4.3.3 A final touch before takeoff	179
4.4 The Product	188
4.4.1 The office	193
4.5 Conclusion	199

**Chapter 5:**

<b>The production process II: From product to story</b>	201
5.1 Final stop (I) The Global pictures desk in Singapore and sales	201
5.2 Final stop (II) The client's end, the case of The Guardian	269
5.3 The International desk: How well did we do?	290
5.4 Conclusion	298

**Chapter 6:**

<b>An analysis of significant events and their coverage</b>	299
7.1 First event: Israeli artillery base, November 2005	301
7.2 Second event: Bombing near TulKarem, December 2005	317
7.3 Third event: The funeral of an Israeli officer, December 2005	337
7.4 Fourth event: Carrots picking near Nahal Oz, November 2005	350

<b>Conclusion</b>	366
-------------------	-----

<b>Appendices</b>	370
-------------------	-----

Appendix 1.0: Reuters editorial pictures by country, 2010	371
Appendix 2.0: Selected words and expressions	372

<b>Bibliography</b>	374
---------------------	-----

Additional sources and websites	389
---------------------------------	-----

## List of pictures and appendices

### Chapter 1:

Adnan Hajj's altered picture, Beirut 2006	13
---	----

### Chapter 3:

Reuters picture network, January 1 <sup>st</sup> 1985	120
Reuters electronic picture desk (EPD), 1985	121
Reuters news picture terminal (RNPT), 1987	133
Reuters price summary for subscribers, May 1991	138
Reuters total number of picture images monthly, 2007	143

### Chapter 4:

Some roads are not passable with normal domestic cars, Israel 2005	170
Photographers at work I, Israel 2006	173
Phil Collins in Israel, Gil Cohen Magen, Israel 2005	174
Agencies photographers sending pictures together, Israel 2006	187
Photographers at work II, Israel 2006	190

### Chapter 5:

Reuters pictures regional network, 2010	202
Global pictures desk, Singapore 2010	204
The 'Japanese Phone', Singapore 2010	206
A doctored picture received by the global desk, Singapore 2010	212
More doctored pictures received by the global desk, Singapore 2010	213
Reuters pictures templates	220
Editors at work, Singapore 2010	220
Keyword entry, protestors in Sweden, Singapore 2010	244
Keywords commandments, Singapore 2010	249
From a picture to a graphic design, Singapore 2010	254
Gizmoz from the Guardian, London, 2011	277

Visual design plan, The Guardian, London 2010	284
Reuters pictures production cycle	297

## Chapter 6:

Israeli soldiers pulling a cleaning rod through a cannon's barrel, Israel 03/11/05	314
A cannon firing in Nahal OZ, Israel 03/11/05	316
Israeli soldiers picking body parts near the city of Tulkarem, Israel 29/12/06	324
Israeli soldiers picking body parts near the Philadelphi route (Barkai Wolfson) Israel 13/05/04	328
Israeli soldiers picking body parts 2004, 2006	330
Front page, Herald Tribune, 30/12/2006	334
The funeral of an IDF officer, Israel 30/12/2006	345
Carrots picking near Nahal Oz, Israel 11/05/06	360

## Acknowledgements

This project would simply not have been possible were it not for so many people at Reuters who granted me access to their work environments and shared with me their daily routines. I wish to thank Matthew Tostevin who gave me a green light to begin my observations in Israel. I am thankful to Oleg Popov, who approved having me around at the Jerusalem pictures department and allowed me to accompany one of his photographers, and to Dylan Martinez who allowed me to spend time at the London pictures desk as well.

Tom Szlukovenyi was very supportive in allowing me to spend some time on the global pictures desk, as was Paul Barker, and Petar Kujundzic was extremely cooperative and shared valuable information. I owe a debt to John Entwisle who granted me access to the Reuters archive. Yann Tessier and Julian Rake gave me a few ideas over dinners, and Luke Baker and Guy Desmond helped out with access as well.

I am grateful to all the photographers, editors, sub-editors, senior sub editors, editors in charge, administrators, graphic designers and chief photographers for their cooperation, willingness to help and patience. They took the time to answer my endless questions during their working hours and beyond: to Sharon Perry and Shelly Alish from the pictures department in Jerusalem; to John Voos and Dylan Martinez from the pictures department in London; to Angie Tan, Candida Ng, Chon Chern Kerk, David Loh, Drew Fritz, Jacinta Goh, Saudah Suyat, Shahida Ariff, Joachim Herrmann, Pablo Sanches Quiza and Sim Wei Yang from the global pictures desk in Singapore; to Dennis Owen from the magazine desk in Singapore; to John Goh from

the keyword team in Singapore; to Hwei Wen Foo from the global graphics desk in Singapore; to Jonathan Bainbridge and Simon Newman from the international desk in London; to Andreas Gans from sales, and to Mitch Kopelman and Steve Crisp for their time and effort. I also wish to thank Roger Tooth who gave me access to the Guardian's pictures operation and shared a lot of information with me as did Sarah Gilbert, Lisa Foreman, Helen Healy and Jonathan Casson.

In particular, I wish to thank my dear friend Gil Cohen Magen, whose rare honesty, clear voice and open heart sparked my imagination during a conversation at a Reuters event in 2004- where this project began- and made the whole thing possible. His ability to speak clearly about his daily job as a Reuters photographer, share his passions and frustrations and invite a stranger to touch the hidden cords of his profession made me realise a thing or two about photography and news, theory and practice, facts and stories, ethnographic research and responsibility.

I came up with some great ideas in Daya Thussu's "Global media" class. David Hendy read a few chapters and offered valuable criticism and insights along the way. Tamar Liebes made insightful comments at an early stage, and I owe a great deal to Paul Frosh for his insight, criticism, effort and friendship ever since this project was conceived. I wish to thank the University of Westminster and the Communication and media research institute (CAMRI) for giving me a scholarship which helped my work progress in London, afforded the travel expenses to Singapore and made my journey go beyond all expectations.

I wish to thank my supervisor David Bate, and I owe a great deal of gratitude to my supervisor Jean Seaton who believed in this project and was a careful reader. It was a privilege to be her student. My mother and brother Sarit and Yoav provided endless love and support. My wife Lee gave me strength, assisted with access, shared

her ideas and helped me overcome my fears and anxieties. This dissertation is dedicated to her and to our daughter Danielle, who became my island of sanity in an ocean of doubts.

## **Declaration of Authorship**

I, Jonathan Ilan, hereby declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.



## List of abbreviations

AFP	Agence France Presse
AP	Associated Press
EPA	European Pressphoto Agency
EPD	Electronic Picture Desk
EVN	Eurovision
GPO	Government Press Office
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
MADA	Magen David Adom (Israeli Paramedics)
PA	The British Press Association
RA	Reuters archive
RNPT	Reuters News Picture Terminal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPI	United Press International
YESHA	Yehuda, Shomron & Azza
ZAKA	Zihui Korbanot Ason (Disaster Victims Identification)

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Reutersgate



On August 5<sup>th</sup> 2006, Reuters, one of the three largest international news agencies in the world, was at the centre of public, media, scandal. In a Reuters picture distributed a day before, a neighbourhood in the city of Beirut appeared to be engulfed in thick plumes of smoke after it was bombarded during the night by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) during the war between the Lebanese Hezbollah and the state of Israel. The picture was taken by Adnan Hajj, a Lebanese freelance photographer who had worked for Reuters for 10 years. Its caption said that it was a picture of smoke coming out of burning buildings in a Beirut suburb after the attack, during which several buildings had been destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Lappin, Y. and Bodoni, R. "Reuters admits: The picture was doctored with the help of a graphic software design". World. Ynet. 6 August 2006. [Hebrew]  
<<http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3287145,00.html>> [accessed April 2010].

Hajj's picture was just one among thousands distributed by Reuters during the war in Lebanon. It was certainly not one of those memorable ones engraved as part of 'collective' memory had it not been for Charles Johnson's suspicious eye. Johnson's "Little Green Footballs" blog had been operated for some time. The thick smoke in the picture seemed 'too' thick for Johnson, who published his suspicions in his blog after a short inquiry: "This Reuters photograph shows blatant evidence of manipulation" said Johnson, "Notice the repeating patterns in the smoke; this is almost certainly caused by using the Photoshop "clone" tool to add more smoke to the image... smoke simply does not contain repeating symmetrical patterns like this, and you can see the repetition in both plumes of smoke. There's really no question about it".<sup>2</sup> A picture which Johnson said was the unaltered original was published in his blog. The same buildings appeared, this time under a thinner pall of smoke. The original picture, suggested Johnson, was actually taken by a photographer named Ben Curtis working for AP- the American International news agency and Reuters' rival- on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July, and two weeks before Hajj's picture was even published.<sup>3</sup> Not only that, but Johnson, now fully convinced of his hunch, pointed to additional alterations spotted in the picture in the form of cloned buildings as well.

Soon enough, different websites taking Johnson's side started to emerge, claiming to have proof of other manipulated pictures distributed by Reuters from the past. And particular doubts were raised about previous Hajj pictures, and he was accused for having a political agenda.<sup>4</sup> A Reuters photographer saw Johnson's blog,

---

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, C. "Reuters doctoring photos from Beirut? ". Little Green footballs. 5 August 2006. <[http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=21956\\_Reuters\\_Doctoring\\_Photos\\_from\\_Beirut&only](http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=21956_Reuters_Doctoring_Photos_from_Beirut&only)>. [Accessed April 2010]

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> On August 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 Hajj was accused of doctoring yet another picture, trying to make an Israeli F-16 dropping a defensive flare seem as if it was firing several missiles at the city of Nabatiyeh in Lebanon (as written in its caption). Hajj was suspected of cloning several flares fired from the plane and describing them as missiles, when only a single flare was actually shown in the original picture. The

and next morning Reuters sent an urgent message to all of its clients telling them to stop using Hajj's picture, and that it should be removed immediately from the archives, as there was reason to believe the picture had been altered using a graphic editing software during its editing process. In addition, Reuters said it would sack Hajj, and that all of his pictures stored within the company's archive (920) would be removed immediately. Hajj tried to save his skin by claiming that he was "...merely trying to remove a speck of dust and fix the lighting in the photos...", but Reuters' heavy machinery of crisis control was already in motion.<sup>5</sup>

"On Saturday, we published 2,000 photos," said Paul Holmes, a senior Reuters editor responsible for the agency's standards and ethics at the time.<sup>6</sup> "It was handled by someone on a very busy day at a more junior level than we would wish for in ideal circumstances".<sup>7</sup> He added that it was probably the result of some "human error" rather than malicious intent.<sup>8</sup> And later Reuters global picture editor at the time, Tom Szlukovenyi, said: "There is no graver breach of Reuters standards for our photographers than the deliberate manipulation of an image. Reuters has zero tolerance for any doctoring of pictures and constantly reminds its photographers- both staff and freelance- of this strict and unalterable policy".<sup>9</sup>

A thorough internal investigation was launched, fearing that Hajj's pictures were just the 'tip of the iceberg', and several editors along the chain of command

---

second doctored picture was revealed in "My pet Jawa" blog published by "Dr. Rusty Shuckleford" (See Shuckleford, R. "Another fake Reuters photo from Lebanon". My Pet Jawa. 6 August 2006. <<http://mypetjawa.mu.nu/archives/184206.php>> [accessed April 2010]). See also Lappin, Y. "Reuters admits to more image manipulation". News. Ynet. 8 July 2006

<<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3287774,00.html>> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>5</sup> See Seelye, K. Q. & Bosman, J. "Bloggers drive inquiry on how altered images saw print". Technology. The New York Times. 9 August 2006. P. 2.

<[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/09/technology/09photo.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=bloggers%20drive%20inquiry%20on%20how%20altered%20images%20saw%20print&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/09/technology/09photo.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=bloggers%20drive%20inquiry%20on%20how%20altered%20images%20saw%20print&st=cse)> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>6</sup> Holmes cited. Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Szlukovenyi cited in "Reuters drops Beirut photographer". BBC News. 6 August 2006. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/5254838.stm>> [accessed April 2010].

were questioned (including a top Reuters photo editor for the Middle East who was 'kindly advised' to take a leave of absence).<sup>10</sup> Hajj, on the other hand, had gone underground and was nowhere to be found. The investigation, however, was of comfort to Reuters, for it revealed no further doctored pictures: "We are fully satisfied, as we conclude our extensive investigation that it was unfortunate human error that led to the inadvertent publication of two rogue photographs" wrote David Schlesinger, Reuters editor-in-chief at the time, in Reuters blog.<sup>11</sup> "There was absolutely no intention on Reuters part to mislead the public...we were not satisfied with the degree of oversight that we had that allowed these two images to slip through," continued Schlesinger, "we have tightened procedures, taken appropriate disciplinary action and appointed one of our most experienced editors to supervise photo operations in the Middle East".<sup>12</sup>

In addition, a set of detailed guidelines for an acceptable use of Adobe's Photoshop was posted, and the Reuters photo editing process was restructured- with greater supervision and additional training, using the help of outside experts on digital work environments. Reuters also began to consider technical solutions to recognize doctored pictures in the future. Finally, senior editors were said to deal with "...all potentially controversial photographs, and we [Reuters] have ensured that shift leaders are focusing solely on quality issues instead of doing editing themselves".<sup>13</sup>

The Hajj's controversy became a news event in itself. It sparked the imagination of those fascinated with the complex relationship between the real and its

---

<sup>10</sup> See Lang, D. "Reuters investigation leads to dismissal of editor". PDN.18 January 2007. <[http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/eseach/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1003534746](http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/eseach/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003534746)> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>11</sup> Schlesinger, D. "Report on Reuters actions after publishing altered photographs". Blogs dashboard. Reuters. 18 January 2007 <http://blogs.reuters.com/blog/archives/4322> [accessed April 2010]. Schlesinger referred to Hajj's doctored pictures of both the Israeli F-16 and the bombed Beirut suburb.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

image. Even though the technical capacity to doctor pictures had been discussed and acknowledged since the 1980's, this example seemed to have struck at the core of what was still considered by some (mainly from the news community) as an undisputable form of signification- the news picture.<sup>14</sup> But the Hujj's controversy is also fascinating from a different angle, leading the way into the institutions who maintain news pictures, their systems and processes of production.

Thus, one way of seeing the picture's history is from the moment it was conceived as an idea and up to its final form as a new born news picture. But then if we also take into consideration its 'career' as a successful Reuters picture at first (and therefore distributed by Reuters to its clients) and later as a Reuters failure (now in the form of a doctored picture), it then becomes a rare document raising a great number of questions: How is a news picture produced? What makes it unique and yet similar? What is that mysterious process hidden from the spectator's eye, allowing for its acceptance as a 'natural' given? What are those different moments and sites through which it is transferred until it is stamped as a valid cultural product, branded? Who are those position holders responsible for its transformation from an idea into a product, and what are the different forces governing their daily routines? What are the economic and cultural powers making it so natural for us until we are willing to consider it as the highest form of representation (as a picture, as news), trustworthy? What part is played by the international news agency along news' overall processes of production, and under what forces responsible for its daily routines does the agency operate- as a great and influential news factory leaning on a highly trusted brand, and as a simple player within a great industry of production which we so often place our trust with blindly?

---

<sup>14</sup> In fact, Reuters' heads of the pictures service were well aware of one specific editing software-Photoshop- and its possibilities for being misused in the early 1990's (see the memo "Regional desks-Interim solution", December 8<sup>th</sup> 1993, Reuters archive (RA), London).

These are the main questions addressed in this project. Surprisingly, it appears that such queries concerning this powerful news organization and its competitors were very much ignored in research, and their processes of production completely overlooked.<sup>15</sup> With Reuters particularly, such absence is a surprise, for within the international news flow arena, Reuters (now Thomson Reuters) is perhaps one of the most intriguing and important players: (1) it is an international news agency and consequently focused on its clients- the different news outlets- in contrast to local news organizations which are committed to their audiences. As a result, it is located 'further up' the international news information flow. (2) It is a private company which has to make profit- an information industry- and the most profitable international news agency within the international news market; at its heart it is concentrated on selling financial information worldwide, and its news products become of great cultural importance. (3) Being an international organization its products are aimed at the international market and thus 'programmed' to have a universal appeal. At the same time, they have also to be tailored to national markets and different domestic demands. They are, therefore, glocal products- much like their

---

<sup>15</sup> Throughout their long histories not much was written on the international news agencies, and the work that was done was focused mainly on the histories of the different agencies. From the mid 1970's the international news agencies drew back certain attention as meaningful media organizations mostly due to UNESCO's call for a new world order (see Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T.(eds) (1998) The Globalization of News. London: Sage). From the beginning of the 1980's a new interest in the agencies had emerged, placing them right at the heart of the 'global' discourse (see Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (eds) (1998) The Globalization of News. London: Sage; Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Schocken Books; Boyd-Barrett, O. (1980) The International News Agencies. London: Constable; and also Read, D. (1999) The power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849-1989. New York: Oxford University press). However, substantial ethnographic work on their structures and lines of production was still missing (see, for example, Clausen, L. (2003) Global News Production. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business school press), apart from little ethnographic work that was focused mainly on the agencies' TV products and not on text or pictures (see Paterson, C. (2006) News Agency Dominance in International news on the Internet. In: Papers in International and global communication No. 01/06. May <<http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/cicr/exhibits/42/cicrpateron.pdf>>. Up to this date, I have not managed to track any work based on the production processes of news pictures in an international news agency with the exception, perhaps, of Gürsel's work, who dealt- among other things- with the production of international news images in the French AFP (See Gürsel, Z. D. (2007) The Image industry: The work of international news photographs in the age of digital reproduction. PhD, Berkley: University of California. These matters, however, are certainly not at the core of her project, and her analysis is not without its flaws as well. It is discussed in depth in chapter two, section 2.2).

processes of production- and both might tell us more about the production processes of international products in international organizations.

News pictures are one of the most popular 'lines' of products in Reuters' media (apart from its TV products). They hold unique features given their universal and particular characteristics- as products aimed for a universal meaning (as pictures, as news), and are also needed to widen the company's circle of clients. They are also meaningful cultural artifacts, extraordinary forms of representation taken daily as the 'true' mediators of reality- highly trustworthy- and thus important for understanding the meaning of culture.

This research focus, therefore, is on the production processes of distinct pictures observed as products at the end (or the starting point) of an exceptional news production process- the production of news pictures in an international news agency. However, this research is not about the unique nature of news pictures (as opposed, for example, to 'ordinary' stock images), but rather on the routines of their production, illuminating those delicate stitches so unnoticed by the eyes of the spectator that they become 'unordinary' pictures, forcing us not to look away. Their unusual status, I would argue, is a result of a wide cultural production infrastructure hidden from- and yet also nurtured by- the consumer's eye. From the camera's lens to the daily work of the photographer, the editor, the producer, the chief of the department, administrators, graphic designers, sales and marketing, the international news agency, the different news outlets, different media and other organizations and their audiences, who are all responsible for the representation of one reality and the production of another.<sup>16</sup>

A brief investigation of such routines revealed, for example, that Hajj's picture was received by the Reuters Global Pictures Desk at 22:30pm on a busy Friday night-

---

<sup>16</sup> See Carey, J. W. (1989) A Cultural Approach to Communication. In: Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society. London: Unwin Hyman. P. 13-36.



half an hour before the end of the mid day shift. As usual, the editor in charge was at that point in the day focused on writing his desk report and paid little attention to pictures newly arriving. In turn, the next editor in charge stormed into a busy shift, so Hajj's picture 'fell between the chairs'. Since the incident, EIC's (editors in charge) start their shift an hour early in order to consider the previous file of images without being distracted and not having to manage the desk at the same time. And Hajj's picture is now, in fact, used to train new editors on the desk about how things can go wrong.

In the following chapters I will track the complex production process of making news pictures in Reuters and the overall production of 'newsworthiness'. I hope to show that by entering into what Lutz and Collins described as "The Great Machinery of Desire", we might have a better understanding of the meaning of news pictures as cultural products, and the reasons for their privileged status (as opposed to other forms of signification) as part of the everyday life of the human nature.<sup>17</sup> By exploring news pictures' processes of production, we might have a better understanding of how we put a cultural economy into work, how it works on us, and why- if at all- a powerful media institution such as Thomson Reuters and its news products deserve trust in a time when trust is in question.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> See "The Great Machinery of Desire" chapter in Lutz, C.A. & Collins, J.L (1993) Reading National Geographic, Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>18</sup> See O'Neil, O. (2002) A question of trust: the BBC Reith lectures 2002. Cambridge: Cambridge University press; Thompson, M. (2008) The trouble with trust. In: The Political Quarterly, Vol. 79(3), July-September: P. 303-313.

## 1.2 Methodology

I mostly use ethnographic research methods: I tried to understand the process, its particular characteristics, and get as close as I could to the social world of the observed population in order to feel it- to 'go native'. And at the same time to keep a certain distance which allows for an external point of view of that social world, taking into consideration the position of the researcher and his personal experience of the field and assuming culture as a system of meaningful symbols in which the researcher places himself within a web of meanings.<sup>19</sup> I divided this project in two central stages carried out along two different periods of time and spread over a number of countries:

1. In the first stage I conducted participant observations taking place from the end of 2005 during a period of almost a year in two steps:
  - I. Accompanying and observing one of Reuters' most experienced Israeli staff photographers located in Israel at the time. Throughout the observations I managed to take part in a variety of more than 30 different news events (and sometimes in several different events in a single day) that were observed- on and off- during a period of almost a year.
  - II. Conducting approximately 20 observations of the daily work of the pictures department of Reuters' local bureau located in Jerusalem during a period of three weeks.
2. In the second stage I conducted participant observations during the first months of year 2010 in different locations and in three steps:

---

<sup>19</sup> Shkedi, A. (2003) Words Trying to Touch: Qualitative Research- Theory and Practice. Tel Aviv: Ramot. [Hebrew]; Geertz, C. (1973) The interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic books & Clifford, J. & Marcus, G. E. (1986) Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. California: University Press.

- I. Observing the daily work of several pictures editors in the pictures department of Reuters' local bureau located in London during a period of one week.
- II. Conducting extensive observations of the daily work of several sub editors, senior editors and editors in charge in the Reuters global pictures desk located in Singapore during a period of two weeks.
- III. Conducting several observations of the pictures operation of the British news paper "The Guardian" located in London for two days.<sup>20</sup>

The choice to use participant observations as one of the main methods was based on the assumption that it is the best way to fully understand the social world of the Reuters' pictures service in its 'natural' surroundings and daily operations. At the same time, it acknowledges the problem of keeping a certain distance from the observed population and thus the insensitivity involved in keeping such a distance on the one hand, and being 'emotionally involved' and part of the observed population and thus unable to maintain an external point of view on the other.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to participant observations I had several in depth interviews with key figures along the production processes of news pictures in Reuters and in the Guardian- cultural mediators- conducted as followed: (1) a number of extensive interviews were conducted with the Reuters staff Israeli photographer and several Reuters pictures editors working in the local bureau in Jerusalem. (2) In-depth interviews were conducted with a senior editor and a senior editor in charge working in the pictures department of Reuters' international desk located in London, and with

---

<sup>20</sup> My observations in the pictures operations of the Guardian were deliberately stopped by the paper's head of photography, who decided to end our relationship in a sudden move and refused to answer my requests ever since (see the section on ethnographic issues later in this chapter). Nonetheless, I have managed- in the short period of time that I was given- to gain a lot of information regarding the Guardian's pictures operations. These findings were processed, analyzed and discussed in chapter 5.

<sup>21</sup> Saville-Troike, M. (1989) The Ethnography of Communication: An introduction. Basil Blackwell: New York.

Reuters' head of pictures sales of Europe, Middle East and Africa. (3) Interviews were conducted with several subeditors, senior editors, editors in charge and the deputy editor of Reuters' global pictures desk, with editors and editors in charge from the magazine desk and keyword team and the desk's administrator- all working at the Reuters' global pictures desk located in Singapore. (4) In-depth interviews were conducted with a graphic journalist working at the Reuters global graphics desk in Singapore, with the 1985 assistant manager of the Reuters' pictures service and with the head of its Brussels' picture desk at the time as well. (5) Several interviews were conducted with the Guardian's head of photography, the website's senior pictures editor, the feature pictures editor, an assistant picture editor and with the head of its sub editors.

Taking into consideration the final outputs at the end of such a process, an interpretive analysis of four different events covered by the Reuters' photographer which took place between the end of 2005 and during 2006 in Israel was conducted as well. However, and as an unorthodox research method, the analysis was focused on the biography of the pictures taken within those events. This unique method of analysis was used for two main reasons: first, and as shall be demonstrated in the different chapters of this project, because the production of news pictures appears to begin way before the pictures are taken by a photographer in the field. Therefore, the analysis of the events in which the pictures were conceived (even though not all pictures are the outcome of 'actual occurrences' as well) are required to reveal additional meanings other than those revealed in their 'final' form as photographic news texts. In addition, their entire process of production is not taken here as a simple one-way process maintained in a closed field of production operated only by privileged producers (photographers, editors, managers etc.). It is an open system in

which the audience plays a pivotal role at key moments and sites along the production routine, having both their producers and their audiences taken here in their complete experience which exceeds way beyond organizational duties; it is a constant dialogue between their worlds along the daily construction and experience of their ways of lives.

A semiotic analysis of several pictures taken by the photographer from those particular events and then sent away for distribution (whether to the local bureau in Jerusalem first or directly to the Reuters global pictures desk in Singapore and then to clients) was also conducted.<sup>22</sup> Combining the analysis of the pictures themselves and of the events in which they were taken, I have managed to demonstrate the circularity of the process- from the moment the pictures were conceived as an idea and up to their final form as cultural products for (and as an example of how they are published by) Reuters clients.

Finally, I was able to see the Reuters archive in London. I was the first to go over all the documents related to the Reuters pictures service from the day it was established- from minutes of meetings to company brochures, from historical guiding books to personal memos.<sup>23</sup> By analyzing archived documents, I managed to place the Reuters pictures process of production within a broader historical context and was able to tell the story of the Reuters pictures service for the first time.

Combining several research methods, this project is as an attempt to fill a certain gap within the overlooked field of cultural production. It might also contribute to research dealing with the acceptance of cultural products by the audience and a semiotic analysis of the products themselves. Taking the production process of news

---

<sup>22</sup> One of the pictures was left on the 'editing room's floor' in a decision taken by the chief photographer of Reuters' bureau in Jerusalem at the time. A semiotic analysis of one picture as it was published on the front page of the Herald Tribune was conducted as well.

<sup>23</sup> I was given free access to all the documents related to the Reuters' picture service from when it was established (1985) and up to year 2000. See chapter 3.

in its photographic form in Thomson Reuters as a case study, I was hoping to make a certain contribution to the field of international news production and 'newsworthiness' as a whole, and examine (i) what is news in its photographic form, and (ii) in what ways the production processes of news pictures in Thomson Reuters international multimedia news agency illustrate the overall production of 'newsworthiness'.

### **1.2.1 Limitations**

Conducting research on such a process is highly demanding, and so a few limitations to consider are in order: this research is of a specific time frame, since- much like institutions and their technologies- production processes are subjects to historical change. This project is not an attempt to identify a 'universal' set of production processes, but rather a particular one taking place from the end of 2005 for nearly one year and throughout 2010. This research ended up covering two extremely important points in Reuters' time: covering the production processes of news pictures in Reuters before and after the merge with the financial Thomson (2007). Although not planned in advance, the two different time frames in which this project eventually took place may supply a comparative angle and contribute to the overall process and its financial backwind- particularly in Reuters, but also as a platform in order to understand better similar processes in international media organizations as a whole.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Although the 'local' stages of the process were analysed from 2005 and thus might, for a moment, seem irrelevant in 2010, this will be a good place to mention that I was constantly aware of certain changes in the process itself which occurred a few years later throughout my work, and I was fully informed of such changes by both the Israeli photographer who I accompanied back then and editors in the Reuters' pictures department in Jerusalem, where the observations first took place in 2005-2006. Apparently, most of the analysis of the process that is based on the findings from 2005-2006 remained the same, and whenever certain changes had occurred, they were updated in 2010. In order to make this contribution as updated as I possibly could, an in-depth interview was also conducted with a senior pictures editor in the Jerusalem bureau in 2009. She was a new comer back in 2006 and therefore was not interviewed at all, but she managed to climb 'up the ladder' and her perspective was found essential to update my original findings.

Although the reading of Reuters' pictures by the audience of consumers is highly important for the conclusions of such work (mainly since consumption is an essential part of production), this project does not include an analysis of how news pictures are accepted by the audience. For Thomson Reuters sells its news pictures to clients worldwide and therefore reaches an international audience of readers, and tracking a sufficient sample from such an audience would have been a complicated task and part of an already complicated research to execute logistically. Nonetheless, as a reminder dealt with in depth later on, it is, at the same time, fully acknowledged at different steps along this journey. In fact, as I shall argue later, it appears that those who operate the production of news pictures in Reuters are themselves cultural consumers and quite often bring their consumer practices to work; consumer culture plays a substantial role at meaningful sites and particular moments throughout the entire process of decision making and daily routines.

In addition, since the audience appears in the following chapters as playing a pivotal role along the different sites in the production processes of news pictures in Reuters and thus, in a sense, equally responsible for their final output (this will be particularly demonstrated throughout the analysis of selected events in chapter 6). And since the process addressed here is taken in a circular structure, the audience is treated in this project not simply in the form of an end consumer (having the ability to influence future production processes with essential feedback, and thus certainly not a passive one) but rather crucial for a complete understanding of cultural production and its cycles in full.

Furthermore, even though the entire production process of news pictures in its key moments and sites is spread over a number of distant places and operated in different countries (my observations only took place in Israel, UK and Singapore), the

process itself is extremely short in time. To make it simple, a picture taken in, say, Israel, then sent from the field to the local bureau in Jerusalem (or sometimes directly to Singapore); then sent to the Reuters global pictures desk in Singapore; then to clients and then published can sometimes be a matter of minutes. Since I have only myself to blame for this work, I was obviously unable to track a single picture along the entire process in real time. As a result, parts of this project covering the entire production cycle (i.e. chapters 4 and 5) are based on the daily norms and operational routines at the different sites of production as a way of reflecting on the actual process as it takes place in real time.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that certain bits of information concerning the production process in its different stages appear in several places in various chapters (although at different variations and contexts). This is clearly due to a unique relationship taking place between process and structure in organizations, and therefore one which requires several points of view in the study of media organizations and cultural institutions.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Even though, from an aesthetic point of view, certain Reuters pictures can easily fall within the definitions of stock pictures or even art, their processes of production appear to be very similar. During the second war in Lebanon, for instance, a Reuters photographer described to me once how he was shooting in the northern city of Kiryat Shmona in Israel where rocket missiles exploded in the streets, then drove back to Tel Aviv where he had to shoot Bar Refaeli- a famous Israeli model- while she was modeling for a swimsuit catalogue, and then rushed back to the northern border. And it is a similar case with editors who work on pictures from a fashion show in Paris the way they deal with series of pictures from Kabul in Afghanistan. Therefore, since work is mainly at the focus of this project rather than text (although certainly not just), and since pictures are considered part of Reuters' news division, from this point onwards the term 'news pictures' refers to all Reuters' pictures. In fact, as shall be demonstrated later, this so called 'leakage' between photography genres in their work processes will not be used here simply to semantically define those genres, but as a challenge to the borders mistakenly set between them when their production was in question before (see, for instance, my analysis of Rosenblum's work under 'commercial photography production', chapter 2), and essentially in order to consider cultural production as an open process rather than a closed and autonomic system of manufacturing.



### 1.2.2 Ethnography for some, a problem for others

Throughout this project I learnt a great deal about the elusive nature of news pictures and their production. I also experienced the slippery position of a researcher when conducting participant observation- those different games of 'changing hats' from connected participant to independent excluded observer that the fieldwork required. It is because of those characteristics of methodology that I had to go through many obstacles along the way, which would perhaps be easier to explain with a story.

In one occasion I was notified by the photographer of an explosion which had resulted in casualties that took place near the city of TulKarem in Israel. Being a closed military area, civilians were not allowed to continue any further, although a few journalists had been allowed to it. Soon enough a great number of reporters, photographers and TV crews arrived as well in order to cover the event. A soldier presented himself as part of the IDF spokes person unit. Given that Israel is a small country, journalists are often familiar with one another, as they are to the IDF spokes persons, and since I was a 'new face in town' he kindly asked about why I was there and explained in a suspiciously nice way that I did not look familiar to him. Without thinking twice I replied that I was from Reuters ("MM...Text?" asked the soldier, as he noticed the notebook in my hand. I nodded) and pointed my finger to the Reuters photographer I accompanied. Surprisingly, it appeared as if he was satisfied for the time being, and went his way.

Time passed and I was deeply involved in my observation when the same soldier approached me once again, only this time he was no longer kind as before, and notified me that in a few minutes the Colonel of the area would give a briefing to all the reporters on the scene, and that I better not go too far. Clearly the soldier 'meant

business', I said to myself, and realized that this briefing could have major consequences for my observation: the scene of events was relatively big and divided into three sub scenes, and in order to watch the photographer from up close I had to move around between the three. If I attended the briefing, I was probably not able to observe the photographer as it was needed, and he could even get entirely out of my sight. On the other hand, if I decided not to attend the briefing, my cover could be blown and I would be forced to leave the scene or worse. At the end, I decided to stick to the original plan and attend the briefing as if I was a reporter, while, at the same time, trying to observe the photographer's work from a far.

Similarly, I realized early on that it would be impossible for me to attend events without being noticed by the photographer and his colleagues. In fact, I could not get to the scenes without the photographer. We met at the scenes quite often, and as time went by I got to know his fellow photographers from competing agencies. In many cases we drove together to the different events, and at times I felt as if I had lost the 'naturalness' of his surroundings, having 'contaminated' it with my presence.

Hours of driving from one scene to another slowly turned into fascinating conversations regarding the photographer's daily work and the organization he was working for, and hours of waiting became my ticket into the thin cords of his world that would remain in the shadows if I chose a different path for my work. Quite often I found myself caught in the middle of an essential crossing along the local department's internal exchange of information flow. The photographer received updates from the editor in the office and sometimes from the chief photographer as well while we were both driving to and from the scenes of events. The photographer did not feel comfortable saying I was in the car, and thanks to a speaker phone I often over-heard valuable bits of information in real time. Needless to say, these were all

important lessons, allowing me to continue with my journey with a clear conscience and a sense of a valid project. The ‘nature’ of a working environment is comprised of numerous layers. Yet some are only revealed when others are hidden.

But, observing a photographer in the field is one thing and observing editors in an office is another. In the field it is often easier to blend in; sitting in an office immediately turns an outside observer into an intruder whose presence often makes people feel uncomfortable. Moreover, since most editing is now done on computers, one can never fully comprehend the position of an editor without asking questions, and one soon discovers that there is a very thin line between what is seen as curiosity and an irritating presence. Quite often, observing ethnographers (or those of us who aspire to become ones in their future) are perceived by the observed as ‘unemployed’ or ‘weird’ (and often being asked “so what are you going to do with this?”, or “so what *do you do?*”).

I was usually welcomed. Many of my subjects did not really understand what it was that I was doing (or did not care). In some cases- in the global pictures desk, for instance- I felt that my presence was enthusiastically welcomed. Did this compromise my position? Was my independence at risk? However, the warmth of my reception was because editors on the global pictures desk work extremely hard around the clock; their position is crucial. Yet they are anonymous. While photographers win prizes, become famous or at least get a credit, editors get no recognition. An outside observer can easily become a credit for editors, and I was fortunate to be there (first) at the right time.

My work on the Guardian’s picture desk showed up similarities and differences. In Reuters my prayers (and mails) were answered immediately, and I was given official permission to conduct my observations in Singapore by the global

pictures editor after a brief meeting. With the Guardian, however, I had to chase its head of photography (virtually speaking) using all the connections I could think of for quite some time. In fact, if it was not with some strings pulled by my supervisor and 'a little help from her friends', I would probably have been left with no reply at all. But I was suddenly invited to meet the Guardian's head of photography in person, and he granted the access I needed.

Access, it appears, works in mysterious ways, and it is usually a matter of trade. Sometimes you have to give something- a possible credit in the case of the Singapore desk- and can then expect something in return. Yet in most cases an outside observer has little to offer in exchange (what do I possess that the Guardian's head of photography can possibly want? especially when my focus is on Reuters). But sometimes, if one is really fortunate, he happens to know someone who knows someone who owes someone a favor, and then all of a sudden you are in.

When I did manage to 'sneak' inside the Guardian, I soon realized that things were similar to my Singapore experience. For, even in the Guardian, photography personnel feel slightly neglected and less like journalists. Picture editors feel that pictures are there to help text; their work is to grab the readers' attention so that journalists (the term still overwhelmingly refers to writing reporters) can get attention for the 'real work' of writing. Such frustration is a great opportunity for an observer. For it is at times such as these that one can 'squeeze the juicy stuff' out of his interviewees just by pushing the right buttons. Having your interviews in a closed and isolated room is also highly recommended; a beer or two in a pub might do the same trick as well.

I was not always a welcome presence, however, during a sensitive crisis. On several occasions, when I was in Reuters local bureau in Jerusalem, I was asked to

leave the room. There appeared to be tension between the photographer who I accompanied and the chief photographer of the local bureau, who knew about my research, and this made my observations in the office uncomfortable.<sup>26</sup> I was first asked by the head of the local bureau in Jerusalem to sign a form, saying that I agreed not to connect any conclusions in my research to Reuters (or even use the name 'Reuters'), and I felt that I should be extra cautious in order not to jeopardize the entire project.<sup>27</sup>

More generally, even though journalists' profession is not unlike the act of ethnographers- they observe and they intervene- they do not like being observed themselves; they become suspicious and unwilling to cooperate. In my experience (and as part of Reuters' policy, although this proved to be the case in the Guardian as well, at least up to the point when I was 'kicked out') this was not the case. Early on, the journalists I met were cooperative and nice, and I was taken more and more seriously as the project evolved. In some cases, however, I was asked to keep certain bits of information 'Off the record'. Much different than journalism, it is exactly what is left 'Off the record' (but not just) that ethnography is very much interested in; the work of journalists is one thing, a research on journalism is another.

I was also given the feeling at Reuters that some of my interviewees were not considered 'professional' by some of their colleagues. This was an interesting point to think about since, studying organizations and their processes of production, one often assumes that those who are more experienced or located higher up the chain of command are often the most 'professional'. In reality this is not always the case. I

---

<sup>26</sup> This conflict between the photographer and the chief of the department is dealt with in depth in chapter 4.

<sup>27</sup> Since these were busy times for a news organization in Israel, the form issue was forgotten and I ended up signing nothing. Burns describes a similar incident- a case of 'corporate paranoia' (although the phrase seems to him as too simple of a definition)- in his work on the organizational practices of the BBC (see Burns, T. (1977) The BBC: Private institution and private world. London: The Mcmillan press LTD P. xv).

realized early on that some interviewees would probably try to earn their place as ‘professionals’ on the accounts of others, or are just sometimes curious about being interviewed regardless of their expertise. In the Guardian, my ticket in was given to me by the head of photography (is there a better one?), which clearly granted me access to those privileged moments and events (the daily editorial meeting of the paper, for instance) that I would probably never have gained if it not for his help. On the other hand, although the Guardian’s pictures operation is quite big and has various personnel at different departments at particular moments and sites at its service, I discovered that I was mainly introduced to the head’s ‘people’ while many others, who are important just as much, were beyond my reach.

This, I believe, was probably the result of the paper’s head of photography being tangled in the internal politics of the organization, or more likely he just did not care enough to be bothered with my research (and why would he?). Observers can never fully understand a working environment but should always attempt to track its most meaningful operators, knowing that some are considered more ‘professional’ than others, some might ‘fool’ us along the way and some are always left out. Since this project explores journalistic practices, it is precisely the relativity of journalism professionalism that I am interested in. It is that same relativity that bothers me when it comes to research.<sup>28</sup>

Even though my research deals with the ‘Picturing of the world’s news’, it starts in Israel which is a very particular news story. Early parts of the project are based on the taking of pictures. These took place in Israel. I am originally from Israel

---

<sup>28</sup> To some extent, this project is a contribution to the concept of professionalism previously discussed under the scope of organizational practices (see for that matter the approaches to professionalism in Elliott, P. (1977) Media organizations and occupations: an overview. In: Curran, J., Gurevitch, M. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) *Mass communication and society*. London: the Open University. P. 142- 173; Gallagher, M. (1982) Negotiations of control in media organizations and occupations. In: Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) *Culture, society and the media*. London: Routledge. P. 151-173).

and was living in Israel at that time. Being an Israeli made it easier for me to get to events, but it also meant that I was conversant with and sensitive to local cultural codes. Moreover, although the production process is a circular one with no clear beginning, middle and end, research is clearly different, and one eventually has to start it somewhere. My starting point was Israel. However, this was only to demonstrate the process in full, having Israel as a case study in order to demonstrate the 'local' stages of production, and thus used as a good representative of certain stages in Reuters' pictures production cycle worldwide.

Some of the pictures analyzed in this project might seem, for some, as 'Israeli' and thus politically one-sided given the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This possibility is acknowledged. It was not relevant for this project. Some, I assume, might even connect my Israeli nationality with the pictures' presentation. In fact, as I argue throughout their analysis, it is their 'Israeliness' (as well as the photographer's) that is, in fact, intriguing when it comes to the analysis of news products in an international news organization, considering key figures and their complete cultural identities as meaningful for a better understanding of international media organizations and their lines of production.

Finally, my wife works as a TV producer for Reuters. She started working at the Reuters' local bureau in Jerusalem before this project started, and she is now at the Thomson Reuters' TV desk in London. In many ways, this project was inspired by her personal experiences, and her stories sparked my imagination. As time went by, we often argued (we still do) on the particular characteristics of her profession as a Reuters' journalist in Jerusalem. Gathering a great deal of information on Reuters and its pictures service and 'bragging' with my Reuters knowledge, she often destroyed my theory- forcing me to realize that observing from the outside one can never fully

comprehend what is within. And while having a ‘good’ sense of the process as a whole, she was willing to agree that an outside observer is as good as any. Thanks to her, I found myself in various Reuters' events, memorizing quotes from heads of desks, administrators, photographers, TV crews and others, and was familiar with Reuters' inside stories. Thanks to her I know now what it means (and what it takes) to examine an international news organization from up-close. Some might find this slightly problematic. For me, it is as ethnographic as it can get.



## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

This project is about the production process of news in its photographic form in Thomson Reuters international multimedia news agency. Its theoretical foundations are placed within the political economy of communications and cultural studies. An outline of both commercial photography production and news production is discussed. The discussion then goes back to the *production-of-culture perspective* as was first acknowledged in the 1970's, considers cultural production's institutional contexts and organizational bodies and moves on to its roots within Adorno and Horkheimer's *culture industry* and its recent incarnations. Finally, a specific theoretical framework for the production process of news in its photographic form in Reuters is then addressed and represented as an interesting case of the production of culture, cultures of production and the articulation of a cultural economy.

#### 2.1 A political economy from below or cultural studies from above?

Thirty years ago Raymond Williams addressed ideology and its relation to culture. Cultural practice, discussed Williams, is all 'ideological' just as much as all practices are signifying. This, however, does not mean that cultural production should be described as ideology or directed by one, since such conceptualization leaves out a set of complex and real processes by which both culture and ideology are produced. Hence, it is not their sole existence but rather the ways in which both culture and

ideology are entwined- “to study ‘an ideology’ and what ‘it’ produces is a recognizable form of idealist philosophy. What the cultural sociologist or the cultural historian studies are the social practices and social relations which produce not only ‘a culture’ or ‘an ideology’ but, more significantly, those dynamic actual states and works within which there are not only continuities and persistent determinations but also tensions, conflicts, resolutions and irresolutions, innovations and actual change”.<sup>29</sup>

This relationship between culture and ideology (between culture and power) was addressed by Williams as a call for the study of ‘the political economy of culture’; it represented an important recognition gained both by the supporters of cultural studies and the political economy of communication with the emergence of ‘the cultural turn’ in the 1970’s and 1980’s.<sup>30</sup> But what could be recognised as Williams’ ‘warm hospitality’ would turn into a theoretical turmoil, pitching political economy against cultural studies. It is on the borders of the two, and at the heat (or boredom) of such debate, that this current project begins.<sup>31</sup>

Capturing a wide range of approaches, political economy was recently defined as “...*the study of control and survival in social life*”.<sup>32</sup> While control refers to how society organises itself and regarded as a political process, shaping the relationships within the community, survival is economic and involves the process of production and reproduction, making political economy capable of encompassing “...all human activity and, arguably, all living processes”.<sup>33</sup> Taken within international scales, the political economy of communication was divided by Mosco into three main streams

---

<sup>29</sup> Williams, R. (1981) Culture. London: Fontana. P. 29.

<sup>30</sup> Wittle, A. (2004) Culture, labour and subjectivity: for a political economy from below. In: Capital and class, 84: P. 11-30.

<sup>31</sup> See Grossberg, L. (1995) Cultural studies vs. political economy: is anyone else bored with this debate?. In: Critical studies in mass communication. Vol. 12(1). P. 72-81.

<sup>32</sup> Mosco, V. (2009) The political economy of communication. London: Sage. P. 3. Italics in origin.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. P. 3.

of thought, stemming from three different regions: the North American *Schiller-Smythe tradition*, the European *Garnham, Murdock, and Golding tradition* and a third stemming from what is known as the 'developing world'.<sup>34</sup>

The emergence of the political economy of communication approach, as well as its international influence, can be attributed to Smythe and Schiller. Yet its European representatives managed to establish a more careful and less deterministic approach for the political economy of communication- focusing on the study of communication, the mass media and cultural practices- and thus found more appropriate for this project on several levels.<sup>35</sup>

Cultural production and the cultural industries were therefore considered complex and uncertain by the Europeans (although having the same concern with the industries' expanding power as did their North American colleagues) who realised their ambivalence and considered the flaws within a one-sided approach, as Garnham put it "...The real weakness of the Frankfurt School's original position was not their failure to realize the importance of the base of the economic, but insufficiently to take

---

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Schiller and his attempts to situate communication in a wider political economy context (Schiller, H. (1976) Communication and cultural domination. New York: Sharpe), and later works dealing with transnational corporations (Herman, E. S. & McChesney, R. (2001) The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism. London and New York: Continuum. See Garnham, N. (1979) Contribution to a political economy of mass communication. In: Media, Culture and Society, 1(2): P. 123-146; Garnham, N. (1990) Capitalism and communication: Global culture and the economics of information. London: Sage; Murdock, G. and Golding, P. (1973) For a political economy of mass communications. In: Miliband, R. and Saville, J. (eds.) Socialist Register. London: Merlin Press. P. 205-234; Mie'ge for his view of the articulation of labour process in media production (Mie'ge, B. (1989) The capitalization of cultural production. New York: International general). Although discussed mainly under the internationalization aspects of the cultural industries by Hesmondhalgh, the 'developing world' perspective is also important here as part of the overall theoretical framework, since a major part of the industries' forces of labour are located and operating in what is described as 'developing countries' and essential for an understanding of their daily production processes and routines. In this specific project it is even more relevant, since during the 1970's (and in many ways today as well) the international news agencies played a pivotal role and were assumed responsible for the imbalances of 'global information flow' by UNESCO, and such a distinction is essential to the understanding of their current processes of production (see Mosco, V. (2009) The political economy of communication. London: Sage. See also Mattelart, A. (ed.) (1986) Communicating in popular Nicaragua. New York: International general).

<sup>35</sup> See also Hesmondhalgh's distinction between the *Schiller-McChesney* tradition and the *Cultural industries* tradition (Hesmondhalgh, D. (2002) The cultural industries. London: Sage, P. 32-35).

account of the economically contradictory nature of the process they observed and thus to see the industrialization of culture as unproblematic and irresistible”.<sup>36</sup>

Communications was perceived by the Europeans as organised and strongly situated within a wider capitalist system, and was found essential for the understanding of production and reproduction; it was recognised as “...industrial and commercial organizations which produce and distribute commodities”.<sup>37</sup> But the relationship between cultural production and the valorisation of capital was conceived with contradictions, and as an arena for struggle between capitalist and non-capitalist social formations. In the same way, social class relations were also considered to be essential for the political economy analysis- whether in the form of media owners with those who take part in the labour process, or between cultural commodities and their reception by their audiences. But these were all considered a set of complex and contradictory processes that are not at all governed by a dominant ideology.<sup>38</sup>

Questioning issues of power, ethics and private businesses often circulated under a capitalistic cover while challenging the extent to which powerful businesses serve the interests of the powerful, cultural production certainly has a 'warm spot' within the political economy- especially within the frame of its critical incarnation. Unlike rather conservative approaches to economics, a critical political economy manifested by Garnham and others is considered more holistic and thus appears to capture essential elements that are demonstrated throughout the exploration of the process in the following chapters: it takes into consideration a socio-historical context,

---

<sup>36</sup> Garnham, N. (1979) Contribution to a political economy of mass communication. In: Media, Culture and Society, 1(2): P. 123-146. P. 131.

<sup>37</sup> Murdock, G. and Golding, P. (1973) For a political economy of mass communications. In: Miliband, R. and Saville, J. (eds.) Socialist Register. London: Merlin Press. P. 205-234. P. 205-206; Mosco, V. (2009) The political economy of communication. London: Sage.

<sup>38</sup> Mosco, V. (2009) The political economy of communication. London: Sage. Murdock and Golding actually criticised Adorno for not considering the “...concrete activities of the people who actually make the products the culture industry sells” (cited in Mosco, V. (2009) The political economy of communication. London: Sage. P. 96)

sees the relationship between the free market and the public as complex rather than one-sided and “...goes beyond technical issues of efficiency to engage with basic moral questions of justice, equity and the public good”.<sup>39</sup>

From a different angle Couldry pictured cultural studies not long ago as “...the distinctive approach to culture that results when we stop thinking about culture as particular valued texts and think about it as a broader process in which each person has an equal right to be heard, and each person’s voice and reflections about culture are valuable”.<sup>40</sup> Considering Couldry’s definition with the particular case of private businesses and the articulation of cultural products under capitalism, what troubled Garnham and others was, in fact, that which bothered the supporters of cultural studies, although observed from a different point of view; they considered culture “...in a non-dominative way...”, and recognized it “...as a space of multiple voices and forces”.<sup>41</sup>

Much like critical political economy approaches, culture can be seen from a rather materialistic scope- whether in the form of Marx’s inability to escape the “...cycle of social production and exchange”, within a certain economical umbrella.<sup>42</sup> Or, that cultural production processes are- by definition- material processes not only when considered within the constraints of an economical system of production, for they are “...not simply derived from an otherwise constituted social order but are themselves major elements in its constitution”.<sup>43</sup> Celebrating the every day and having one of its core foundations as culture’s ordinariness, it involves all of us and

---

<sup>39</sup> See Golding, P. and Murdock, G. (2005) Culture, communications and political economy. In: Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) Mass media and society (4<sup>th</sup> edn). London: Arnold/New York: Oxford University Press. P. 60-84. P. 61.

<sup>40</sup> Couldry, N. (2000) Inside culture. London: Sage. P. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. P. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Marx cited. P.12.

<sup>43</sup> And thus culture cannot be explained simply at an economic level (Williams, R. (1981) Culture. London: Fontana. P.12. See also Couldry and his argument as to why the materiality of culture cannot be escaped in Couldry, N. (2000) Inside culture. London: Sage. P. 11-16).

therefore its texts "...should never be seen as isolated entities but always as part of a shared practice of making meanings involving everyone in a particular culture".<sup>44</sup> In that sense, we all contribute to the production of culture and responsible for its organization; we are all active producers of meanings.<sup>45</sup>

During the 1980's and 1990's such universal notions of culture (as with the term itself) were criticised as well (mainly its 'Britishness'). Treating culture as a dominant force repressing other formations of culture rather than the form of the 'ultimate democracy', its ordinariness was then addressed as a matter of local complexity rather than one joined space.<sup>46</sup> It is within those terms, and the ones which seem to fit perfectly to this project, that one of cultural studies' main concerns in relation to social power was mainly focused around the issue of authority: to those who speak and those who listen, to those centred and those marginalised. And it soon became the common arena to discuss the politics of social identity often dealing with questions of class, gender, ethnicity, race and sexuality and their articulation in the form of cultural identity; cultural studies became a secured site to consider differences and struggles.<sup>47</sup>

Cultural studies believes that culture matters, and that people are by no means 'cultural dupes' manipulated by some dominant structure; the approach celebrates the complexities and contradictions between culture, power and people while paying attention to the influence of economic structures. Its supporters argue that there are other forms of power than class, with varying degrees of autonomy. They see

---

<sup>44</sup> Couldry, N. (2000) Inside culture. London: Sage. P. 24.

<sup>45</sup> Williams, R. (1961) The long revolution. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

<sup>46</sup> See for example Ngugi Wa and his explanation of the 'cultural bomb' as the biggest weapon unleashed by imperialism: "The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves." (Ngugi Wa, T. (1986) Decolonising the mind. London: James Curry. P. 3).

<sup>47</sup> Hesmondhalgh, D. (2002) The cultural industries. London: Sage.

problems of gender, nationality and identity as equally important.<sup>48</sup> By contrast, classic political economy argues for a dominant structure of which waged labour and the exchange of commodities is essential for creating the conditions of existence, and the conditions in which cultural studies operate as well. That gender, race or nationality are themselves, as manifested by the supporters of cultural studies, systems of domination, but ones that can never survive on their own outside a capitalist class system of domination, and which their struggles and conflicts can only be measured when placed within a political economic context in which those are constituted by specific cultural practices.<sup>49</sup>

When both approaches are melted together, they can be seen as making substantial contributions to each other's 'black holes', for both seem to be facing a similar challenge: works within cultural studies emphasize the subjective and social constitution of knowledge; that culture is produced by all social actors and not only by the privileged; and propel the importance of everyday life, seeing cultural identity as increasingly affected by gender, race or nationality as well as class. But also consider a socio-historic context in which culture is produced and struggled for. The supporters of political economy, on the other hand, can maintain now that its substance is eventually the lives of ordinary people along their daily confrontations with different institutions and world representations. And its terrain should now become more appealing than ever for 'culturists', attracting cultural studies to address the processes of labour and their institutions, of production and consumption and their high value within a wider framework of the construction of meanings. Thus, in the following chapters, both approaches- whether divorced or reconciled- are used

---

<sup>48</sup> Grossberg, L. (1995) Cultural studies vs. political economy: is anyone else bored with this debate?. In: Critical studies in mass communication. Vol. 12(1). P. 72-81.

<sup>49</sup> Garnham, N. (1995) Political economy and cultural studies: reconciliation or divorce?. In: Critical Studies in Media Communication, Vol. 12 (1) March 1995. P. 60 – 71.

together, rather than the conflicts between them.<sup>50</sup> The particular process analysed later suggests that a dominant structure- whether in the form of the cultural or the political-economic- is always operated and produced from below, and demonstrates how there is “...no view from above, from nowhere”.<sup>51</sup>

The Reuters pictures service belongs to a powerful private organization with a well known profit orientation. In fact, with as much as 95% of its revenues coming from non-media clients from the supply of financial information worldwide, and with reports at the beginning of the 1990's that half of all international financial information was flowing through Reuters technology on a daily basis, this leaves little room for mistakes: Reuters is not only a pivotal player in the business of making money. It is, in many ways, responsible for making money what it is worth.<sup>52</sup>

At the same time, its news pictures are unique: they are products- Reuters' products- and thus produced and distributed to Reuters' clients as part of the overall Reuters' business scheme. But they also belong to an extraordinary system of visual representation- cultural artefacts, signs belonging to the symbolic world and thus loaded with meanings absorbed in the different sites of their production and consumption. Those meanings circulate in a complex system- a ‘circuit of meaning’ responsible for the construction of social practice, enabling us to ‘make sense’ of the world.<sup>53</sup> In that sense, those who put their production in motion are not just Reuters' and part of an organised force of labour, but also males or females, Israelis or Palestinians, religious or secular, and those differences might come across as conflicting cultural identities along the production of news pictures in Reuters. News

---

<sup>50</sup> Garnham, N. (1995) Political economy and cultural studies: reconciliation or divorce?. In: Critical Studies in Media Communication, Vol. 12 (1) March 1995. P. 60 – 71.

<sup>51</sup> Haraway cited in Couldry, N. (2000) Inside culture. London: Sage. P. 14; Wittle, A. (2004) Culture, labour and subjectivity: for a political economy from below. In: Capital and class, 84: P. 11-30.

<sup>52</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>53</sup> See Du Gay, P., Hall, S. Janes, L., Mackay, H. and Negus, K. (1997) Doing cultural studies: the story of the Sony walkman. London: Sage



pictures, for that matter, carry the foot prints of a complex mosaic containing a variety of different ways of lives.

Drawing from the two approaches, the process addressed here takes place within a specific socio-historic context in a particular institution at a particular time at specific places and spaces: its analysis combines an overview of the Thomson Reuters ownership and its recent transformations, its history taken in a broader historical context of international news agencies and the international news flow arena. It is discussed as part of the specific socio-historic structures and transformations of Reuters' pictures service- from the days of its establishment and up to this day- and relates to matters of change and continuity.

At the same time, the process is carefully analysed at different stages and sites (both in their geographical sense and as different stations along the production routine) and key moments: it includes the daily work practices and routines of different 'cultural intermediaries' and symbol creators such as photographers, editors, graphic designers or sales representatives working for the Reuters' picture service, and several symbol creators and intermediaries involved in the process at a specific client's end- the Guardian. It involves the daily work of different departments- the magazine desk or the keyword team, for instance- and it is based on the different positions at different regions (the work of the Jerusalem local bureau and the work of the Singapore global desk, for example), all sharing the daily load of production at Thomson Reuters international multimedia news agency. It addresses the overall effect of competing multimedia international organizations, considers the process of production as an arena for constant conflicts- between, for example, professionalism and nationalism, members of different occupational communities over the different

formations of social power- and recognizes the complexities and challenges international production processes are met with on a daily basis.

In a sense, this analysis is a contribution to an overlooked ground of cultural production and its processes within the field of cultural studies (as opposed to a vast amount of research dealing with cultural texts and their reception). And it contributes to the particularities and subjective complexities affecting media institutions and their industries from within- a perspective often ignored in a ground overloaded with research in which private media organizations are taken as dominated and repressed systems of production, where power is often attributed to ownership. Standing from a certain interdisciplinary point of view, and as a call for additional perspectives as well, the analysis here might demonstrate how theories are not enough on their own right, and that their borders should be questioned and challenged time and time again, for “...the only theory worth having is that which you have to fight off, not that which you speak with profound fluency”.<sup>54</sup>

## **2.2 Commercial photography production**

Taken as a unique technology with an exceptional ability to document reality, photography has become a popular subject for research. Its ability to capture a given moment from the past made it a special tool to preserve history, leading the way to an innovative perception of memory, and helped identify photography as a new art style- when the action of taking a photograph would compensate for the limitations of mankind as expressed in painting and sculpture (the hand and the eye). This placed photography at the centre of an aesthetic debate- whether as high art or as standard

---

<sup>54</sup> Hall, S. (1992) Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies. In: Grossberg, L., Nelson, C. and Treichler, P. (eds.) Cultural studies, New York: Routledge. P. 277-294. P. 280.

art.<sup>55</sup> Its evasive nature and popular status as the highest form of signification led to philosophical questions regarding photography and its essence as a symbol.<sup>56</sup> Its power as an 'authentic' document made way for a cultural debate on the means of perpetuating the relations of power and social control, on classification and on the ability to turn history into human nature.<sup>57</sup>

Inspired by semiotic, psychoanalytical and Marxist approaches, photography has been the centre of focus with regard to its different cultural contexts and to the ideological reality it represents.<sup>58</sup> A cultural starting point has made it possible to observe the unique relationship between photography and reality. Such a perspective was made by stressing the various practices of the acceptance of photography, as well as the ways it influences different aspects of the reader's daily routine. But it was, at the same time, that cultural prism that allowed for a close examination of those hidden and delicate stitches constructed along its production, making the photograph appear as a natural given, a rare document- a footprint leading towards the maintenance of the cultural industries and the industrial production of cultural goods.

There is perhaps too much writing on pictures as texts, or on their reception and their analysis, and too little work done on their production.<sup>59</sup> This scholarly

---

<sup>55</sup> See for instance Baudelaire, C. (1859) *The Salon of 1859*. In: Chrvet, P. E. (1981) (ed.) Baudelaire, Selected writings on Art and Artists. Cambridge: Cambridge University press. P. 285-325 ; Benjamin, W. (1992) *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. In: Illuminations. London: Fontana. P. 211-244.

<sup>56</sup> Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography. London: Fontana; Sontag, S. (1979) On Photography. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

<sup>57</sup> Edwards, E. (1992) Photography and Anthropology: 1860-1920. New Haven: Yale, University Press. See also Sekula, A. (2003) *Reading an archive: Photography between labour and capital*. In: Wells, L. (ed) The photography reader. London: Routledge. P. 443-452; Barthes, R. (1988) *Myth today*. In: Mytologies. London: Fontana. P. 74-117.

<sup>58</sup> Wells, L. (2004) Photography: A Critical Introduction. London: Routledge; Tagg, J. (1988) The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press; Lutz, C. A. & Collins, J. L (1993) Reading National Geographic, Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press; Hardt, H. & Brennen, B. (1999) Picturing the Past: Media, History and Photography. Chicago: Illinois, University Press.

<sup>59</sup> Barthes' 'photographic message' and his philosophic analysis of the press photograph certainly springs to mind here (Barthes, R. (1977) *The Photographic message*. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31).

vacuum was addressed, for example, by the emergence of rather materialistic approaches to the photographic meaning traced back in the 1970's, calling for an inspection of different social institutions that need to be taken into account in addition to semiotic approaches questioning the photographic meaning.<sup>60</sup> But apart from several reminders to the importance of the production processes of commercial photography and its institutions during the following years, the field was barely touched.<sup>61</sup>

One interesting reminder worth mentioning, and although coming from a rather passionate professional's point of view and less from a scientific one, is Harold Evans' "Pictures on a page". With the experience of a reporter, columnist, broadcaster, author, editor of dailies and Sundays and an American tabloid, Evans addresses the practical business of news photography in a book coloured with pictures, graphic designs and text, pointing to the complexities inside the daily routine of photojournalism combined with his own interpretation of 'do's and not do's'. He explains the 'process of the news story' and the importance of catching the 'story telling moment'. In addition, he considers technical difficulties the photographer faces such as photo-angles and lenses, composition, setting up the scene and the risk of polluting it. Here the work of the art director, graphic designer and especially the editor is revealed in its importance- all responsible for the articulation of the news picture from conception to print- alongside the photographer's, as they all collaborate on a daily basis at the different sites of production, and equally capable of injecting the same news photograph with different meanings. Thus, Evans points, for example, to the differences between a simple cropping and a creative one; between the decisive moment, the news or the visual one; the possibilities of enhancing, reducing or

---

<sup>60</sup> Burgin, V. (1982) Thinking photography. London: Macmillan.

<sup>61</sup> See for example Ritchin, F. (1990) In Our own Image: the Coming Revolution in Photography. New York: Aperture.

manipulating the photographic message by, say, juxtaposition in lay-out or the meaning of captions, and how these might contribute or interfere with the visual message.<sup>62</sup>

Evans provides a magnificent glimpse into the heart of the photojournalism industry, perhaps one not at all possible if it not for the eye of an insider. Nonetheless, his work could easily be seen as sharing a common view (especially from the news milieu) of which reality maintains some universal truth that needs to be found, reported and documented in the ‘right’ way (why is it, for example, that “...the close up is economical and it is newsy” more than any other shot?).<sup>63</sup> In addition, his work is mainly concerned with the photograph as a document and its limitations and less with the actual work organization of news photography, and thus can be taken together with research concerned more with photographs as texts (with Barthes’ directions reversed in mind) and less with work.<sup>64</sup> Although such absence seems today to be taken more seriously, when just recently was photography described as “...ingrained in so many processes that a scholar of photography must also be highly informed about industries and institutions that traditionally have had little to do with the study of photography”.<sup>65</sup>

Certainly, and among the very few who actually did give their attention to the subject, Hall’s determinations of news photographs back in the 1970’s stands as an interesting point to begin with. Concerned mostly with the ideological determinants

---

<sup>62</sup> Evans, H. (1997) Pictures on a page: Photo-journalism, graphics and picture editing. London: Pimlico. Some of these issues were already addressed under Barthes’ connotation procedures, but above all see his fascinating contribution to the relationship between the text and the press image (see Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31).

<sup>63</sup> Evans, H. (1997) Pictures on a page: Photo-journalism, graphics and picture editing. London: Pimlico. P. 154.

<sup>64</sup> Barthes, R. (1977) From work to text. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image-Music-Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 155-164.

<sup>65</sup> Rubinstein, D. & Sluis, K. (2008) A life more photographic: Mapping the networked image. In: Photographies, Vol. 1(1) March. P. 9-28. P. 9.

of news pictures using Barthes' connotation and denotation, Hall finds that in the case of news photographs "...the rhetoric of connotation saturates the world of events with ideological meanings...", and at the same time, "...distinguishes or displaces this connection".<sup>66</sup> Media representation in the form of news pictures, in other words, is never naïve but rather highly intentional, systematic and ideological.

Although less concerned with the operational practices of news photographs, Hall's argument was, in many ways, relevant in the 1970's as it is today. And yet a few issues in his work need clarification early at this point. First, even though still addressed today at certain levels, assuming some sort of a 'dominant- meaning patterns' system in the form of some dominant ideology based on the social knowledge of media audiences and media producers seems "too simple", as Schudson put it, for "...it makes of human beliefs and attitudes a more unified, intentional and functional system than they are".<sup>67</sup> Such matters were dealt with in depth long ago and are, for many, that which separates between academic disciplines. Yet when the process of news pictures' production is at stakes, such a distinction is crucial. It stands, for example, as to what distinguishes between Hall's newspapers as a unified system of production, to the newsrooms that are discussed in the following chapters- an arena and the setting of endless struggles and conflicts over different variations of social power and control. And such conflicts occur between and within certain 'occupational communities' (photographers and editors, editors and editors), between different departments (the TV desk and the pictures desk) or different divisions (financial information vs. news) at significant moments in the production cycle of news pictures, and therefore relevant for their final output.

---

<sup>66</sup> Hall, S. (1973) The Determinations of News Photographs. In: Cohen, S. and Yong, J. (eds.) The manufacture of news, Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage. P. 176-190. P. 187.

<sup>67</sup> Schudson, M. (1989) The sociology of news production. In: Media, Culture & Society, 11: 263-282. P. 277.

It is also important, early at this point, to consider the role played by the audience not as a passive unified field of reception, but rather a key player involved in putting the production routine in motion- whether in the form of clients requiring special domestic considerations (pictures containing nudity, for instance, that are not distributed to certain clients in specific local markets who might find such images highly offending), or when, for example, different consumer practices are put into work by producers at different moments of decision making (editors selecting ‘top’ pictures on the basis of their personal taste. These examples and others are discussed in depth in chapters 4 and 5).

Finally, the operational practices of news pictures seem to be taken by Hall as maintained by simply the ‘newspaper’, or ‘journalists’, or ‘editors’. This assumption is, of course, correct and yet slightly misleading. It ignores a far diversified line of labour responsible for the production of news maintained by different cultural intermediaries, both within and outside the newsroom- managers, heads of departments, technical teams, accountants, administrators, graphic designers, sales representatives and so on- who are all equally responsible for the execution of news pictures.

An important contribution, although focused more on style and less on process, is Rosenblum’s “Photographers at work: A sociology of photographic styles”. Using ethnographic research methods (participant observations with the help of interviews) to demonstrate how work organization affects style, Rosenblum connects the types of social structure with photographic styles and addresses the stylistic differences

between news, advertising and fine arts photography to explain “...why each photographic style looks the way it does”.<sup>68</sup>

Yet this research is inadequate. Its main flaws appear early on in Rosenblum’s research methods.<sup>69</sup> Thus, although dealing explicitly with specific patterns of style and their differences (matters of light and lines, content and form, space and place), or addressing the ways these might be read and accepted by spectators, Rosenblum fails to support her conclusions with either textual analysis or audience reception.

Such an additional approach is, of course, necessary for addressing issues of production given the sheer relationship between products and processes. And it is highly relevant since it demonstrates an inevitable relationship between, for example, production and consumption. But it might also contribute to a better understanding of a rather complex relationship between the three styles of photography independently analysed by Rosenblum.<sup>70</sup> As a result of such absence, Rosenblum’s analysis seems a little flat and thus reveals the inadequacy of her research.<sup>71</sup> Her limited methodological approach is shown where she describes how we read news pictures (do we all read pictures the same way?), and in her too general assertions about the particular stylistic features of news, advertising or fine arts pictures.

---

<sup>68</sup> Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of photographic styles. New York/London: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc. P. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Some of the arguments in regards to Rosenblum’s book addressed here were already discussed by Frosh (see Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 52-54).

<sup>70</sup> A textual analysis could, for example, reveal certain similarities between stylistic conventions. The semiotic analysis of the picture taken in the first event in chapter 6, for example, could easily become a significant challenge to Rosenblum’s distinction between *space sensibility* described as one of the key features in fine arts photography as opposed to *place sensibility* often found in news and advertising (see Rosenblum, B. (1978) Style as social process. In: American Sociological Review, Vol. 43 (June). P. 422-438).

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, her description of news pictures style and their reception in page 14. In fact, she implies of such absence of work on production herself when she mentions that “...an analysis of production done in isolation cannot take into account the social limitations that are generated by the distribution system”. Or, that “...an analysis which seeks to understand the look of an object by focusing exclusively on market or audience demands, is also an incomplete analysis”. (Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of photographic styles. New York/London: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc. P. 121).



Second, and although it appears as if Rosenblum feels strongly against certain theoretical distinctions, she does seem to make two highly controversial ones herself, addressing the three forms of style within three worlds of photography as separated, and declaring that her analysis is focused on the ‘rendition of subject matters’ and not with questions of meaning.<sup>72</sup> The decision to make a distinction between the styles of photography appears in the book’s form (three different chapters dealing with news paper photography, advertising and fine arts), but it is far more disturbing in content, as Rosenblum specifically states that she treats “...one particular style of photography as a totality” and treats each style’s socioeconomic system “...as a totality of patterns”.<sup>73</sup> For it appears not to encompass the different styles and their complex relationships with one another.

In fact, it is Rosenblum herself who acknowledges that there is probably some borrowing and exchange between the different styles (although, for some reason, sees news photography as the least penetrable of the three), with one explanation, in her view, being the mobility of photographers among the various worlds of photography. Although such clear borders could be easily challenged in terms of style, this total separation between the genres is hardly the case in their processes of production. While some photojournalists do see themselves as artists, for example, that alone might suggest that these worlds are not simply separated but rather maintained in a complicated system of signification and impact.

Yet, in the case of the Reuters pictures service, this unique relationship comes in many concrete forms along the production of news pictures: Reuters' photographers are strongly affected by the daily work of stock photographers who focus on the

---

<sup>72</sup> In the case of style and content, for example, Rosenblum points that such a distinction might prevent us from “...asking the really important questions...”, and cause for an “...analysis whose fruits are dubious” (Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of photographic styles. New York/London: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc. P. 9.)

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. P. 9.

production of advertising pictures (sending a greater arsenal of pictures from an event, aiming for a bigger market and trying to attract non-news clients as done by Getty; the production of feature stories in addition to hard news ones. See chapter 7, fourth event). At the same time, certain departments, such as the Reuters pictures' magazine desk, develop certain pictures packages for the 'creative use' category in the Reuters archive who appear to be very similar to stock pictures, and are programmed to be reused and thus resold to a variety of clients as stock pictures are addressed to advertisers.

The analysis later on will be very much based on Rosenblum's second diffusion explanation of why these borrowings might occur, when she points to the possibility that "...the stylistic conventions become part of the larger culture...".<sup>74</sup> But unlike Rosenblum's offer that seems too little and appears far too late in her book (p. 112), it is this 'larger culture' that will be addressed from a holistic point of view in the following chapters at key moments and particular sites of news pictures' production in Reuters.

In that sense, the decision to exclude the matter of meaning from her analysis seems obscure just as much. When Rosenblum identifies the connection between pictures and 'stories', for example, she seems to ignore the fact that the relationship between their styles is inevitable. Stories are not a natural given and thus naïve but rather carefully picked, addressed in particular ways by different operators in specific institutions at different sites at particular moments in their production (whether as news pictures, advertising or the arts). Their selection may very well be the outcome of conflict and relations of power- between photographers and editors, between departments, institutions, identities. Their styles cannot be surgically separated from

---

<sup>74</sup> See Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of photographic styles. New York/London: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc. P. 9. See Rosenblum's discussion on the separation between style and content. P. 112.

their political circulation and analysed on their own right, for they are the outcome of such politics and maintain the footprints of the historical and cultural contexts in which they were produced. Considering the production processes of all pictures, these questions of meaning and reason must be addressed carefully, as Frosh put it, for they “...concern the relationship between production processes, symbolic forms and ideologies; questions which point, yet again, to the broader realm of culture, and whose avoidance makes it impossible for Rosenblum to address the overall social, ideological and cultural functions of news, advertising and art photography”.<sup>75</sup>

Taking news photography in its totality, an additional point to make refers to Rosenblum’s idea of news photography’s style as the sole outcome of the work organization, ignoring the “...historical or cultural explication of the styles and their development, the insensitivity to nuance and complexity...”.<sup>76</sup> While news pictures are produced in different news organizations (but not just) and thus the outcome of a certain system of commercial and closed production (although, in many cases, some are contributed by ‘amateurs’), and even though similar views were raised by news scholars as well, the production of news pictures in this current project considers their production processes as open rather than closed.<sup>77</sup>

As a result, it is therefore based on the complex relationship between news organizations and how these might affect the production process (competing news papers, for instance). And it focuses on a specific news organization- an international news agency- and how it operates daily, both as one of the main suppliers of news information worldwide, but also as a particular player within a complex arena

---

<sup>75</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 53.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> See Tuchman, G. (1978) Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality. New York: Free Press. See also Tuchman's idea of typifications and categorizations of events-as-news by the ways they happen and their ramifications for the organization of work (Tuchman, G. (1973) Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected. In: American Journal of sociology, 79(1). P. 110-131).

alongside a great variety of news platforms (local and international, websites or news papers). It is also worth mentioning that news photographers and picture editors are not only 'news people', but hold complex identities that often come into play in the form of constant conflicts throughout their daily production routines- a photographer's national identity working for an international news agency, for instance- and are thus significant in order to understand the daily production processes of news in its photographic form.

Finally, it is precisely Rosenblum's idea of newsworthiness taken as a natural given- when some events tend to be simply 'newsworthy' (p. 13) - which is unpacked in the following chapters. In that sense, those whose daily work is examined here are not considered simply as maintaining a certain 'news mood' (p. 14), and news is certainly not regarded here simply as 'real life events' (p. 55), but rather the result of a complex system of cultural production shared daily by news organizations, their operators, their products, their clients and their audiences- responsible for the production of a cultural economy and the outcome of one.<sup>78</sup>

In Lutz and Collins' "Reading national geographic" pictures are taken as complex documents which might "...reinforce or challenge shared understandings of cultural difference".<sup>79</sup> Focusing on National Geographic's pictures, their processes of production and practices of reception, the authors examine NG's (National Geographic) contribution to the promulgation of images of the world outside the USA- with the formation of identity taken as one drawing from images of others.<sup>80</sup> "Cultural products" observe Lutz and Collins, "have complex production sites; they

---

<sup>78</sup> It is, of course, important to remember that Rosenblum's research is outdated. It was written, for example, before the transition from analogue to digital, which clearly had a huge impact on the production processes of pictures, their distribution and consumption, different personnel and their daily jobs, the use of computers and software (like Photoshop).

<sup>79</sup> Lutz, C. A. & Collins, J. L. (1993) Reading National geographic. Chicago and London: University of Chicago press. P. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

often code ambiguity; they are rarely accepted at face value but are read in complicated and often unanticipated ways".<sup>81</sup>

Placing NG's images in specific historical and cultural contexts found essential for their meaning, and through which a unique insight into the process where those images are formed, selected and controlled, purveyed and read, is acquired, Lutz and Collins operate a tripartite methodological approach: examine practices of production, analysing a sample of images and observing the practices through which they are read. Especially interesting is their examination of the production process inside 'the great machinery of desire', taking NG's photographs not as a "...standardized product of an omniscient industry", but rather "...generated through a series of complex, and at times contestatory, production practices".<sup>82</sup>

Lutz and Collins' research is useful as they attempt to consider the production processes of pictures. The processes of execution, for instance, are no more completely caged in a closed and total Rosenblumian system of production- whether in advertising, news or the arts ("...it is not journalism, it is not an art magazine" as was stated by one editor, "it is story telling").<sup>83</sup> While most of NG's photographers had previously been photojournalists, and with its pictures packaged and distributed to readers as 'truth found in the field', photography in NG is placed by Lutz and Collins between art photography and photojournalism. At the same time, its system of production is constrained and captured by an environment maintained by advertising photography, and thus "...must often respond to trends that advertising sets".<sup>84</sup>

However, their analysis, as Frosh argues, does give a sense of linearity- as if the process itself begins with the pictures' conception as an idea, which then turns into

---

<sup>81</sup> Lutz, C. A. & Collins, J. L. (1993) Reading National geographic. Chicago and London: University of Chicago press. P.11.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. P. 48.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. P. 56.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. P. 84.

text and ends with their reading.<sup>85</sup> Even though a commercial production process of pictures does encounter certain moments of linearity- an editor having the final word in the photo selection process, for instance- it is, in fact, more of a circular one. For example, pictures received with 'good reviews' are injected back to the system of production as the seeds for future projects. And in certain cases, as in the Reuters pictures service, data regarding the success or failure of pictures as opposed to its competitors is gathered by specific personnel on a daily basis and then analyzed for future improvements as well.

In addition, and probably since their research was mainly conducted during the late 1980's and early 1990's, National Geographic is treated by Lutz and Collins as somehow placed in a 'secured bubble'- free from competition and the conditions dictated by the free market- and maintained within what they describe as the 'confidence of class'.<sup>86</sup> With the rise of the internet and social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, it would have been interesting to see what effects these have on the process, now that everyone is a photographer and 'exotic' places have become 'closer' than ever. In that sense, it is also important to remember the constraints dictated by the international market and how it affects the daily production process of NG's images- how it is that a single picture appeals to all audiences.<sup>87</sup> Finally, their analysis of marketing is relatively brief and insufficient, and ignores important questions such as the type of NG's clients, diversity of products and markets, the entire process of distribution and its reasons.

---

<sup>85</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg.

<sup>86</sup> An expression used by the authors to describe the warm hospitality they were given. This was explained by placing NG in a secured status, having no fear from competition.

<sup>87</sup> "We're not in the business of offending people" said one from the captioning department while describing the process of verification. But how it is that such careful conceptualization is embedded within the daily process itself is an important question to consider- especially when processes of production are maintained by international institutions such as National Geographic- and one which unfortunately is absent from their analysis. (Lutz, C. A. & Collins, J. L. (1993) Reading National geographic. Chicago and London: University of Chicago press. P. 81.)

Frosh's "The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry" provides an insight of the production of stock images within 'the visual content industry', as it is focused on "...the making of ordinary, mass-produced, photographic images".<sup>88</sup> Taking a somewhat of an unorthodox approach in the analysis of the production process of stock photography, and considering photography both as product and representation, Frosh illuminates a number of key terms emerging from the stock industry- success, creativity, meaning, genre, concept and catalogue- as he tries to "...distinguish 'moments' in the circuit of culture without stripping them of their multiple practical and discursive interconnections, putting into play the dual (sociological and semiotic) focus on stock photography's 'cultural economy' and its 'mode of signification'".<sup>89</sup> Trying to illuminate "...the production of photographic meaning and the meaning of photographic production", Frosh bases his findings on two separate but related objects of analysis: stock photographic production procedures, and categories of stock photography images.<sup>90</sup>

This was certainly a major step forward, especially with the importance given by Frosh to professional photographs as products and the connection between stock photography production to cultural production processes. Frosh's attempt is also notable given his concern with the '*privileged complexity of cultural production*' manifested both in his dual methodological approach (interpretive interviews and the analysis of image catalogues, both demonstrating the connection between moments of image-production, distribution and circulation), and by placing these unique moments

---

<sup>88</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 1.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. P. 57.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. P. 8. Given the huge size of each catalogue, a key category of images-'romantic couples'- was selected and analysed based on semiotic and post-structuralist approaches in terms of content, style and textual placement.

of production in the political economy of communication and cultural studies, where they belong.<sup>91</sup>

Frosh's work does not investigate audience reception of stock images. But unlike Frosh's experience, which was focused on the stock industry and thus at somewhat of an amorphous industry, this project is based on a very 'real' one. In addition, as Frosh was struggling to gain access and was, in many cases, denied one from some of the larger stock agencies (what he describes under the limitations of his project as the result of "...secrecy, verging on paranoia, of many in the industry itself"), this project was very much based on the privilege of getting access.<sup>92</sup>

These two minor and yet important differences between these two projects are mainly reflected in methodology and thus in the overall conclusions: based on the privilege of 'getting inside' the daily production process of news pictures in Reuters, I was able to conduct participant observations in addition to in-depth interviews which took place at different sites of the production of pictures in several countries during a number of years. Although, in many ways, this was very hard to produce logistically, it turned out to be extremely useful in terms of research, as I was able to support my arguments with substantial evidence from the field.

My advantage in going to the source of pictures meant that I was able to see the pictures in their most 'raw' form (right after they were taken by the photographer in the field) and thus compare them with their 'final' form when published on the front page of one of Reuters' clients the next day. This was also why I could easily pick a certain event to analyse even though its pictures were eventually left out of distribution- an analysis which obviously is important to the conceptualization of the process just as much. Such access eventually made the process of picking a sample

---

<sup>91</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P.25. Italics in origin.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. P. 23.



for my historical (and textual) analysis of the pictures much easier than having to cope with catalogues.

In fact, based on findings from observations of the complete process supported with an analysis of significant events and their coverage, the production process of news pictures in Reuters, I would argue, appears to be far less privileged than assumed by Frosh (although very similar in its complexity). For, as shall be demonstrated later on, the audience here appears to be taking a substantial part in the different stages of production at meaningful moments and sites- with producers putting their consumer practices to work, for example- rather than being first exposed to the end product in the form of a ‘sealed and finalised envelope’.<sup>93</sup> Thus, with the privilege of access and having Thomson Reuters as a ‘real’ concrete organization (unlike the stock industry), I was able to circle the overall production process of news pictures in Reuters and not ‘compromise’ with the illumination of key concepts. This, as I hope to achieve in the following chapters, will be a certain contribution to the production process of news in its photographic form, and to the overall production processes of visual phenomena.

Finally, another work worth considering is Gürsel’s “The image industry: The work of international news photographs in the age of digital reproduction”.<sup>94</sup> Focusing an “anthropological eye”, Gürsel addresses news images as formative fictions being “...constructed representations that reflect current events yet simultaneously shape ways of imagining the world and political possibilities within it”, when those fictions

---

<sup>93</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 12.

<sup>94</sup> Gürsel, Z. D. (2007) The Image industry: The work of international news photographs in the age of digital reproduction. PhD, Berkley: University of California. It has come to my attention that Gürsel’s dissertation is going through major revisions and should be published as a book in the near future. My arguments here are based on both chapters from her original dissertation (specifically her introduction chapter in which she explains her view of formative fictions as well as the one based on her observations in the US Newstime and in the Visa Pour L’image festival in France) and those already revised (in which she analysed her observations in both GVI and AFP).

are taken as cultural products which “...circulate as commodities but also as visual truth-claims about populations and historical events”.<sup>95</sup>

Examined throughout a two-year field work in key nodal points of production, distribution and circulation in New York and Paris, data on the labour processes involved in the production, reproduction and circulation of international news images was gathered by Gürsel from five different sources, including the Paris headquarters of the French international wire service (AFP). These sources, described by Gürsel as the complete “...social worlds of the labour behind news images”, are then discussed in an attempt to explain how international news photographs are produced; how the digital turn changed both the dynamics of exchange and the exchange partners in the international news photography network; how various communities are imagined by the individuals involved in production and circulation of the images and how the attitudes and practices of individuals within the photography network are shaped by the structures in which they operate.<sup>96</sup>

Gürsel’s work provides valuable information on the production process of news images, especially of the Iraq war, as she explores the daily routine of various pictures’ departments. Describing a particular ‘mood’ in the newsroom at times of a specific conflict, she illuminates important moments in the production of news images. Gürsel writes well and identifies key concepts. She sees *futurepast images* as images containing ‘moments’ from the past, yet ones chosen to be relevant for the future in terms of their saleability. As news pictures have to be sold and thus require specific characteristics in their moments of execution in order to become available for future sales as well, Gürsel also points to the circularity of the production process of news images, as she observes that “...the tremendous challenge facing image-brokers in

---

<sup>95</sup> Gürsel, Z. D. (2007) The Image industry: The work of international news photographs in the age of digital reproduction. PhD, Berkley: University of California. P. 1.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. P. 1.

various capacities as they make decisions today is to accurately imagine themselves into the future and making sure that what the world will want to see tomorrow has been anticipated and photographers have been enabled to capture it visually today. They need to ensure that not only have they covered the here and now, but that they will also have covered the *futurepast*<sup>97</sup>.

Yet there are problems with her work. Methodologically, although Gürsel conducted observations of the production of news pictures, her analysis does not involve audience reception and has very little textual analysis. While textual analysis does seem appropriate when the text's production routine is in question, the absence of some audience reception analysis seems far more disturbing in her case, and there was certainly a place to consider the different roles played by the audience of consumers (or, at least, acknowledge in the case of its absence).

Ignoring both angles eventually leads Gürsel to address the photography department of AFP, the editorial offices of US news magazines and the annual photojournalism festival as the only "...social worlds of the labour behind news".<sup>98</sup> Such misunderstanding leads to incorrect assumptions about how news images are employed to mobilize diverse populations in a multitude of ways (P. 9); how 'we' are used to images putting us in relation to people (P. 3, are we all used to certain images the same way, if at all?), or how photographs of the world form how certain geographies and populations are imagined by others (P. 33) seem flat and thus mere generalizations.

A second more fundamental reservation is that she gives no thought in any of the organizations observed to the socio- historic and cultural contexts of production. Both AFP and US news time are private organizations with a well known profit

---

<sup>97</sup> Gürsel, Z. D. (2007) The Image industry: The work of international news photographs in the age of digital reproduction. PhD, Berkley: University of California. P. 83. Italics in origin.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. P.1

orientation. Their products are therefore aimed at specific audiences and clients under stressful competitive environments in particular moments, and their consumption is crucial for their survival. This, of course, has a huge impact on the production processes of news pictures as well as on their final outcome, and it also indicates how such processes are open- influenced by and affecting competing parallel systems of manufacturing. Yet, instead of recognising such a complex open system of production, Gürsel addresses the production of news images as a closed totality.

It means that she privatizes the choices; she focuses mainly on “image brokers” and their individual ‘imagination’ and less on their day-to- day operations as part of an organization. While ‘individuality’ of those who operate in the production line on a daily basis is, of course, relevant to the production of news pictures (their conflicting cultural identities), it is important to consider that they hold concrete organizational identities, and that positions, departments and organizations can better be understood as some arenas in which organizational status is struggled over. In that sense, it would be more accurate to consider production sites of news pictures not as some ‘clean’ romantic spaces in which news pictures are ‘imagined’ and conceived, but rather as ‘filthy’ and concrete places in which news pictures and their production are the outcome of an everlasting battle over social power and control.

It is mainly for these issues that Gürsel’s attempt is eventually left on a superficial level and is thus an insufficient analysis in terms of production: focusing mainly on moments within the daily routine in the offices of various pictures departments, she fails to consider the importance of photographers in the field (although recognised in their importance by some of her interviewees, “the photographer is the first editor. We’re the second editor” as one of GVI’s editors

suggested).<sup>99</sup> Addressing the daily work of the different editors she fails to address the complexity of operations in (and aimed for) an international market (such is the case, for instance, when she describes how an editor simply ‘pushes’ the pictures to clients without paying any attention to the international market’s diverse nature of consumption, and that which affects the entire process of distribution).

In that sense, her notion of international news pictures seems odd as well (what are, for that matter, those *international* news pictures and in what ways are those different from any other news pictures? What is this world of which they are images of (P. 29), and whose world is it?). At the same time, and even though she does recognize the daily routine in the production of news pictures (one “routinizing the unexpected” certainly springs to mind here) and addresses issues that could easily fall within matters of agenda setting (her description, for example, of stories dominating others in AFP, p. 134), the discourse of news production appears to be missing both from her theoretical foundations and her overall analysis. Since, in one way or another, news pictures are news products, it is therefore necessary to address them as the outcome of the production processes of news.

### 2.3 News production

News has long been seen as more than information. Max Weber said that journalists could be better understood as ‘professional politicians’, and that news organizations should be recognized as political clubs.<sup>100</sup> But it is often common to

---

<sup>99</sup> Gürsel, Z. D. (2007) The Image industry: The work of international news photographs in the age of digital reproduction. PhD, Berkley: University of California. P. 114.

<sup>100</sup> See Tuchman, G. (1991) Media institutions: Qualitative methods in the study of news. In: Jensen, K. B. and Jankowski, N. W. (eds.) A hand book of qualitative methodologies for mass communication research. London and New York: Routledge. P. 79-92.

place one of the first influential formal studies of news production in the early 1950's of American 'gatekeepers'.<sup>101</sup>

Borrowing the term 'gate keeping' from social psychology and applying it to journalism, it was White who was first to investigate how a wire editor of a small morning news paper (known as 'Mr. Gates') rejected or accepted stories for print in the news paper.<sup>102</sup> During a period of one week, White looked at every piece of wire copy from the editor addressed as the 'gatekeeper', as well as the reasons for those eventually rejected (apparently only several cases were rejected given Gates' political views). These findings eventually led him to conclude that the gate keeper "...plays a most important role as the terminal 'gate' in the complex process of communication", and that by studying the reasons for rejecting certain news stories "...we see how subjective, how based on the 'gatekeeper's' own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations the communication of 'news' really is".<sup>103</sup>

'Gate keeping' is still used as a concept today; it is used to explain the relationship between news organizations and their products.<sup>104</sup> In many ways, it suggests how important the professional roles played by journalists on a daily basis really are for the conceptualization of news production. At the same time, it also implies of some greater schemes responsible for putting news organizations in motion which might affect the production of news just as much. In fact, it is these two separated and yet interrelated paths of news production that lie at the core of news production scholarship. They map the two main paths of news research in the

---

<sup>101</sup> See Tuchman, G. (1991) Media institutions: Qualitative methods in the study of news. In: Jensen, K. B. and Jankowski, N. W. (eds.) A hand book of qualitative methodologies for mass communication research. London and New York: Routledge. P. 79-92.

<sup>102</sup> White, D. M. (1950) The Gatekeeper: A case study in the selection of news. In: Journalism Quarterly, 27: P. 383-390.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. P. 390.

<sup>104</sup> Schudson, M. (2005) Four approaches to the sociology of news. In Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) Mass media and society (4<sup>th</sup> edition). London: Hodder Arnold. P. 172-197.

following years under the social organization of news work on the one hand, and how news making (and news organizations) is pressured by political, economic or cultural contexts on the other.

One approach has been the daily practices of news making- either as a form of social production of 'reality' (often discussed within the reporters-officials relationship framework and less on the reporters-editors one), or as a product manufactured by the news organization and thus affected by technical constraints dictated by the organization itself. Examining the nature of news events, for example, Molotch and Lester argued for the existence of world events reported in news as the outcome of practical purposes which they serve rather than 'real' events worth covering. Creating a typology of news stories based on their occurrences and the practices of the news stories promoters, assemblers and consumers, they saw the media as reflecting "...not a world out there, but the practices of those who have the power to determine the experiences of others".<sup>105</sup>

In another influential study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek and Time conducted by Gans, news was mainly explained by the powerful role of news sources for supplying information and exert pressure, the efficiency of the news work organization and routine, and eventually as produced in certain ways in order to create and maintain an audience.<sup>106</sup> And in another ethnographic research conducted in a Californian news paper, Fishman identified how the world is

---

<sup>105</sup> Molotch, H. & Lester, M. (1974) News as purposive behaviour: on the strategic use of routine events, accidents and scandals. In: Tumber, H. (ed) (1999) News: A Reader. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P. 37-49. P. 46.

<sup>106</sup> Gans, H. (1979) Deciding what's news: a study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek and Time. New York: Pantheon.

bureaucratically organised for journalists, enabling the reporter to detect stories and events, thus making the largest share of news coming from government officials.<sup>107</sup>

Addressing news as the by product of the news work organization, Epstein emphasised different technical organizational and economic requirements on American television network news production; he argued that news is the product of the news organization while considering the different stages along the selection, coverage and reformulation of events to be related to organizational needs.<sup>108</sup> And Tuchman maintained that news professionalism "...serves organizational interests by reaffirming the institutional processes in which newswork is embedded".<sup>109</sup> The daily coverage of events-as-news required a routine by Tuchman and her colleagues, for having to capture a tiny fraction of activities to report on a daily basis given the organizational constraints, journalists "...must routinize their task in order to make it manageable".<sup>110</sup>

Such a perspective underestimates macro forces and external pressuring contexts working on journalists, their sources and the organizations in which they operate. Addressing news making within a closed and total system of production ignores the importance of media ownership. It also fails to address the political context, and while journalists are socialised into the routines and values of their occupation, it is still important who these journalists are, where they come from and what cultural identities they have. The newsroom is a place in which news is produced, but it might also turn into an arena in which social power is fought for,

---

<sup>107</sup> The origins of news ideology, claimed Fishman, were to be "... traced to the practicalities of news work imposed by the existing structure of news organizations in [this] society" (Fishman, M. (1990/1980) Manufacturing the news. Austin: University of Texas press. P. 18).

<sup>108</sup> See Epstein, E. J. (1973) News from nowhere. New York: Random house.

<sup>109</sup> Tuchman, G. (1978) Making news: a study in the construction of reality. New York: Free press. P. 12.

<sup>110</sup> Gans, H. (1979) Deciding what's news: a study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek and Time. New York: Pantheon. P. 1. See also Tuchman, G. (1973) Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected. In: American Journal of sociology, 79(1). P. 110-131.



making the production of news the outcome of struggle rather than the result of common interest of those who seem, at moments, to share an organizational identity.

From a macro point of view, interesting attempts have been made in order to place news making in broader political, economic or cultural contexts. Thus, fewer corporations, for instance, were said to have control on more of the American news media. And with only a few parent firms dominating all American mass media, their news subsidiaries were said to be pushed to ‘cross’ an ethical line by promoting the needs of their owning corporations.<sup>111</sup> And from a European angle, research has shown that the difference between quality and popular journalism in Britain derives from economic pressures. Thus, the publishers of quality papers may not maximize their reach because larger, poorer audiences jeopardize their advertising value. At the same time, publishers of popular newspapers have to maximize their circulation and aim for undifferentiated audiences by promoting material with a universal appeal.<sup>112</sup> They have a different advertising base.

News, said Herman and Chomsky, is produced by a small number of private corporations, dependant on advertising and on government officials for its sources.<sup>113</sup> Although they may expose corruption, the press played an indispensable role in legitimating the distribution of power, when “...the basic definition of the situation which underpins the news reporting of political events, very largely *coincides* with the definition provided by the legitimated power holders”.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> Bagdikian, B. (2000) The media monopoly. (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Boston: Beacon Press.

<sup>112</sup> Curran, J., Douglas, A. and Whannel, G. (1980) The political economy of the human-interest story. In Smith, A. (ed.) Newspapers and democracy. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. P. 288-342.

<sup>113</sup> See Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda model in Herman, E. S. and Chomsky, N. (1988) Manufacturing consent. New York: Pantheon.

<sup>114</sup> Murdock, G. (1973) Political deviance: The press presentation of a militant mass demonstration. In Cohen, S. and Young, J. (eds.) The manufacture of news: a reader. Beverly Hills: Sage. P. 156-175. P. 158. Italics in origin.

However, such approaches fail to explain how news content can become critical of the ownership of corporations, of political scandals, of conflicts. Dreier, for instance, pointed out that mass media institutions have an organizational logic of their own, explaining how the reasons and conditions in which the media impinge on the ideological hegemony of the capitalist class are, in fact, far more complex. The news media, Dreier says, are not passive instruments, because "...the ability of the capitalist class to impose its ideological hegemony- both on itself and on subordinate groups- is limited by the indeterminateness of social forces, including those forces which provide the mass media with a degree of independence"; the capitalist class faces the threat of challenge from below.<sup>115</sup>

The conceptualization of some unified macro system from up above has also been challenged. Much research has assumed that within liberal democracies the relationship between the media and the state is the same. However, Hallin and Mancini found that in certain countries in southern Europe news papers were highly politicised with strong links to political parties and to the state. In northern and central European democracies, journalism was found to be more separated from political parties- placed within their corporatist model, and a liberal model, where the role of the state is more limited, was found to be more extreme in USA than in the UK or Canada.<sup>116</sup> Democracies in the West, claimed Hallin and Mancini, developed a number of stable systems of relationship between media and politics.<sup>117</sup>

In the same way, news is constructed within the 'cultural air' that we breathe and which "...ruling groups and institutions create, but it is in part one in whose

---

<sup>115</sup> Dreier, P. (1982) Capitalists vs. the media: an analysis of an ideological mobilization among business leaders. In: Media, Culture and Society, 4. P. 111-132. P. 129.

<sup>116</sup> See Hallin, D. C. and Mancini, P. (2005) Comparing media systems. In: Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) Mass media and society (4<sup>th</sup> edition). London: Hodder Arnold. P.215-233.

<sup>117</sup> Schudson, M. (2005) Four approaches to the sociology of news. In: Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) Mass media and society (4<sup>th</sup> edition). London: Hodder Arnold. P. 172-197.

social context their own establishment takes place”.<sup>118</sup> But the effects of such culture appear to vary as well. Zandberg and Neiger examined the role played by the Israeli media during the first days of the Al-Aksa Intifada in early October 2000. Focusing on the coverage of violent clashes between the police and Israel’s Arab citizens, they found that when those events were perceived as threatening to the very existence of the state, journalists’ national identity dominated their professional one.<sup>119</sup>

Yet when news making is considered within broader economic, political or cultural contexts, it is still insufficient. Such a macro prism often fails to consider those delicate and often unseen relationships taking place within and outside the news organization- between different ‘professionals’, departments (TV, pictures or text), organizations (local news papers and international news agencies) and industries.

Now there are many new blends of ownership and control of state and commercial corporations who “...do not have names, let alone theories to explain them”.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, with new technologies, news is mainly produced and distributed via computers and sophisticated software; news making becomes more and more complicated to explore, even when examined in qualitative research methods, and much work remains to be done. Whenever access is granted, combining a holistic scope is essential for the study of news making. Failing to apply a combination of approaches- both on the macro and micro levels of news making- would necessarily lead to a simplistic and insufficient explanation of newsworthiness' complex web of operations and its relationship with the cultural economy it represents, and through which it is manufactured.

---

<sup>118</sup> Schudson, M. (2005) Four approaches to the sociology of news. In: Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) Mass media and society (4<sup>th</sup> edition). London: Hodder Arnold. P. 172-197. P. 189.

<sup>119</sup> Zandberg, E. and Neiger, M. (2005) Between the nation and the profession: journalists as members of contradicting communities. In: Media, Culture and Society, Vol. 27(1): P. 131-141.

<sup>120</sup> Schudson, M. (2005) Four approaches to the sociology of news. In Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) Mass media and society (4<sup>th</sup> edition). London: Hodder Arnold p. 172-197. P. 176.

## 2.4 The production of culture perspective and beyond

Even though the industrialization of culture was already acknowledged for quite some time (Hall and Williams certainly spring to mind here), a production-of-culture-perspective per se was actually recognized in the mid 1970's.<sup>121</sup> Trying to address the relationship between culture and social structure, Peterson suggested his perspective as the means of "...turning attention from the global corpus of habitual culture and focusing instead on the processes by which elements of culture are fabricated in those milieus where symbol-system production is most self-consciously the center of activity".<sup>122</sup>

Realizing the relationship between production and consumption, and that such structuring is subject to different variations over time, Peterson made a distinction between two possible modes of analysis: a synchronic one involving a comparative study of the production process from 'creation' to consumption, in which it would be important to observe issues of 'originality' and 'innovation'; the different means of financing production; the impact of technology; the social organization of production; the contexts in which culture products are used; the impact of consumers on the production process and others. And a diachronic one concerning the different patterns in which the different forms of culture change over time; addressing whether different cycles of production are comparable; if and how they may become parallel over time; what may propel such a production cycle and whether it is a closed and internal one or rather based on its relationship with society.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>121</sup> See Hall, S. (1973) *The Determinations of News Photographs*. In: Cohen, S. and Yong, J. (eds.) *The manufacture of news*. Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage. P. 176-190; Williams, R. (1974) *Television, Technology and Cultural Form*. London: Fontana.

<sup>122</sup> Peterson, R. A. (1976) *The production of culture*. Beverly Hills/London: Sage Publications. P. 10.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

Dimaggio and Hirsch tried to “...examine and compare the diverse range of situations in which works of art are conceived, sketched, actualized, and enjoyed-processes which collectively will be termed the production of art”.<sup>124</sup> Drawing on the industrial sociology and that of the professions, they examined the functions, roles, careers, the industries, processes and the complex interrelations among culture producing institutions. Discussing the functions of creation, entrepreneurship and patronage, promotion and consumption, they tried to gain a better understanding of how essential those functions are for the transformation of a work of art “...from a conception into a commodity”.<sup>125</sup>

Kadushin's “Networks and circles in the production of culture” looked at the circular structures of cultural production. Kadushin linked different social units with a relatively low visibility (members in such a network are not aware of all its members and can only ‘see’ their immediate surrounding contacts).<sup>126</sup> Circles of production, Kadushin said, have no boundaries; they lack specific norms about structure or leadership, membership or interrelationships between members and a particular goal or purpose. Since they are not instituted, such circles tend to “...follow other more formal relations”, and all are a part of an *external economy industry*, having its production line include different factors available only outside of the individual production organization.<sup>127</sup>

Peterson's perspective was clearly a breakthrough (although limited by the sociological perspective of its time in which cultural texts were determined by

---

<sup>124</sup> Dimaggio, P. and Hirsch, P. M. (1976) Production organizations in the arts. In: Peterson, R. A. (ed) The production of culture. Beverly Hills/London: Sage Publications. P. 73-91. P. 74.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. P. 75.

<sup>126</sup> What he described as a *macro-phenomenon* (Kadushin, C. (1976) Networks and circles in the production of culture. In : Peterson, R. A. (ed) The production of culture. Beverly Hills/London: Sage Publications. P. 107-123).

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. P. 110.

organizational factors).<sup>128</sup> Production processes are always in motion, forever open and thus constantly influenced by competing processes from a variety of areas and fields, locations and identities, and always in dialogue with their audiences- as the consumers of cultural goods, but also as pivotal players at significant moments of production.

These processes should also be examined within their particular organizational bodies, as well as under broader industrial forces, and explored between the webs of their micro connections and modes of operations apart from their macro structures. Some are delicate and formal (the relationship, for example, between an editor and a photographer), others informal (different friendships within an institution and between members of competing ones) relations between the different members of production. In addition, there are also linear sets of connections through which different forms of power and authority are exercised at particular moments and sites in such processes (a chief editor ordering a photographer to cover a certain event in a certain way, a final decision to ‘spike’ a picture taken by an Editor in Charge).<sup>129</sup>

Finally, identifies Hesmondhalgh, the production of culture perspective seems to come in the form of ‘isolated systems’ and insufficient unless “...synthesized into a more comprehensive vision of how cultural production and consumption fit into wider economic political and cultural contexts...”.<sup>130</sup> It requires focus on the cultural

---

<sup>128</sup> It helped, for instance, to consider creativity now as the result of a complex division of labor (Hesmondhalgh, D. (2002) *The cultural industries*. London: Sage). See also Frosh's observation on the production of culture perspective in Frosh, P. (2003) *The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry*. London: Berg. Such 'organizational factors' were clearly embraced by Rosenblum and Tuchman (see Rosenblum, B. (1978) *Photographers at work: A sociology of photographic styles*. New York/London: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc; Tuchman, G. (1978) *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: Free Press).

<sup>129</sup> Spike/unspike/spikes are the terms used for "killing a picture" (or bringing one back to life by unspiking it) by different Reuters pictures' practitioners at different moments and sites of production.

<sup>130</sup> Hesmondhalgh, D. (2002) *The cultural industries*. London: Sage. P. 36.

institutions, their role as part of giant corporate industries and the industrialization aspects of cultural production.<sup>131</sup>

## **2.5 Media institutions and the organization of cultural production**

Media organizations and their practitioners have some control over the processes of communication in society. Yet there is not enough work on the ways particular media are organised and of the actual roles and functions of those who put them in motion (this scholarly vacuum was already reminded in the late 1970's).<sup>132</sup> A few decades later the situation remains the same, when the 'mystique and secrecy' which media organizations surround themselves with is found relevant today as it did before. And major difficulties in gaining access into these organizations and their lines of production still matter today as they did in the past.<sup>133</sup>

What power the media exercise and who controls it within them remains a key question. And dispute about who hold such powers- media owners, the media professionals or the socio-political environments and their constraints- has not yet been resolved.<sup>134</sup> A possible explanation to such a dispute may come across in the juxtaposition and interplay of two approaches to organizational power and control positioned at two different levels of observation: one considering the issues of ownership and control 'downwards', and the other considering its 'unknown' practitioners, their daily routines and their external constraints 'upwards'.

---

<sup>131</sup> Hesmondhalgh, D. (2002) The cultural industries. London: Sage.

<sup>132</sup> Elliott, P. (1977) Media organizations and occupations: an overview. In: Curran, J., Gurevitch, M. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) Mass communication and society. London: the Open University. P. 142- 173.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (1982) Culture, society and the media. London: Routledge.

Focusing on media ownership, such power was said mainly to have been the result of corporate control and traced in the movements in the structure of the communications industries towards concentration and conglomeration- with the British mass media markets, for instance, placed in the hands of a few large companies.<sup>135</sup> When those communications industries are dominated by conglomerates, they share a potential for having some control over the range and direction of production, and appear to structure the overall business environment within which public communications organizations operate as well.<sup>136</sup>

Trying to define the relationship between share ownership and the control of corporate activity, Murdock offers four approaches to corporate control, shifting between *action and agency* or *structural context and constraint* in either a capitalistic or an industrial social order. A full analysis of control, says Murdock, needs to look "...at the complex interplay *between* intentional action and structural constraint at every level of the production process".<sup>137</sup>

Murdock's characterization is subtle. And his four approaches model supplies a framework for examining media institutions at the different levels of operation and the actions taken by their practitioners, considering a socio-political context and its pressures in which media institutions and their practitioners come into play. However, media organizations are an essential unit of analysis upon which the entire corporate and industrial structure and operation are built. This observation is worth emphasizing here since in practice, and from the lower levels of corporate and industrial operations,

---

<sup>135</sup> Murdock, G. (1982) Large corporations and the control of the communications industries. In: Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) Culture, society and the media. London: Routledge. P. 118-150. See also Tunstall and Palmer and their description of powerful media owners- 'moguls' such as Maxwell and Murdoch- that are found responsible for the direction taken by the media industries during the 1980's (Tunstall, J. and Palmer, M. (1991) Media moguls. London: Routledge).

<sup>136</sup> Murdock, G. (1982) Large corporations and the control of the communications industries. In: Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) Culture, society and the media. London: Routledge. P. 118-150.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. P. 125. Italics in origin.



employees do not see themselves as part of an abstract industry, but rather as part of a concrete organization which might have been merged or incorporated in the past. They hold an actual access card to enter a specific building and a password to log into their mail account, an actual chair to sit on, a daily routine to pursue, a real boss to please (or moan about) and real work friends or enemies.

Such recognition is also relevant here, because even though there are greater forces at stakes in the following chapters, it is an actual organization- Thomson Reuters- that this research is concerned with, maintained throughout particular modes of operation (aiming, for instance, at an international circle of clients, unlike other news institutions). Although operating under the umbrella of a similar industry, organizations strive to differ in their goals and business schemes, diversify their lines of products and create a dependency for their services on the account of their competitors. And such differences might have a great impact on the daily processes through which their outputs are produced.<sup>138</sup>

Yet, when the organization unit and its daily practices and routines are introspected along its lines of operations, its 'professionals' and 'amateurs', their daily practices and organizational identities, this leads to an additional perspective under Murdock's capitalist mode of ownership and control. For, within what Murdock identifies as a capitalistic structure, the corporate and its 'practitioners' (whether as individuals, organizations or industries) operate in a unified capitalistic field in their pursuit of the maximization of profit, and one which dominates all modes of ownership and control, daily practices and routines.

---

<sup>138</sup> See, for instance, the different pictures distribution technologies developed by Reuters, making their clients dependant on its picture services and technical support throughout the years of its operation in chapter 3.

When some employees share a sense of pride working for great corporations, for example, others find it alienating.<sup>139</sup> Their daily work may all of a sudden seem meaningless and minimized now that they have been incorporated and thus 'industrialised'. Their organizational personalities and familial sense of belonging have now been taken away from them and replaced with a 'commercial' one. Their daily routine might suffer from their lack of motivation, and some might even sabotage the process with their lack of satisfaction- a picture doctored, for instance- which might lead to an entire chain of events involving managers and executive directors at a decision-making level of operation; it may cause a dramatic drop in share prices and affect the corporate control as a whole.

Employees have different views and goals. Even though they all work for a corporation with a well known profit orientation, there are also other pressures on their work. Murdock does not consider additional negotiating and conflicting forces responsible for the formation of the cultural identities of the organization's practitioners or its owners, apart from their organizational ones. Such conflicting fields of identity might come into play at every step in the production routine, and might have a great impact on the articulation of control and ownership in media institutions under a capitalistic scope as well.

Gallagher's 'Negotiation of control in media organizations and occupations' takes into account the form of organizational power as an unstable arena of constant negotiations.<sup>140</sup> Considering the interaction of organizational, production, professional and personal factors in the media institution, Gallagher tries to understand why and

---

<sup>139</sup> In a conversation once with one of Reuters senior correspondents, I was told how furious he was the day the "corporate police", as he put it, made sure there was nothing on his desk with the old Reuters logo on it right after the merge with Thomson took place.

<sup>140</sup> Gallagher, M. (1982) Negotiations of control in media organizations and occupations. In: Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) Culture, society and the media. London: Routledge. P. 151-173.

how media output ‘comes to be as it is’. Thus, says Gallagher, while the question of who controls is indeed fundamental, it is in fact the significance of that control which “...rests in the way in which it is, or can be, exercised...’control’ in the media has meaning primarily in terms of the extent to which communicators are able to shape output”.<sup>141</sup> Media institutions, points Gallagher, are dynamic and part of a social process and subject to change. And their notions of power should be examined under their complex relationships between their practices and operations to the wider environments, public controls and external constraints in which they operate, and must be considered within particular socio-historical contexts of development. Examining the daily operations of media institutions under external political, commercial and inner-technical constraints, she sees power as manifested through constant negotiations between internal pressures inside the organization and external ones. “Mass communication”, concludes Gallagher, is “...indeed bound with, and bounded by, the interests of the dominant institutions in society”, but these interests “...are continually redefined through a process to which the media themselves contribute”.<sup>142</sup>

Gallagher's work is useful; it takes into account the external constraints and the internal pressures through which cultural production comes into play. However, specific consideration is also needed here for the relationships- both formal and informal- between the practitioners and communicators themselves at every level of production: between the different levels of the organizational structure and between colleagues from competing organizations; between communicators holding similar and different positions; between departments, bureaus and organizations, corporations

---

<sup>141</sup> Gallagher, M. (1982) Negotiations of control in media organizations and occupations. In: Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) Culture, society and the media. London: Routledge. P. 151-173. P. 152.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. P. 171.

and industries, and the ways the organizational apparatus is put into action as the means to gather social power within and between these different levels. In that sense, professionalism, as Gallagher suggests, is not only the means of the organization to control its employees, but rather, at times, the means for practitioners to control their colleagues and an arena for constant struggle over social power- when one can be honoured with the status of professionalism or stripped from one regardless of his formal expertise.

Whether on the macro or micro levels of media institutions and their processes of production, and despite the difficulties to gain access, some did managed to take a peak and survived to tell their stories. Taking their ownership and analysing the decision-making processes of key media owners as crucial for understanding corporate control, Tunstall and Palmer considered a group of powerful media owners- ‘moguls’ such as Maxwell and Murdoch- to be responsible for the direction of the media industries during the 1980’s.<sup>143</sup> But little focus was given to the political and economic contexts, having a great influence on their corporate control within an unstable market that was subject to change and continuity (as was the case, for instance, with the British press barons in the years 1920-1940.)<sup>144</sup>

Additional work, focused mainly on the micro connections in the institution, demonstrated the ways in which working practices in the media institution affected the production of the media text. Burns demonstrated the ways in which the different organizational structures, career pathways and inside politics affected the work of BBC employees.<sup>145</sup> And substantial work- although mainly from a functional

---

<sup>143</sup> See, for example, Tunstall, J. and Palmer, M. (1991) Media moguls. London: Routledge.

<sup>144</sup> See Curran and his description of the era of the press barons in Curran, J. and Seaton, J. (2003) Power without responsibility: the press and broadcasting in Britain. (6<sup>th</sup> edition) London: Routledge.

<sup>145</sup> Burns, T. (1972) Commitment and career in the BBC. In: Mcquail, D. (ed.) Sociology of mass communications. London: Penguin. P. 281-310; Burns, T. (1977) The BBC: Public institution, private world. Basingstoke: Mcmillan.

perspective- on working practices and daily routines that was discussed earlier (most popular especially during the 1970's and early 1980's), was done in the field of news production as well.

Combining both perspectives, the particular process discussed in the following chapters is therefore carefully placed in a specific time frame and analysed within a broader socio-historic context of development, change and continuity. Taking into consideration the current ownership and control structures of the organization from the higher levels of ownership, the analysis of the process is focused from the 'inside out'- on the daily practices and interconnections of its communicators and their routines, their struggles and conflicts, their occupational cultures. It maintains cultural production at particular sites in particular moments as a field of constant negotiations: between identities, between positions, departments, bureaus and organizations, industries and fields of external pressures and constraints.

Stripping the cultural production process and its industries from their organizational bodies would fail to consider their unique circuits of cultural meaning and lead to an inevitable generalization and misunderstanding of their differences and contradictions, resistances and struggles. Ignoring the cultural context its operators are both responsible for its manufacturing and bound to the constraints it dictates, and its relationship with the economic structure the organization strives to survive in, would simply allow for describing the general coincidence between patterns of ownership and patterns of output, to use Murdock's words, rather than offering a possible explanation for it.<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> Murdock acknowledges that without concrete evidence, we are only left with a description of how media corporations are increasingly integrated into the core of British capitalism, or on the materials they produce, which seems to support capitalism's central values of private property rather than offer an explanation (Murdock, G. (1982) Large corporations and the control of the communications industries. In: Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) Culture, society and the media. London: Routledge. P. 118-150).

## 2.6 Cultural production and the industry

The debate surrounding the industrial aspects of culture and its production can be traced back to the canonical work of Adorno and Horkheimer's 'Culture industry'. In a critical Marxist analysis they addressed the industrialization of culture- once in its highest form as art and as the means of liberation from the constraints of the real world, which have become commoditized, lost its 'authenticity' and thus industrialized.<sup>147</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer's work prepared the ground for the close connection between culture, society and a profitable industry. They said that the corporation in its capitalist form dominated the means of production, but its processes were maintained and strongly connected both to the consumers and the creative artists, as both 'belonged' to the culture industry.<sup>148</sup>

Throughout the 1960's and late 1970's, however, the term was converted to 'cultural industries' (or '*industries culturelles*') and new approaches emerged, opposing Adorno and Horkheimer's 'unified field' in which culture was industrialized and offering a more uncertain notion of cultural production with different logics in play.<sup>149</sup> Thus, new perspectives considered how certain industries might vary within their lines of operation.<sup>150</sup> How the consumption of different cultural commodities is highly selective.<sup>151</sup> Or how cultural labour can be productive (under capitalist cultural production) or unproductive (under non-capitalist production of cultural products) -

---

<sup>147</sup> Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M. (1977/1944) The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception. In: Curran, J., Gurevitch, M. and Wollacot, J. (eds.) Mass communication and society. London: Edward Arnold. P. 349-383.

<sup>148</sup> See Negus, K. (1997) The production of culture. In: Du Gay, P. (ed.) Production of culture/cultures of production. London: Sage. P. 67-118 for a further discussion on this connection.

<sup>149</sup> Especially Mie'ge, B. (1979) The Cultural commodity. In: Media, Culture and Society, 1: P. 297-311, and later Mie'ge, B. (1987) The logics at work in the new cultural industries. In: Media, Culture and Society, 9: P. 273-289 and Mie'ge, B. (1989) The capitalization of cultural production. New York: International general. P. 10, 12.

<sup>150</sup> Mie'ge, B. (1987) The logics at work in the new cultural industries. In: Media, Culture and Society, 9: P. 273-289; Hesmondhalgh, D. (2002) The cultural industries. London: Sage.

<sup>151</sup> Mie'ge, B. (1979) The Cultural commodity. In: Media, Culture and Society, 1: P. 297-311.

when production can be divided into reproducible or semi-reproducible products, and when the involvement of cultural workers is not always necessary in their production.<sup>152</sup>

Specifically, Adorno and Horkheimer's pessimism was questioned, calling for a consideration of the use of new technologies and innovations and their role as part of the articulation of cultural products (particularly within the arts); addressing the industrialization of art as a process of capital valorisation adapting to new fields with specific conditions; on how the industrialization process can, and does, come across oppositional and resisting voices, and how the cultural production process co-exists with other forms of production.<sup>153</sup> And it was Mie'ge who paid attention to the disadvantages of a single approach for the study of cultural production, laying the foundations for future research by saying that "...the capitalisation of cultural production is a complex, many-sided and even contradictory process", and that it "...cannot be analysed in simple or unilateral terms".<sup>154</sup>

The cultural industries are operated, maintained and articulated by different personnel in different positions at particular sites of production.<sup>155</sup> They do not necessarily share the same organizational culture, and thus can be taken as part of

---

<sup>152</sup> Mie'ge, B. (1979) The Cultural commodity. In: Media, Culture and Society, 1: P. 297-311.

<sup>153</sup> Mie'ge, B. (1989) The capitalization of cultural production. New York: International general.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. P. 12. The culture industry was also picked as industries in UNESCO's 'culture industries', in which cultural activities were seen mainly as the result of the influence of certain major media and communication companies- when their critiques blamed the industries for being in absolute control of the means of culture production. Nonetheless, and although stemming from Adorno and Horkheimer's pessimistic point of view, culture production was also recognized by the supporters of the industries for carrying educative and informative opportunities and reconsidered to be applied outside the US and on international scales. The cultural industries, for example, were addressed as being able to provide 'developing countries' with the means of cultural 'take-off' (see UNESCO (1982) Culture industries: a challenge for the future of culture. Paris, UNESCO: France. < <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/Ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=49972&gp=0&lin=1&ll=1>>). This is also addressed in Negus, K. (1997) The production of culture. In: Du Gay, P. (ed.) Production of culture/cultures of production. London: Sage. P. 67-118).

<sup>155</sup> See, for example, Negus and his research on the recording industry and production of pop music, focusing on personnel at different sites within the music business and their contribution to the sounds and images of pop (Negus, K. (1992) Producing pop: Culture and conflict in the popular music industry. London: Edward Arnold).

different *occupational communities*- when their members hold different (and conflicting at times) organizational identities.<sup>156</sup> Furthermore, organizational divisions can also be seen as the result of different classification struggles, so organizations are an arena for conflict in which different departments or divisions, or personnel holding different positions within them struggle over social power.<sup>157</sup> Cultural industries are propelled from the outside, but also have influential internal pressures; we need to understand, as Williams put it, “right inside the productive process how these difficult modes of address and forms are actually constructed”.<sup>158</sup>

This micro perspective is helpful for this research. For it considers cultural production not as a deterministic economic one standing on its own, but rather as a key moment in the production of meaning within a great ‘circuit of culture’.<sup>159</sup> Thus, both the economy and culture should be taken more as *hybrid categories*- as part of the circulation of cultural products, and thus operating in a ‘cultural economy’ where “‘Economic’ processes and practices- in all their plurality ...depend on meaning for their effects and have particular cultural ‘conditions of existence’. Meaning is produced at ‘economic’ sites (at work, in shops) and circulated through economic processes and practices (through economists’ models of how ‘economies’ or

---

<sup>156</sup> See Gregory, for example, and her ‘organizational culture’ study from a ‘native point of view’, focusing on the careers of technical professionals cutting across several computer companies in the Silicon Valley. Occupational communities were found to cross-cut the organization. An interesting finding as well, for that matter, was the fact that different occupational cultures were often described by its members as being central to the survival of the organization as a whole (Gregory, K. (1983) Native-view paradigms: multiple cultures and culture conflicts in organizations. In: Administrative science quarterly, Vol. 28(3). P. 359-376). When the cultural industries are questioned, members of such communities are often placed at different sites- both within the organization in different positions and places, but also in different countries or regions given their magnitude and their operations around the world.

<sup>157</sup> See Bourdieu’s discussion on classes and classification in Bourdieu, P. (1986) Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste. London: Routledge.

<sup>158</sup> Williams cited in Heath, S. & Skirrow, G. (1986) An interview with Raymond Williams. In: Modelski, T. (ed) Studies in Entertainment: Cultural Approaches to Mass Culture. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. P. 3-17. P. 14.

<sup>159</sup> See Du Gay, P., Hall, S. Janes, L., Mackay, H. and Negus, K. (1997) Doing cultural studies: the story of the Sony walkman. London: Sage; Du Gay, P. (1997) Production of culture/cultures of production. London: Sage.



‘organizations’ work, through adverts, marketing materials and the very design of products) no less than in other domains of existence in modern societies”.<sup>160</sup>

Organisations and industries, for that matter, are in the business of producing cultural products (although under a greater influence of certain cultural intermediary occupations such as advertising, design or marketing responsible for tightening the relationship between production and consumption).<sup>161</sup> But these institutions are also important sites, essential for the construction (and reconstruction) and managing of the organizational culture and the formation of identity. In simple words, the cultural production process is both an economic process and a cultural phenomenon- an articulation of the production of culture and cultures of production.<sup>162</sup>

In many ways, this perspective was not only a matter of change of prism to address cultural production. It was also an important shift from a rather macro perspective- from which the cultural industries were mainly inspected by their ownership and its effects upon their lines of production- to a micro one through which it is necessary to understand how “...structures are produced through particular human actions and how *economic* relationships simultaneously involve the production of *cultural* meanings”.<sup>163</sup>

At the same time, taking the cultural industries as complicated sites of production, audiences and their desires were also taken into consideration as extraordinary sites of consumption. No longer was production conceived as finalised at the producers end but rather in its circulation with the industries’ audiences and

---

<sup>160</sup> Du Gay, P. (1997) Production of culture/cultures of production. London: Sage. P. 4.

<sup>161</sup> See Du Gay, P., Hall, S. Janes, L., Mackay, H. and Negus, K. (1997) Doing cultural studies: the story of the Sony walkman. London: Sage

<sup>162</sup> Negus, K. (1997) The production of culture. In: Du Gay, P. (ed.) Production of culture/cultures of production. London: Sage. P. 67-118.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. P. 84, Italics in origin.

consumer culture.<sup>164</sup> In that sense, cultures of production can therefore be understood as ‘cultural worlds’, and the sites of cultural production as an arena in which a complex set of collective practices, interpretations and experiences are interwoven together- making the different technical elements ‘stick’- putting the process in motion.<sup>165</sup>

If cultural production had been reduced to a by-product of dominating corporations and their ownership in the past, the practices of production and its operators were now taken more seriously. Those who put production into motion hold different positions at particular moments and sites, and are often in conflict with their colleagues over organizational power and control; their daily practices are the outcome and the meeting point of different cultural worlds- a variety of ‘ways of lives’.

And yet, such an approach does not seem to encompass cultural production in full. Negus concluded by addressing future research to the fact that “It is important to consider the culture of production not only within the organization in terms of particular occupational cultures but in terms of how these connect with broader social divisions and how these are given specific cultural meanings within the production process”.<sup>166</sup> Those involved in the process do not cease to exist once employed by an organization or an industry and maintain a certain ‘way of life’ before joining the organization. Their identity is not constructed from ‘scratch’ but rather circulated as yet another element and part of an already complex system through which their cultural identities are constructed.

---

<sup>164</sup> See Gendron and his idea of how standardization can actually be perceived as a source for pleasure for audiences (Gendron, B. (1986) Theodor Adorno meets the cadillacs. In: Modelski, T. (ed.) Studies in Entertainment. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IA, Indiana: University Press . P. 18-36).

<sup>165</sup> See Jensen, J. (1984) An interpretive approach to cultural production. In: Rowland, W. and Watkins, B. (eds.) Interpreting television. London: Sage. P. 98-119.

<sup>166</sup> Negus, K. (1997) The production of culture. In: Du Gay, P. (ed.) Production of culture/cultures of production. London: Sage. P. 67-118. P. 102.

They are males or females, religious or secular, Israelis or Palestinians, and they are also audiences and consumers on their own right who often bring their consumer practices to work. They watch TV, read newspapers, go to art exhibitions and to the cinema, they eat junk food or despise it, they wear jeans and sneakers or suits and boots. At times, these contribute to their daily jobs as cultural producers, and might appear in the form of conflict with their organizational identities, affecting the process just as much. In that sense, production is not just one brick within the 'circuit of culture' alongside consumption, regulation, representation and identity as addressed by Du Gay et al. It is, in itself, a circuit of culture. In addition there is also the importance of the cultural text; the cultural production process meets its audiences as a product. As a result, it would be difficult to fully grasp a certain process without taking into account its final outcome, just as much as addressing a certain cultural product would not be complete without considering the process responsible for its production.

Hesmondhalgh considered the cultural industries in a more holistic view, focusing more on structure, and examined the remarkable transformation the cultural industries have undergone since the early 1980's- did the changes represent a new era of cultural production? Or did they merely represent shifts within their 'complex professional stage'. And he offered a framework for evaluating the cultural industries based on the means of cultural production or the treatment of creativity in cultural-industry organizations. Hesmondhalgh also found the specific organizational and economic dynamics within the industries essential for their understanding. He identified an internationalization process with the use of new technologies as the means of competition in a new business environment, and recognised the importance

in texts (considering how cultural texts and their consumption by audiences changed during the 1980's and 1990's as well as the effects of such changes).<sup>167</sup>

Drawn from Hesmondhalgh's holistic point of view, this project is mainly based on process and less on institutional structure. Taking into special account that processes have to be analysed in terms of their institutional context and organizational bodies in their specific socio-historic contexts, this structure-process distinction appears to be an important one: first, since this project is focused on a very specific cultural production process taking place in a particular institution. Although certain similarities at different sites at specific stages in processes within organizations and industries may be found, it is important to remember that different industries maintain particular processes in specific organizational structures- local organizations or international ones, for instance- which might have an essential effect on our understanding of cultural production and the cultural industries as a whole.

Thus, the analysis of specific processes might actually shed a new light on the cultural industries and their general structures. The idea, for example, of some internationalization process the industries have undergone in order to compete in a new business environment, as outlined by Hesmondhalgh, might suggest that they have been simply 'national' or 'local' at some point and thus internationalized at another. Yet when their particular processes of production are observed from up close, the case proves to be different. For both their structures and processes have always been in a hybrid state- constantly floating between the private and the public, the national and the international, the 'local' and the 'global'.<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup> Hesmondhalgh, D. (2002) *The cultural industries*. London: Sage.

<sup>168</sup> This argument is further discussed in chapters 4 and 5 with the specific case of glocal mechanisms, with Reuters taken as an international organization forced to adjust its modes of production at different moments and sites in order to survive in a demanding international market that forces its suppliers to tailor their cultural goods for particular clients with specific needs. At the same time, it is coerced by the forces of a certain 'glocal condition' international organizations and their practitioners are faced

Cultural intermediaries- often in the form of different clients with different needs operating as particular institutions and 'real' organizations (unlike the amorphous industries they 'work for') - are not only a certain link in the chain of production, but pivotal players at significant moments and sites in the cultural production routine, and should also be taken into account in order to understand the structure of the industries and their modes of operations. Finally, even though the cultural industries play an important role in the production of culture, they are also circulated in one and thus part of a greater cultural umbrella in which they operate. And even though they have great powers, they are, by no means, located outside or above cultural production, but rather, in a sense, the by-product of one.

## 2.7 Producing news pictures, making news

News in its photographic form is not a natural given. It is produced, decorated, marketed and distributed in a certain way that allows its natural perception. Thus, I

---

with, and that which eventually determines the organization's body and structure. (See Robertson, R. (1995) *Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity*. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) *Global modernities*. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44). Much like Hesmondhalgh's observation, similar attempts have already been made to consider international organizations and their processes of 'regionalization', 'domestication' or 'localization'. Such definitions appear to be too simple in my view, mainly since they consider international organizations in full control of such processes and fully responsible for their adjustment, when, in fact, international organizations are themselves governed (but certainly not just) by a certain condition- putting their structures and production processes, clients and audiences in order (Boyd-Barrett, O. (1980) *The International News Agencies*. London: Constable; Gurevitch, M., Levy, M. R. & Roeh, I. (1991) *The Global News Room: convergences and diversities in the globalization of television news*. In: Dahlgren, P. & Sparks, C. (eds.) *Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere*. London: Routledge and Cohen, A. , Levy, M. R. , Roeh, I. & Gurevitch, M. (1996) *Global Newsrooms, Local Audiences: A Study of the Eurovision News Exchange*. London: John Libbey & Company Ltd; Clausen, L. (2003) *Global News Production*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business school press; Clausen, L. (2003b) *Global News Communication Strategies- 9.11.2002 Around the World*. In: *Nordicom review* No. 3. Fall Edition . Goteborg: Nordicom & Clausen, L. (2004) *Localizing the Global: 'domestication' processes in international news production*. In: *Media, Culture and Society* Vol. 26(1): P. 25-44). This would also be a good place to mention that the term 'global' is carefully used in this project even though the concept 'globalization' is taken here as highly problematic throughout its different incarnations. Nonetheless, it is still very relevant- especially when international organizations and their modes of production are in question- since it is still used in different variations as part of the international organizations' jargon and Reuters' in particular (the 'global pictures desk' or 'global graphics desk', for instance).

would argue, news pictures' final form as products laid down on the 'shelf of dailiness' had its Standards stamp way back in their processes of production. And not before going through critical stages at particular moments and significant sites throughout their stages of manufacture. They were approved by an endless number of 'professionals' acting as culture mediators- working either for Reuters or for its clients' pictures operations- from the moment they were conceived as an idea and up to their final form.<sup>169</sup> At the same time, Thomson Reuters will be considered here as part of a cultural industry and the latter operating under a wider cultural cover, fighting to survive in a demanding economic structure; this structure propels the production process of news pictures, forces them to stay in line with competing processes long before the pictures reach the doorstep of the agency's clients and then the audience of consumers in the form of a published news picture.<sup>170</sup>

The relationship between the various steps of turning an idea into a cultural product- a news picture- is unclear. So too is the connection between the steps of 'culturising' a news picture and the organization and the cultural industry in which it is produced, and the ways it competes with other industries and parallel processes of production under economic and cultural pressures and constraints. For, essentially, it is those organizations and industries that produce a cultural economy; it is, at the same time, that which dictates their structures and modes of operations.<sup>171</sup>

In that sense news pictures are of great importance: as cultural products they have a significant role in forming cultural identity, symbolizing social status,

---

<sup>169</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Carey, J. W. (1989) A Cultural Approach to Communication . In: Communication as Culture: Essay on Media and Society. London: Unwin Hyman. P. 13-36.

delivering certain symbols and myths, legitimizing social forces.<sup>172</sup> They are the output of 'professional' practices particularly tailored for the needs of the news organization (the international news agency) in which they are produced as part of a unique system of production. And at the same time, they are aligned to the different organizational constraints dictated by the organization and to those it is forced to obey. They are the product of a well oiled industry and the means to increase profit within the overall production-consumption circulation of culture.<sup>173</sup> And at the same time, they are controlled by economic and cultural forces that are putting the industries in motion, making the production of news pictures a dynamic process of meaningful symbols maintained under a great cultural cover and inseparable from the cultural worlds of its operators' 'ways of lives'- as individuals, as organizations, as industries.<sup>174</sup>

Thus, the process demonstrated in this project is a circle connecting at various levels between production and consumption, photography and news, between identities. Such circular structure is demonstrated in the following chapters as one that exists both on the vertical levels of production (between different personnel positioned in different departments in the production process- a photographer and the chief photographer at the local bureau, for example) and on its horizontal ones (between the agency, competing agencies and the different news outlets, all affected from one another). Those who operate the process at different moments and sites are taken as a key crossing of different circles of identity- each 'professional' is meaningful on its own right, and all intermeshed together along the construction of

---

<sup>172</sup> Kellner, D. (1995) 'Cultural studies, multiculturalism and media culture'. In: Dines, G. and Humez, J.M. (eds.) Gender, race and class in media: A text-reader. London, Sage. P. 5-17.

<sup>173</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg.

<sup>174</sup> Jensen, J. (1984) An interpretive approach to cultural production. In: Rowland, W. and Watkins, B. (eds.) Interpreting television. London: Sage. P. 98-119; Williams, R. (1961) The long revolution. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

their cultural identities (an Israeli photographer working for an international news agency, for example).

These circles are addressed as constantly in motion within a meta-circular structure of production with no beginning, middle or an end along the time line.<sup>175</sup> The following process is governed by ‘professional’ conventions of photography and news, and both are coerced to its pressures and daily demands; it is a chaotic routine shifting between different dimensions of struggle between the micro and the macro. It is a process responsible both for the production of culture, and one reflecting the cultures of its production.<sup>176</sup>

Using the production process of news pictures as a platform, newsworthiness in its photographic form is therefore addressed here not only as the outcome of the organization in which it is produced. It reflects the international news agency as an autonomic unit, as it is an expression of news making and photographic practices. And it is the result of dominant news and photography discourses, as it is the outcome of a wider cultural network of production through which such discourses come into play. Focusing a holistic point of view, news pictures result not as the sheer representatives of truth, but rather the servants of a regime of one.<sup>177</sup> This regime performs dominant practices of news alongside dominant practices of photography; news pictures as the output of the news organizations in which they are produced, and those news organizations as part of a cultural industry- both affecting and influenced by other cultural industries. This regime propels the cultural industries as the outcome of a wider cultural network circulated in a complex economic structure- a cultural

---

<sup>175</sup> Although, as I shall demonstrate in the following chapters, there are also linear micro-structures at particular moments and sites in the production routine- a chief photographer having the final word on assignments given to his photographers, for instance.

<sup>176</sup> Negus, K. (1997) The production of culture. In: Du Gay, P. (ed.) Production of culture/cultures of production. London: Sage. P. 67-118.

<sup>177</sup> Foucault, M. (1980). Power/ Knowledge. Brighton: Harvester.



economy, circulating news pictures under dominant systems of discourse. It is a regime of signification.<sup>178</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> Lash, S. (1988) Discourse or figure? Postmodernism as a Regime of signification. In: Theory, Culture and Society 5: p. 311-336.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Wire and the Empire**

Reuters has a long history, but selling pictures became part of its remit surprisingly late. Why did Reuters decide to establish such a service when it was already firmly rooted as part of its competitors' line of business? How did it go about entering the picture market? What was its system and what were the difficulties? How did it manage to keep the Reuters brand operating a new service that called for new values and different standards to be considered, and what were the consequences for Reuters' other lines of production from the financial division? These are the main questions this chapter is dealing with. Some answers may be told in the network of Reuters. For the picture service was just another product within a well orchestrated international organization which had been operating successfully since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has a clear brand maintained through stormy weathers over the years, survived two world wars and has changed side by side along some of the major technological innovations taking place in society. In this chapter, the story of the Reuters picture service is told for the first time. Some of the questions would be addressed under Reuters (now Thomson Reuters) current position within the international news and business arena, its reasons, its financial status and its forecast.

### 3.1 The 'Big Four' in a Small World: An Introduction

A good starting point would be to consider the environment in which Reuters first came to life. In his book "The International News services" Jonathan Fenby describes one of the basic conditions for the establishment of the four international news agencies as having to be "...one thing to all people, operating within the status quo and avoiding involvement in the events they reported".<sup>179</sup> Fenby, a former Reuters assistant editor, still provides a good impression of the way international services work despite the fact the 'global' map of international news information flow has dramatically changed since his book was first published (Fenby's book was published in 1986 and therefore not updated with several major changes which occurred in the past few years. It was written, for example, just before the collapse of UPI, placing Reuters, AP and AFP as the three major players in the international map of news information flow since the 1990's and, to some extent, until this day.<sup>180</sup>)

He suggests that business pressures led to the establishment of the 'big four' agencies, and from a historical point of view such a perspective is well supported. The 1850's led a meteoric growth of news papers around the world and with them a significant rise for the demand of news.<sup>181</sup> Conveniently, it was right when the telegraph cable technology was set up (around 1840), leading the way towards the first cable laid across the Atlantic (1858).<sup>182</sup> In many ways, it was both the vast

---

<sup>179</sup> Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Shocken Books. P. 23.

<sup>180</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (1998) The globalization of news. London: Sage Publications.

<sup>181</sup> Xin, X. (2006) A Developing Market in News: Xinhua News agency and Chinese Newspapers In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 28(1): P. 45-66.

<sup>182</sup> Bielsa, E. (2008) The pivotal role of news agencies in the context of globalization: a historical approach. In: Global Networks 8, 3. P. 347-366. With the emergence of telegraph and underwater cables, information could travel faster than it used to, and the distribution of news information via the wires around the world became a matter of great commercial value (see Herman, E. S. & McChesney, R. W. (2001) The Global media: the new missionaries of corporate capitalism. London and New York: Continuum).

demand for news papers and the emergence of the new technology which would soon become two of the main factors for the establishment of four major news agencies: a French agency headed by Havas (which became AFP-Agence France Presse, 1835), the German ‘Wolff’ (1848), AP (Associated Press) in the United states (1849) and ‘Reuters’ in the UK (1851).<sup>183</sup> Although distant in place and national interests (and yet sharing the same working environments. Julius Reuter, for instance, started his career as a subeditor working for Havas), the agencies were established and running based on a simple business assumption: the selling of identical news products to a great number of clients around the world would make the information production’s cost relatively low, and permit the selling of the information at a low cost to the different news papers.

With the development of telegraph cables, and the speeding up of the reception of information from local agencies and having the information distributed to more countries around Europe, the four agencies accumulated great power and rivalry with each other.<sup>184</sup> Resources invested by the four in order to keep up with their strong competitors, as well as the high cost for using the cable technology, produced a cartel agreement in 1870. The world was divided between them: under the agreement Scandinavia, Germany and Eastern Europe would become under German control; the Americans got United States, Canada, Alaska, and several parts of the Caribbean and central America; the French kept France, the Mediterranean region, the French Empire

---

<sup>183</sup> Since transferring materials in ships was expensive and telegraph taxes were high, AP would turn its ownership from a private initiative to a cooperative owned by some of the major American news papers. However, it did not take long until AP became a dominant player in transferring news information around the country, offering its clients a complete monopoly over local news information, as opposed to its European colleagues who were controlled by private ownership and remained as such (Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Schocken Books).

<sup>184</sup> Pike, R. & Winseck, D. (2004) The Politics of Global Media Reform, 1907-23. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 26(5): P. 643-675.

and South America (from 1890) and Reuters' control was over the territories of Britain and the Netherlands, the British Empire and the Far East.<sup>185</sup>

Each agency enjoyed its monopolistic status based on the cartel's division and was committed to supply the information from the regions under its control to the other agencies free as charge. At the same time, each benefited by becoming a source of national pride and enjoyed a financial support from its government. The cartel agreement increased business. Reuters and AFP quickly opened branches in all the major European capitals and in India, China, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt and others. Joint branches were also open in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.<sup>186</sup> However, a strong inside competition in the US market and dissatisfaction targeted at AP's dysfunction by many local news papers eventually led towards the establishment of a new American agency- UP- at the turn of the century (1907).<sup>187</sup> UP would soon shake the delicate balance between the older agencies, especially the fellowship of the ring between Reuters and AP, and was very much the reason for the downfall of the cartel in the 1930's.

After the Second World War, and after the collapse of the German agency, AP and UPI became the major forces in the arena of reporting and international distribution of news information.<sup>188</sup> Reuters and AFP struggled with financial difficulties at their side, picking up the pieces after the war. The two Americans

---

<sup>185</sup> Bielsa, E. (2008) The pivotal role of news agencies in the context of globalization: a historical approach. In: Global Networks 8, 3. P. 347-366.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> In the years after the Second World War, UP took over INS (headed by Hurst). The relatively small agency suffered from an unreliable status, and survived thanks to Hurst's insistence for using its service by his news papers. With the merge UP became UPI in the late 1950's (Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Shocken Books).

<sup>188</sup> The German agency established by Wolff turned to be highly dependent on the German government. With the rise of national socialists in the 1930's, it was merged with another German agency called TU (Telegraphic Union ) in 1933 and became a national agency (Wilke, J. (1998) The Struggle for Control of Domestic News Markets (2). In: Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (eds.) The Globalization of News. London: Sage. P. 49-60.). Operating as a national and political agency throughout the Second World War, its downfall was probably just a matter of time. After all, its clients did not want to be recognised for doing business with a former Nazi institution.

identified the financial possibilities given their surprising new status and pushed forward the idea of distributing translated news information to local markets, mainly as a solution to cut loose any local agencies as their mediators. Opening new local bureaus around Europe as part of their new business strategy was a successful business strategy at the beginning of the 1960's both for AP and UPI. However, their new scheme did not last long given the high cost of maintenance and the cut in revenues, as well as the impact of the economic recession of the period. In addition, several local US papers such as 'The New York Times', 'The Los Angeles Times' and 'The Washington Post' were already gaining substantial power, placing the US agencies under an existential dilemma: in order to keep up with their powerful status as international news agencies they were forced to strengthen their grip on to their local infrastructure in the US- as the sole suppliers of news information at the financial level. However, the two would then become 'American' agencies facing national pressures from their home land.

At the same time, Reuters began a more commercial approach and diversified its informational products from foreign news to other forms of information offered to its clients around the world. The fact Reuters located itself as an international supplier right from the beginning (unlike its competitors who were mainly based on local markets, such as AFP in France and AP and UPI in the United States) made it easier for Reuters to ground itself as a supplier of economic information as well.<sup>189</sup> Given the combination of innovative computer technologies at the time, Reuters was becoming the most powerful in the market in the following years (and its financial stability is very much sustained up to this day).

---

<sup>189</sup> Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Shocken Books.

With post-colonial winds, and with financial help from UNESCO, the 1970's brought with them new voices of opposition to the established agencies. It was argued that the news agencies maintained Western imperialism with the help of their informational products, leaving the 'third-world' countries behind 'in the dark'. There was a call for a new order (New World Information and Communication Order, backed by the communist states), assumingly based on a one-side ownership over the international news information flow, and one which was mediated mostly by the international news agencies. Although the agencies refused to take a monopolistic responsibility on their side, claiming that they were at the service of the international markets and not the other way around.<sup>190</sup>

The two last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century faced the 'big four' with major changes to their financial and organizational structures. The collapse of the communist regime in the USSR forced the international agencies to regroup. New players in the form of global television networks such as CNN and BBC World entered the arena (providing news information to local networks), and became a significant free source of information. CNN, for instance (and perhaps one of the major players in the field of continuous international news information flow), was reaching 1 million of all US television households in 1980, and 59 million households in more than 140 countries by 1999.<sup>191</sup> An additional development was the appearance of film news agencies (Visnews turned Reuters' at 1992 and AP Television emerged at 1994), which played

---

<sup>190</sup> Gerald Long, the former managing director of Reuters at the time, was especially known for his reaction, opposing the accusation that the agencies had monopolistic intentions by saying that it was as if to say that "...cows hold a monopoly on the production of milk and that babies are abjectly dependent on them." (Long cited in Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Shoken Books. P. 249).

<sup>191</sup> With CNN and CNNI reaching more than 119 million households in 1992 (Volkmer, I. (1999) News in the global sphere: A study of CNN and its impact on global communication. Luton: University of Luton).

a significant role as one of the agencies' main sources of revenue in the following years.<sup>192</sup>

Finally, the financial information market was shaken by the rise of Bloomberg (1981) as a key player in the international arena (Dow Jones and Bloomberg were considered Reuters' main competitors in the international market of financial information of the 1980's. Although, having a relatively small amount of terminals around the world, it was Bloomberg which became Reuters' main rival, and in the beginning of the 1990's it announced its intentions to enter the international news market in order to broaden its line of services.<sup>193</sup>) Unlike Reuters which managed to brand itself internationally over the years, AP, UPI and AFP became strongly attached to their local markets and at the same time drawn away from the international one (The 1990's signified AP, for instance, as the dominant agency in the American market, having 94% of all US news papers subscribed to its services.<sup>194</sup>)

Being an organization which was first established as non profitable, and based on data from 2006, AP is one of the most significant international sellers of news: it serves around 5000 television and radio networks, around 1700 American news papers and 8500 press, television and radio outlets spread over 121 different countries around the world, and it operates 242 branches. It is owned by 1550 US journalism union members who vote for the head of the cooperative on a yearly basis.<sup>195</sup> AFP depends heavily on subscriptions from the state of France (over 40%), and its clients are spread over 165 different countries apart from its French clients (who make approximately 46%

---

<sup>192</sup> Bielsa, E. (2008) The pivotal role of news agencies in the context of globalization: a historical approach. In: Global Networks 8, 3. P. 347-366.

<sup>193</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. (1998) 'Global' News Agencies. In: Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (eds.) The Globalization of News. London: Sage. P. 19-34.

<sup>194</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2004) News Agencies as News Sources: A Reevaluation. In: Paterson, C. & Sreberny, A. (eds.) International News In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Eastleigh: University of Luton Press. P. 31-46.

<sup>195</sup> Horvit, B. (2006) International News Agencies and the War Debate of 2003. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 68(5-6): P. 427-447.



of the agency's revenues).<sup>196</sup> It has major difficulties raising funds in order to invest properly in the research and development of new distribution technologies and does not enjoy the financial support from the French government as it did in its first years of operation.<sup>197</sup> With AP rising as the leading agency in the American market, UPI became marginal and highly insignificant in the international arena. Most of its international contracts owned by the company were sold to AP, and its international picture service was sold to Reuters. It now delivers as much as 300 news stories and around 150 pictures on a daily basis, and it is mostly focused on the coverage of technological and scientific innovations worldwide.<sup>198</sup>

The 'fifth' agency in the circle- the Russian TASS- has lost a substantial power with the fall of the communist regime in the USSR, and has become a narrowly Russian agency controlled by the Russian federation (ITAR-TASS). It was forced to make substantial cuts in its personnel and operates 74 bureaus in Russia and 65 bureaus spread over 62 different countries. It lost its grip as the major news agency in central and Eastern Europe.<sup>199</sup> The fall of both TASS and mainly UPI marks a new era, placing the operations of international news flow at the hands of three major international news agencies, also known now as the 'big three': the French AFP, the American AP and the British-Canadian Thomson Reuters as their leader.<sup>200</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2004) News Agencies as News Sources: A Reevaluation. In: Paterson, C. & Sreberny, A. (eds.) International News In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Eastleigh: University of Luton Press. P. 31-46; Boyd-Barrett, O. (2000) National and international news agencies: issues of crisis and realignment. In: Gazette, Vol. 62(1). P. 5-18.

<sup>197</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2004) News Agencies as News Sources: A Reevaluation. In: Paterson, C. & Sreberny, A. (eds.) International News In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Eastleigh: University of Luton Press. P. 31-46.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. See also Rantanen, T. (2002) The Global and the National: Media and Communications In Post Communist Russia. Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield.

<sup>200</sup> Even though this project is focused on an international news agency and its processes of production, it is also worth considering the impact of various national news agencies on the daily operations of the international news information flow worldwide (see Boyd-Barrett, O. (2000) National and international news agencies: issues of crisis and realignment. In: Gazette, Vol. 62(1). P. 5-18). And equally important are the agencies' clients and their audiences, although much work is needed on both.

### 3.1.1 New media, old rivalries

Early on the big agencies were technologically pioneers- from the use of telegraph cables through the use of radio technology, telephone and finally computers and satellite. And much like all technological innovations, their uses would set the tone in the international market. The new technologies were the means of fuelling the battle of control over the international news market- with the agencies investing in the development of new technologies in order to diversify their lines of production; to improve their products; gain a monopolistic advantage over their colleagues and with the intention of creating complete dependency by their clients.

The grounds for establishing the agencies' television news services, for instance, were set early in the 1950's. The American AP had already started producing news film at the end of the Second World War, although UPI is considered to be the first television news film agency (United Press Movietone Television, UPMT) from around 1953. As part of UP's agreement with Moveitone, the latter was committed to supply the film; UP was responsible for its distribution across the world. But ten years later their partnership ended, with UPI creating its own news film service (UPI Newsfilm Inc.) in 1963. In 1967, and partly as a result of strong competition from The British Commonwealth International News film Agency (BCINA) controlled mainly by the BBC, UPI merged with the British broadcasting news organization ITN and set up a new news film operation (UPITN). Based on their partnership, UPI would supply its communication and other facilities while ITN would pay UPITN for its news film.<sup>201</sup> Reuters, on its side, already had control over one sixth (and later one third) of Visnews shares (a British film agency in origin- The

---

<sup>201</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. (1980) The International News Agencies. London: Constable.

British Commonwealth International Film Agency mainly controlled by the BBC and the Rank organization) in 1964, and strengthened their relationship up until a failing attempt to take it over in the 1980's. However, up until then, both UPITN and Visnews positioned themselves as the main suppliers of news film for non American clients, and later to the whole international news market as well.<sup>202</sup>

The two news film agencies leaned on Reuters and UPI- by using their massive international infrastructures, and by using their news informational products and personnel- while concentrating on gathering news from the American market and selling it internationally. Visnews had a strong relationship with NBC and later with Television News (TVN) in the early 1970's as the means to get their local news and supply international news. UPITN, on its side, joined Paramount Pictures Corporation in an attempt to supply news feeds to American television channels, and for a while UPI's operational involvement in UPITN was, to an extent, greater than Reuters' in Visnews.<sup>203</sup>

From the mid 1970's news-feeds were in use, and satellite transmission was used for international distribution. Video cassettes were sent to stations with videos (News film was also delivered to clients via air-freight). Film was mainly in colour and the use of English commentary was starting to build up as well (mainly by Visnews), thus attracting other agencies into the field of news film.<sup>204</sup> From the mid 1980's, AP and AFP aligned their forces and broke into news film, mapping the international news film market for the following years: Reuters took over Visnews, establishing 'Reuters TV'. UPITN turned into WTN- the second biggest television news company, which was eventually bought by Disney in 1996. AP added 'APTV' to its services in 1994, and in 1998 declared its intentions to acquire WTN- a business

---

<sup>202</sup> Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Shocken Books.

<sup>203</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. (1980) The International News Agencies. London: Constable.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

decision which positioned AP and Reuters later as the main competitors in the field of international television news.<sup>205</sup>

In the field of news pictures the story was less simple. Although news pictures were already in use by the agencies in 1927, records show the first 'wire photo' was only recorded eight years later.<sup>206</sup> In those years pictures started to earn their place on American news papers, but it was the appearance of the first 'wire photo' that marked the beginning of a new era: the battle over the relative importance of pictures over text.<sup>207</sup>

In 1950's radio became the preferred technology for distributing pictures to agencies' clients, making AP and UPI the key players in the field of international news pictures (with UPI being the most dominant, supplying to 679 clients thanks to the acquisition of a local American pictures agency- ACME- and a large cooperation achieved with European national agencies as well.<sup>208</sup> AP had 523 clients). But radiophoto was still not popular until UPI (and later AP) began to distribute its services to South and Central America, Europe, Asia and Australia. And even then, several countries around Europe and Asia were still not able to receive the service in the mid 1960's and the early 1970's. With Reuters and AFP showing no international interest, the emergence of 'wire photos' was clearly the outcome of the Americans' rivalry. As a result, huge amounts of resources were targeted at their picture services

---

<sup>205</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. (1998) 'Global' News Agencies. In: Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (eds.) The Globalization of News. London: Sage. P. 19-34.

<sup>206</sup> Fenby describes how the first pictures were sent to AP's clients by messengers and by post (Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Shocken Books). Only in 1935 was AP able to transmit its first news picture via telephone cables developed by Bell laboratories. The picture recorded was of a crashed aeroplane in the Adirondack Mountains, and was immediately transmitted to the agency's clients. It is considered to be the first official 'wire photo' used by the agencies (Zelizer, B. (1995) Journalist's "Last" Stand: Wirephoto and the discourse of Resistance. In: Journal of Communication 45(2), Spring: P. 78-92; Boyd-Barrett, O. (1980) The International News Agencies. London: Constable).

<sup>207</sup> Zelizer, B. (1995) Journalist's "Last" Stand: Wirephoto and the discourse of Resistance. In: Journal of Communication 45(2), Spring: P. 78-92

<sup>208</sup> Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Shocken Books.

and new technologies for the distribution of pictures were tested in both sides. AP, for instance, presented its 'Laserphoto' in 1974 (with laser beams used to transmit photos by wire) and later the 'Electronic Darkroom'. Yet the service was still not profitable.<sup>209</sup>

The two Americans enjoyed complete domination of the international news pictures market until the beginning of the 1980's. The French AFP attempted to enter the field as well, but failing to secure a deal with Reuters halted the strategy. Reuters was facing financial difficulties and preferred to focus on developing its financial information division as the means of stabilizing its resources. In 1985 AFP finally established its own picture service, but it was Reuters who positioned itself as the main competitor in the field of news pictures.<sup>210</sup> A financial comeback (given the amount of revenues coming from the Reuters Monitor Money Rates Services) led towards a merger with UPI and allowed Reuters to maintain a leading edge over the European pictures market, with UPI maintaining its grip on to the American one.

Reuters' business move led to a strong opposition within the company. The argument was that the picture service would not be profitable and was consequently an unwise investment of such major resources.<sup>211</sup> But Reuters had a lot of resources to spend thanks to its successful floatation, and a new toy in the form of a new picture service seemed like a great investment for the future. In a way, the decision to enter the field of international news pictures marked Reuters as the leading agency in the

---

<sup>209</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. (1980) The International News Agencies. London: Constable.

<sup>210</sup> In 1985 the European Press photo Agency (EPA) entered the European market of news pictures as well. Founded by seven major Western European national photo agencies it was originally tailored for the needs of the European media market. Among its shareholders today are: the Dutch ANP, the Austrian APA, the Italian ANSA, the Belgian Belga, the German DPA, the Spanish EFE, the Swiss KEYSTONE, the Portuguese LUSA, the Polish PAP, the Greek ANA and Hungary's national agency MTI. In 2003 EPA launched its new international photo service, planning to go 'global' ([www.epa.eu](http://www.epa.eu)). Even though in Reuters' records EPA is described as an important player in the European news pictures market (especially in its first years of operation), it never gained much power and is not considered to be a powerful competitor in the international arena since 1980's.

<sup>211</sup> Fenby, J. (1986) The International News Services. New York: Shocken Books.

field of international news pictures up until 1990's, when strong winds started to blow on the nape of its neck from the financial front.

### **3.2 Is Reuters on top of the world?**

A few years ago Reuters was described as the leading agency by the number of clients and revenues and the amount of resources spent on research and development worldwide.<sup>212</sup> As a company which positioned itself at the service of the international market right from its inception (and therefore did not have to rely mostly on the supply of information to the local British market, unlike its French and American competitors who relied on their local markets), its revenues were four times those of AP's and UPI's in foreign markets in the late 1970's, and its staff drawn from 160 different nationalities in the late 1980's. By 2000 Reuters had positioned itself as a financial information provider independent of media, with 95% of its revenues from stock brokers and banks and not the media.<sup>213</sup>

Being profitable, Reuters was able to invest in innovative technologies and these would set the tone for the use of computer technology. One of its turning points was its use of the Reuters Monitor Money Rates service- a computer screen showing all the different currencies, foreign and national, worldwide, and later the news reports from the different regions as well. In 1981 Reuters completed its 1970's innovation and made it possible for its clients to engage in financial transactions via its new transmission technology. By the beginning of the 1990's it reported that half of all

---

<sup>212</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2004) News Agencies as News Sources: A Reevaluation. In: Paterson, C. & Sreberny, A. (eds.) International News In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Eastleigh: University of Luton Press. P. 31-46.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

international financial information (estimated for the huge amount of \$1.2 trillion) was flowing through Reuters technology on a daily basis.<sup>214</sup>

The new technological approach was pushed in its news division as well. In 1973 Reuters developed computerised technology (IDR) which enhanced data transmission. For the first time Reuters journalists in New York used computerised units which allowed their work to be synchronised, making its operators shift between video segments, written text and information transmission on the same device.<sup>215</sup> A growth in demand led to the decision to make Reuters go public in 1984. The idea was to use the income from floatation in research and future investments in other technological developments. In terms of profit, the decision to go public was wise. Six months after taking over the UPI's picture service, Reuters opened its own pictures terminal followed by the acquisition of Visnews (1987), making profits go even higher.<sup>216</sup>

High profits had consequences. From an early stage the profit from the financial division became the main source of income for Reuters and led to a major dispute between Reuters' financial and news divisions. The 'Reuters news' division argued that investing in financial information was disguised as news. However, as vast revenues were coming in from its financial section (as opposed to its struggling news division), finance was favoured, and it was clear that major changes would eventually have to take place in Reuters' business strategy and organizational structure.<sup>217</sup> This clash was not the first and certainly not the last, but Reuters' future business strategy

---

<sup>214</sup> Bielsa, E. (2008) The pivotal role of news agencies in the context of globalization: a historical approach. In: *Global Networks* 8, 3. P. 347-366. See also [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com), 2006.

<sup>215</sup> See [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com), 2006.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Read points that Reuters revenues from media products in 1989 were at a total of £78.4 million compared to £162.7 million from transaction products and £945.8 million from information products going to financial markets (Read, D. (1999) *The power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849-1989*. New York: Oxford University press).

was already obvious; Reuters' prestigious line of news products were marginalised and absorbed into the Reuters financial brand. From this point on the 'quality' of its news products were judged by their commercial success.

The opposition dissolved, since Reuters' grip on to the financial information market was ever more powerful. Nonetheless, it was a sign for future challenges for Reuters. Summarised by Fredric Forsyth, one of Reuters' foreign representatives at the time, in Reuters' internal paper, addressing the acquisition of 'Comtel'<sup>218</sup> -

"For its first 120 years the agency founded by the old Baron was essentially synonymous with one thing- general news from abroad. On the general news side we all referred to Comtel in terms of some mystification as an arcane little outfit whose staff was concerned with the number crunching rather than the real business of political and general-news gathering. How wrong we turned out to be!"<sup>219</sup>

Yet the dispute left scars. These were evident during 1990's with a managerial battle which took place between marketing and editing considerations on a daily basis. In 1994 Reuters set up a closed circuit television service (RFTV)- a system designed to enable its clients to watch live feeds- but was forced to shut the service down because of its high costs.<sup>220</sup> The television service became a popular subject and source of argument in Reuters' corridors about whether it was worth investing in the service, transforming Reuters TV into a separate international news broadcasting channel around the clock like CNN, or settle only with the supply of video news materials to Reuters' clients as part of a Reuters package. The decision not to go

---

<sup>218</sup> A private company established at 1869 which was the main supplier of commercial prices between South America and London. It was owned by Reuters in 1944 after it was on the verge of collapse, and was said to be accountable for earning nearly one-third of the UK commercial service's revenues in late 1980's (Read, D. (1999) The power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849-1989. New York: Oxford University press).

<sup>219</sup> Forsyth cited in Ewha, B. J. (2003) News agency Wars: The Battle Between Reuters and Bloomberg. In: Journalism Studies Vol. 4(3) : P. 387-399.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.



through with the transition and not to transform the agency into a network was, for many, the main cause of the major financial difficulties Reuters would face in the following years.<sup>221</sup>

The investment in Reuters' news pictures infrastructure was profitable- especially after the 1998 football World Cup tournament in France, where Reuters astounded audiences and clients with its fast digital pictures transmission technology. However, the pictures division was facing major cutbacks since its revenues were not as high as expected (although considered relatively safe and assumed to be of great financial potential for the future).<sup>222</sup> The lack of coordination between Reuters' different divisions led to media products which were not synchronized with clients' demands. Management's complacency, bad customer services and a failure to understand the course of the international market added to the equation, and Reuters was suddenly placed in a static position, fuelling the hunger for control over the international financial market from an anonymous start-up company- Bloomberg- who grew up to be one of the leading companies in the financial information market.<sup>223</sup>

Unlike Reuters who went public in 1984, and is therefore obliged to report to its share holders, Bloomberg does not report its revenues and losses. Using Reuters' disadvantages in the financial market to its benefit it gained substantial power, and in 2002- for the first time since Reuters' days of glory in the 1980's- was the main reason for Reuters' major fall in revenue (in 2002 Reuters reported the price of £1.45 per share as opposed to £17 per share in 2000). From the turn of the millennium Bloomberg doubled its profits, and from 19.9% of all revenues in the international

---

<sup>221</sup> Ewha, B. J. (2003) News agency Wars: The Battle Between Reuters and Bloomberg. In: Journalism Studies Vol. 4(3) : P. 387-399.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

market has grown to as much as 38%; Reuters was only rising by 2% (from 44% to 46%).<sup>224</sup>

In 2006 Reuters claimed to be the biggest international news agency in the world- with 196 bureaus delivering information to around 130 different countries around the world, and with profits of £2.4 billion.<sup>225</sup> However, these figures disguised the real position of Reuters: it was struggling as a clumsy giant against the feline Bloomberg. Nonetheless, Reuters and Bloomberg managed to position themselves as two of the most powerful players in the international arena from the turn of the century, both struggling to maintain their pockets ‘deep enough’ in order to win the battle of control and dominate the international market of financial news information.<sup>226</sup>

In 2007 Reuters was the first to come to terms with its weaknesses- especially with an impending financial crisis. In May, the financial Canadian Thomson organization and Reuters agreed on the terms of a merger that was completed on April 2008 to become the world's largest provider of financial and news information. At a cost of £8.7 billion, the new Thomson Reuters merger was claimed as “...a watershed in the global information business”, that would “underpin the strength, integrity, and sustainability of Reuters as a global leader in news and financial information for many years to come”.<sup>227</sup>

As part of the acquisition deal, Thomson paid 352.5p in cash plus 0.16 of a share for each Reuters share, valuing the business at 691p a share and Reuters at \$17.2 billion. Under the agreement, the Thomson family holding company would own 53%

---

<sup>224</sup> Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2004) News Agencies As News Sources: A Reevaluation . In: Paterson, C. & Sreberny, A. (eds.) International News In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Eastleigh: University of Luton Press. P. 31-46.

<sup>225</sup> See [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com), 2006.

<sup>226</sup> See Ewha, B. J. (2003) News agency Wars: The Battle Between Reuters and Bloomberg. In: Journalism Studies Vol. 4(3) : p. 387-399. P. 398.

<sup>227</sup> Pehr Gyllenhammar, chairman of the Reuters founder share company trustees, cited in Wearden, G. & Allen, K. “Reuters agree to Thomson merger”. News. Media. The Guardian. 15 May 2007  
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2007/may/15/reuters.pressandpublishing>> [accessed April 2010].

of the combined company; other Thomson shareholders would own approximately 23% and Reuters' shareholders approximately 24%.<sup>228</sup> The new merged company headed by Reuters' former chief executive, Tom Glocer, alongside Thomson's David Thomson, would have 34% of the world market for financial data. This would be slightly above the 33% market share held by Bloomberg LP- the privately held developer of the Bloomberg terminals that appear on a lot of trading desks- thus overtaking Bloomberg at the top of the list of financial data market sector providers.<sup>229</sup> In addition, with further job cuts within a 'combined workforce' of around 50,000, the two companies were predicted to have annual savings of more than £500 million over three years.<sup>230</sup>

The merger did not go smoothly. One of the major concerns with the deal, especially from Reuters' side, was the damage it might do to the company's independence. Throughout its history, Reuters' reporters prided themselves of being un-biased, relying on the company's protection mechanisms. This had been protected when Reuters went public in 1984 by the creation of a special share held by Reuters Founders Share Company. This was created in order to block any takeover if Reuters' journalistic independence was compromised- with rules preventing any party from owning 15% or more of Reuters' stock.<sup>231</sup> The new Thomson ownership of a 53% stake in the newly merged company, claimed members of the transatlantic alliance of

---

<sup>228</sup> Wearden, G. & Allen, K. "Reuters agree to Thomson merger". News. Media. The Guardian. 15 May 2007 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2007/may/15/reuters.pressandpublishing>> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>229</sup> "Thomson and Reuters agree on 17\$ billion merger". Mergers and acquisitions. Dealbook. The New York Times. 15 May 2007 <<http://dealbook.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/05/15/thomson-and-reuters-agree-to-17-billion-merger/>> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>230</sup> Wearden, G. & Allen, K. "Reuters agree to Thomson merger". News. Media. The Guardian. 15 May 2007 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2007/may/15/reuters.pressandpublishing>> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>231</sup> "Thomson and Reuters agree on 17\$ billion merger". Mergers and acquisitions. Dealbook. The New York Times. 15 May 2007 <<http://dealbook.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/05/15/thomson-and-reuters-agree-to-17-billion-merger/>> [accessed April 2010].

unions, would be a violation of the Reuters “trust principle” protecting Reuters from being controlled by “any one interest, group or faction”.<sup>232</sup>

Thomson, it was argued, was responsible for the selling of the ‘Times’ and the ‘Sunday Times’ to Rupert Murdoch. The company might sell its share of Reuters to other, unsafe owners, in the future as well. The deal went through despite the Reuters Founders’ reservations thanks to Thomson's promise that similar Founders Shares would be held in both Thomson Reuters Corporation and Thomson Reuters plc, each adopting the Reuter Trust Principles.<sup>233</sup>

Serious doubts were also raised by the European commission as to whether there would still be enough room for fair competition in the market for financial information after the merger. There was the risk that the business customers for financial information would be dependent on a sole provider. A ‘remedies package’ providing ‘strong safeguards’ in order not to harm the users of financial data was offered by the merging companies, making the deal meet the terms of competition regulations.<sup>234</sup> Thus, rules such as the Reuters' 'special share' can be broken when money is running out, and 'Reuters news' was facing another strike. Reuters news is for making money (or at least not to stand in the way) and not the other way around.

Today, Thomson Reuters is worth around \$30 billion. Its income is estimated at \$13.2 billion, with 60% coming from financial information operations. Its revenues for the past twelve months are estimated at \$1.5 billion. It has 53,000 employees working in 93 countries operating 500,000 financial terminals around the world on a

---

<sup>232</sup> Wearden, G. & Allen, K. “Reuters agree to Thomson merger”. News. Media. The Guardian. 15 May 2007 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2007/may/15/reuters.pressandpublishing>> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Allen, K. “Thomson Reuters merger moves closer”. Business. The Guardian. 19 February 2008. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2008/feb/19/reutersgroup.reuters>> [accessed April 2010].

daily basis.<sup>235</sup> Controlled by the Thomson family who holds around 55% out of the total shares, 14% held by the Royal bank of Canada, and 31% traded in both New York and Toronto's stock markets, Reuters' share of all Thomson Reuters business is estimated at around 5%.<sup>236</sup> During the last recession Thomson Reuters was hit. The collapse of both the Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. and Bear Stearns Companies Inc., two of Thomson Reuters' major clients, had a huge impact on the corporation- with 60% of its income coming from the financial markets- with a drop of around 7-8% in its annual increase percentage (from 7-8% before the recession to slightly above 0% as to this day).<sup>237</sup> Yet, much like many other powerful corporations it managed to survive surprisingly well, probably because of its diverse activity.

Thomson Reuters has a strong presence in the international financial news market. It may continue to lead the market of financial information for some years, even though Bloomberg shows no signs of fatigue. Before the merger, Bloomberg- still enjoying the status of youth and innovation as opposed to 'old time' Reuters- was leading the financial market and now operates 300,000 terminals on a daily basis. Thomson Reuters' share of the market is only slightly bigger, being strongly competitive with Bloomberg in financial information terminals. At the same time, the future appears to hold other challenges for Thomson Reuters- especially now when Rupert Murdoch with his News corporation has set his eyes on the New York based

---

<sup>235</sup> 'Financial terminal' is the professional term used to describe a computerised system that enables financial professionals to access a financial information service (supplied by Bloomberg or Thomson Reuters for example) through which users can monitor and analyse financial market data movements and place trades in real-time.

<sup>236</sup> Handwerker, C. "Tom Glocer, Reuters CEO: If people pay for a ringtone, why not pay to read 2,000 words?". Consumerism. The Marker. 24 October 2009. Hebrew in origin, my translation. <<http://www.themarket.com/consumer/1.538405>> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>237</sup> Ibid. Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. was one of the biggest global financial services firms until it went bankrupt in 2008 under what is considered to be the biggest file for bankruptcy in US history (for the official file see [www.lehman-docket.com](http://www.lehman-docket.com)). Bear Stearns Company Inc. was a global investment bank, securities trading and brokerage until it collapsed and was sold to JPMorgan Chase in 2008. ([www.beartearn.com](http://www.beartearn.com))

'Dow Jones & company', standing as a target for a \$5 billion bid, wanting to enter the profitable financial information market<sup>238</sup>

Nonetheless, in the news division the future seems more promising for Thomson Reuters, even though the news industry is dramatically changing (with the rise of citizen journalism, for instance, opposing the financial difficulties of news papers, forcing Thomson Reuters and its competitors in the news industry to adjust accordingly.<sup>239</sup>) Despite the recession Reuters' news division has grown (from 2400 to 2700 journalists). AP, Reuters' main competitor in the international news arena, is still a formidable competitor. Nevertheless, the recession damaged many US papers, which are still one of AP's main sources of income. Unlike Reuters, it has no financial information division to hold on to and may very well find itself thrown out of the international arena, as was the case with its American rival UPI.

"Thomson Reuters continues to grow" said Mitch Kopelman, the 1985 assistant pictures editor for North America and the current Thomson Reuters' vice president for broadcast services of the Americas, "...revenues are growing, profits are growing through this downturn. Reuters has been strengthened by its acquisition. ...AP doesn't have a financial news service, or a data base operation or a scientific information service... they are not diverse. They are not diverse at all, and their core market has been badly damaged by this recession".<sup>240</sup> The merger with Thomson was a wise business decision, for now. But its leaders say that competition

---

<sup>238</sup> "Thomson and Reuters agree on 17\$ billion merger". Mergers and acquisitions. Dealbook. The New York Times. 15 May 2007 <<http://dealbook.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/05/15/thomson-and-reuters-agree-to-17-billion-merger/>> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>239</sup> Glocer himself mentioned recently that citizen journalism is the next step for stringers, for "...sometimes the best news items come from them. When an Air France plane crashed we did not have any photographers at the spot, but we bought pictures from airplanes fans who happened to be there for €250 and those pictures made it to the front pages". (Glocer cited in Keinan, E. "Reuters CEO: good news are coming from surfers". Computers. Ynet, 21 October 2009. Hebrew in origin, my translation. <<http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3793342,00.html>> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>240</sup> Mitch Kopleman, the 1985 assistant pictures editor for North America and the current Thomson Reuters vice president for broadcast services of the Americas, 2009.

is good for business, and that the international market has its own rules, “From my experience” said Tom Glocer after being asked about the company's competition with Bloomberg, “If you do not have any competition you become chubby, lazy and satisfied, and end up losing it all”.<sup>241</sup>

### **3.3 The story of the Reuters picture service**

Is Reuters a news organization with a missionary agenda, an agent dedicated to 'deliver the world to the world'? or is it a huge news factory responsible for the production of news and financial information worldwide? It was revenues coming from the supply of financial information which made it possible for Reuters to survive as a distinguished, independent, quality news organization. So much so, that Reuters' news could easily be treated as some 'toy' thrown to the company's news personnel; Reuters' leaders, heavily rooted in the financial division, would then watch their 'little brother' play with pride. Without those revenues and Reuters' successful floatation in mid 1980's, there is also reason to believe there would have been no Reuters picture service.

This research depends on the Reuters archive from when the Reuters picture service was officially established in 1985. It begins with the purchase of UPI's US pictures service and ends with the contemporary business. It explores the ways Reuters managed to finance the production of pictures; to build a new network for the picture service; to invest in (and develop) new technologies of distribution, consumption and operation while being constantly on guard with its research; to study

---

<sup>241</sup> Glocer interviewed in Handwerker, C. “Tom Glocer, Reuters CEO: If people pay for a ringtone, why not pay to read 2,000 words?”. Consumerism. The Marker. 24 October 2009. Hebrew in origin, my translation. < <http://www.themarker.com/consumer/1.538405>> [accessed April 2010]. [accessed April 2010] ).

its markets, its competitors and clients; to create new lines of products in the form of news pictures within an already fully operational organization, and deal with the difficulties that such changes resulted in.

Establishing its picture service during 1980's not only helped Reuters make a strong entry into the international pictures market when international news had just entered a new digital era. It also helped Reuters build a strong business and technological model at a point when new models were necessary. More than that, it used its picture service operations to establish the basis and the new infrastructure for a future multimedia business. In that sense, the story of the Reuters picture service tells the story of news making as a whole. It may serve as a prompt for further investigation of news organizations, their production lines and final news outputs- as commodities sold to maximize the organization's profits, and profits depended on 'newsworthiness'.

### **3.3.1 A 'strong start' and the 'best of both worlds'**

Reuters' decision to establish its picture service in the mid eighties seems puzzling, especially since it was taken nearly fifty years after the first wire photo was transmitted by AP.<sup>242</sup> One explanation might be that Reuters was just not 'interested' in pictures. And why would it be? It already had a solid circle of international subscribers using its financial text information services. It was already technologically

---

<sup>242</sup> Zelizer, B. (1995) Journalist's "Last" Stand: Wirephoto and the discourse of Resistance. In: Journal of Communication 45(2), Spring: P. 78-92. In the "Reuters World" monthly paper from June 1995 it is said that between 1945-1965 Reuters was involved in a pictures' operation with the UK domestic PA called the 'PA-Reuter Photos Ltd.', supplying pictures to the UK and international clients. Around 1958 the service was almost under PA's complete control until 1965 when Reuters withdrew completely, leaving its representatives disappointed with '...no picture service to offer when negotiating contracts' (see Read's first edition in Read, D. (1999/1992) The power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849- 1989. NewYork: Oxford University press. P. 253; see also "A tumultuous decade: Ten years of change in Reuters news pictures". In "Reuters World", Issue No. 104, June 1995, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 24 ).



advanced (especially after its booming period of growth in 1970's) compared to its rivals, and the company was just about to 'go public'- getting ready to sell its privately held shares to new investors. Things were working well and according to plan.

However, Glen Renfrew, the company's managing director, realised that in order for Reuters to remain competitive it would have to position itself not only as a leading supplier of text and financial data information, but rather as a multimedia company. Renfrew, an Australian who joined Reuters in 1952, had both the experience of computerised business and the vision for the digitization of information. He had been involved in the first computerised development of Reuters' financial news services, and was keen on reaching a huge market early in the 1970's. He would be remembered as one of the most successful managing directors Reuters had had, achieving an 'explosive growth' throughout his decade in control (1981-1991) thanks to a highly successful floatation. This also turned Renfrew himself into a wealthy man.<sup>243</sup> Although Renfrew had tried to push the floatation scheme at the beginning of the 1980's, he realised that a picture service would distinguish Reuters from many of its competitors such as the Dow Jones.

He put together a team (known later on as the Picture Project Group, PPG) to study the market. It was headed by Peter Holland, former manager of Reuters Overseas, news products manager Nick Carter, technical manager Mike Griffin and former assistant financial manager Reg Pritchard. Charlie McCarthy- a new member on board after working as UPI's news picture editor for Europe, the Middle East and Africa for 11 years- joined as team consultant.<sup>244</sup> As the project was to enter an

---

<sup>243</sup> See Fenby, J. "Glen Renfrew: The man who took Reuters to market and into the digital age". Obituary. The Guardian. 7 July 2006.

<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/jul/1/07/reuters.pressandpublishing>>  
[accessed January 2011].

<sup>244</sup> In late 1984, once the deal with UPI went through, new faces would join the team: the Washington picture desk editing services for North, Central and South America, would be headed by Robert

already established market, each member of the team had to be carefully selected, highly experienced, and acquire the knowledge of what the picture market had to offer and what it was missing; together they would make the idea of an innovative digital picture service come to life.

In order to supply their clients with pictures, Reuters needed first to source its images, and the fact it was already considered a big and powerful organization did not seem to help. National agencies were the main suppliers of pictures (mainly to UPI), and since negotiations over rates on their text operations were already in progress with Reuters, the agencies became suspicious of Reuters and feared that this big organization would be ‘gobbling up everybody’.<sup>245</sup> The team, therefore, concentrated first on the large US market to buy picture supplies from. The first talks were with the Gannett team- owner of ‘USA Today’- after the failure of negotiations with UPI six months earlier.<sup>246</sup> In the spring of 1984 the talks collapsed, and some sources suggested that it was because of an attempt by AP representatives to offer some

---

Schnitzlein- a former ACME photographer and UPI and the general manager of UPI’s international pictures division in Brussels. The Brussels picture desk, responsible for services to Europe, Africa and the Middle East would be headed by Steve Crisp- the former UPI’s pictures’ editor for the same region. Gary Kemper, a former UPI’s London pictures bureau manager, would take over the Hong Kong desk responsible for Asia, Australia and New Zealand. Hal Moore, the former picture editor of the Miami Herald, would become responsible for the picture coverage from and for Latin America. Claudie Salhani, a former UPI international picture editor in Beirut, would be responsible for the Middle East. Mitch Kopelman would become assistant pictures editor for North America after working for UPI and as USA Today’s director of photography, and Joseph Marquette would become chief photographer in North America after a 27 year career at UPI. The group would be headed by Hans Ouwerkerk who joined Reuters in 1970 as a sales executive and held senior general management positions in Europe and Asia (see “Photo experts snapped up” in “Reuters world” no. 26, December 1984, Reuters Archive (RA), London, P. 8).

<sup>245</sup> Steve Crisp, the 1985 head of the Reuters pictures Brussels’ desk and the Thomson Reuters chief photographer for the Middle East and Africa, 2011.

<sup>246</sup> Gannett Co., Inc. is an American news, information and communications company originated in 1906. In 1979 the team owned 78 daily news papers in 33 US states and Guam, a national news service, 7 television and 14 radio stations, outdoor advertising plants in the US and Canada and 21 weekly news papers. It was also the founder of the national news paper ‘USA Today’ in 1982 (www.gannett.com).

‘savings’ to Allen H. Neuharth- Gannett’s CEO at the time and the founder of ‘USA Today’- to “...make the Reuters conversations go away”.<sup>247</sup>

Which they did. Although for Reuters this turned out for the best. Gannett’s papers were relatively small in the US market at the time, and did not have a strong presence beyond Washington, New York and Los Angeles; most of their papers were located in small cities. And although capable of supplying some sources of images for the future Reuters picture service, it did not provide Reuters with the kind of coverage needed from the larger US cities. UPI was already facing a deteriorating financial condition, and within six weeks the deal was already on its way.

In June 1984, a 10-year agreement was signed between Reuters and UPI, enabling Reuters to launch its full news pictures service outside the United States in January 1985. Reuters paid \$3 million to UPI for the exclusive use of its International pictures’ business with an additional \$300,000 for existing contracts, equipment and other assets for the first five years, and \$2.46 million for the subsequent five years. Reuters gained exclusive rights outside the United States for UPI’s pictures from the US, while UPI received exclusive rights for the distribution of Reuters’ pictures inside the US, although Reuters retained the revenues from the sales of its Reuters’ pictures in the US market.

In addition, Reuters agreed to pay UPI the sum of \$41,000 per month for five years, with the possibility of varying the fee according to the revenues from the picture service during that period.<sup>248</sup> \$20,000 would be deducted from the fee if UPI was not able to obtain Reuters access to UPI’s pictures library. UPI agreed to consult

---

<sup>247</sup> Mitch Kopleman, the 1985 assistant pictures editor for North America and the current Thomson Reuters vice president for broadcast services of the Americas, 2009. In January 25<sup>th</sup> 1985 a memo was sent from Reuters’ management to Hans Ouwerkerk, the first Reuters picture service’s manager, with greetings for a good successful first month “...despite the traumas of the first month..” and “despite the “sabotage” attempts“, indicating, perhaps, a disruptive attempt made by AP (see ‘Pictures’ memo sent from PMH to Hans Ouwerkerk, January 25<sup>th</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London.)

<sup>248</sup> See “Reuter/UPI Picture Agreement”, June 25<sup>th</sup> 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1-3.

Reuters about all policies, and Reuters would have the first option to take over UPI's US pictures business if UPI filed for bankruptcy or decided to leave the business.<sup>249</sup> If UPI failed, Reuters would lose £1.3 million in the first year, but had a profit of £1.6 million in the second and profits of up to £3.5 million by year five.<sup>250</sup> Nonetheless, the two agencies would continue to run separate news wires inside and outside the US, while 24 out of UPI's 260 news and pictures bureaus worldwide would become part of the Reuters picture service.<sup>251</sup>

The new agreement, described by Glen Renfrew as a "strong start" and "the best of both worlds" by UPI's chief executive Douglas Ruhe, was meant to expand the service to agencies' subscribers.<sup>252</sup> With 100 US pictures moving on the UPI's wire on a daily basis (making a total of three-fourths of UPI's pictures service) its subscribers could enjoy their full domestic pictures report with the addition of Reuters' international one.<sup>253</sup> All pictures would be sent to subscribers through the regular UPI's telephoto network at first, and transmitted by the Reuters' communications system after the transition period. UPI was allowed to maintain its independent contracts with non-US news wire subscribers, but international photo contracts would be assigned to Reuters.<sup>254</sup>

The picture services' editorial structure was designed to replicate the regional variations in the market. It was organised in three time zones covering America, Europe and Asia. Picture editors were appointed in Washington, Brussels and Hong

---

<sup>249</sup> See "Reuter/UPI Picture Agreement", June 25<sup>th</sup> 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 2.

<sup>250</sup> See "Editorial report", January 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 19.

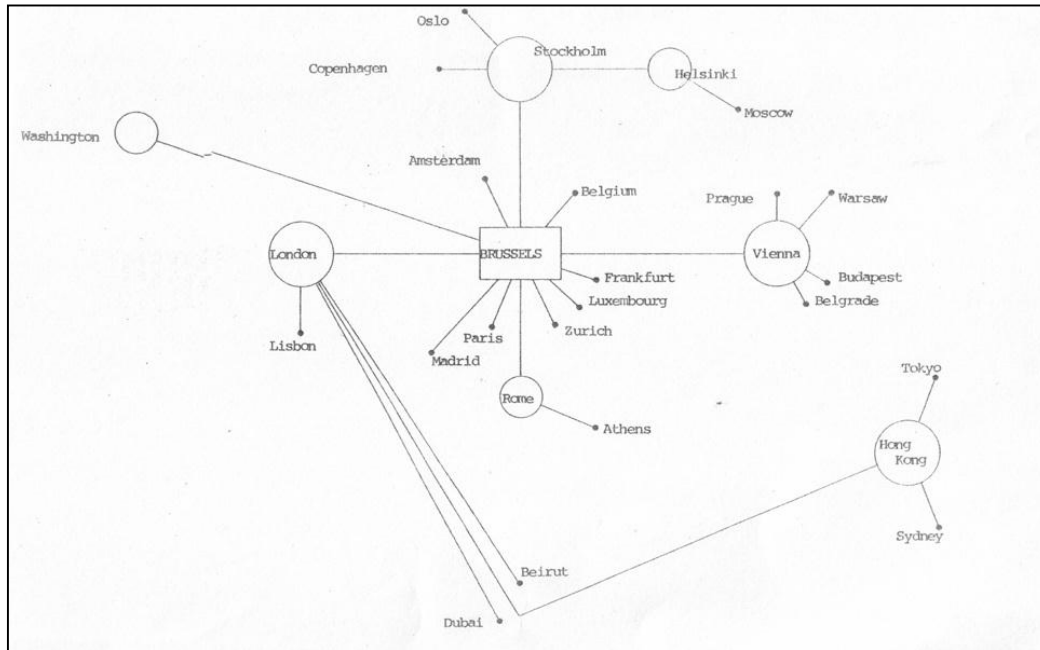
<sup>251</sup> See a memo sent by Peter Holland under "UPI-Reuters", June 25<sup>th</sup> 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1. See also "\$5.76m deal gives picture service a head start", in "Reuters World" No. 23, July 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

<sup>252</sup> Renfrew cited in "Reuters and UPI in News Pictures Agreement", Reuters Press release, June 25<sup>th</sup> 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1. See also Ruhe cited in "\$5.76m deal gives picture service a head start", in "Reuters World" No. 23, July 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

<sup>253</sup> See service message "UPI-Reuters 1STADD Washington 6-25", June 25<sup>th</sup> 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

Kong, and special editors would take charge of pictures from Latin America and the Middle East; all to make sure that Reuters' pictures were "...full of vivid action, original angles, and those human moments which capture the hearts of stories", aimed to provide "...the best photos from every centre worldwide".<sup>255</sup>



*Reuters picture network, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1985 (day 1, line links only shown, RA)*

US pictures would be transmitted through the Washington office by Reuters' pictures staff using full colour, black and white darkroom, printing facilities and a new 'Muirhead electronic pictures desk' for the editing and transmission of pictures. Brussels and Hong Kong would start using the Muirhead desks later the same year, and all would be linked by high-speed circuits.<sup>256</sup> A "Reuter" credit would appear on each picture supplied directly by Reuters. Pictures supplied from the UPI's US file

<sup>255</sup> Hans Ouwerkerk, the former Reuters news pictures project manager, cited in one of Reuters press releases, December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 3. See also section 2.2.2 under 'The Reuter network' in "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>256</sup> See sections 2.2.7 and 3.1 under 'High technology' and 'how editing centres and desks will inter-relate' in "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London.

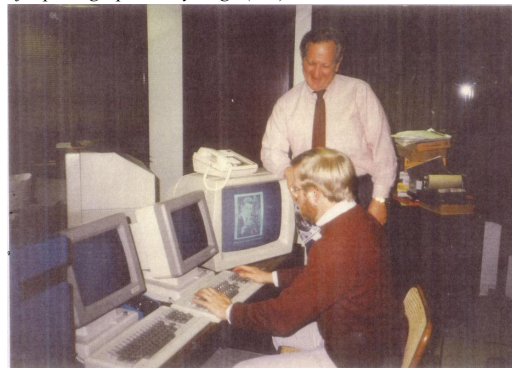
and distributed by Reuters would be credited “Reuter-UPI”, and Reuters pictures distributed by UPI in the US would be credited “UPI-Reuter”.<sup>257</sup>

Having relationships with other local news pictures agencies, Reuters managed to work with an additional 250 photographers in addition to its own staff (more than 60 photographers in 30 cities with additional stringers- cameramen not on the full-time staff) and included PA’s news pictures (the British Press Association) and the Swiss ‘Keystone’ in its international picture services.<sup>258</sup> Another deal signed with the Kraus-Thomson organization Ltd.- owners of the Bettman archive which managed the UPI pictures library- meant that its subscribers could enjoy access to one of the world’s largest collections of news and historical pictures contained both in the UPI photo library and the Bettman archive in New York (with an estimated 17 million negatives.)<sup>259</sup> Reuters’ clients were also

able to buy pictures directly from the Bettman’s archive, sell for secondary markets such as magazines and book publishers and pay Reuters a commission for each sale.<sup>260</sup>

Taking advantage of the company’s enormous worldwide

*The electronic pictures desk (EPD) in Washington, 1985. The desk enabled pictures to be received, edited, stored and transmitted electronically without any need of a ‘hard copy’ of a photograph at any stage (RA.)*



communications network and exploiting its well known brand, Reuters was already developing new communications and hardware solutions. Electronic picture desks

<sup>257</sup> See “Pictures/Briefing”, a memo sent to RNA (Reuters North America) staff under Q&A, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 3.

<sup>258</sup> See “Reuters News Pictures- Background feature” under Reuters press release, December 31<sup>st</sup> 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 3-4.

<sup>259</sup> The archive also included the complete resources of the BBC Hulton Picture library and the News Features of Underwood & Underwood from 1880 (See “UPI Photo Library/ Bettmann Archive” from Reuters archive (RA), London, and under “Pictures/Promotion”, November 14<sup>th</sup> 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London).

<sup>260</sup> See “Pictures/Briefing”, a memo sent to RNA (Reuters North America) staff under Q&A, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

(EPD) were bought for all three time-zones' editorial centres as the means of smoothing and speeding the picture flow, while permitting editing without a reduction of picture quality. And the desks would also be linked by high speeds with enlarged capacity, so that each centre could select different outputs for its regional services.

In the Middle East, Mexico, Central America and Northern Latin America radio casts would be replaced by continuous line services. Plans were made in order to avoid quality loss caused by the analogue/digital conversion equipment which was already in use by AP and AFP.<sup>261</sup> High-resolution cameras and wideband communications links became normal.<sup>262</sup> Digital store-and-select receivers, offering a major increase in picture choice, a decrease in paper and chemical costs and direct links into pagination systems were planned as well. Reuters also planned later to introduce its subscribers to digital storage units, an all-colour service, graphics and digital archiving of pictures retrieved by reference to captions searchable in the basic historical database.<sup>263</sup>

A pricing system was developed, dependent on the uses and location of transmission of images. The first picture handed in at a network point would cost a subscriber \$35 and \$20 for each picture thereafter. A picture handed in at a transmission point would cost \$35 with tolls. A special picture from a network point by a staff photographer would cost \$60 and \$30 for additional ones. Special assignments would cost \$200 with additional travel cost and tolls for half a day's

---

<sup>261</sup> See section 7.1-7.3 in "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>262</sup> Electronic cameras were immediately preferred. Even though 'Sony' already had its 'Mavica' camera out in the market, 'Canon', 'Panasonic' and 'Hitachi' were turning into the leading companies in the field. However, none of their cameras offered the resolution required for print-quality pictures. Reuters was still waiting for the next generation of cameras, with a stronger CCD chip, to arrive later on (See "US and Canada trip, 29 September- 4 October 1986", a memo sent by Hans Ouwerkerk, October 9<sup>th</sup> 1986, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 4).

<sup>263</sup> See sections 7.2.5-7.2.10 in "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London.

work and 350\$ for a full day. Colour transmissions would cost 150\$ within the same area and 250\$ from one area to another.<sup>264</sup>

Because its competitors were already established, Reuters could learn from their technologies and solve the faults they had encountered while constructing its own system of operations. One of the main concerns was to improve the pictures' transmission process. This was relatively simple: a photographer would take a picture with his 35mm camera, develop the film and make an 8'x10' print. The print was then placed upon the rotating drum of a transmitter after having a typed caption stuck on the print with a 'sticky back' paper.<sup>265</sup> A pinpoint beam of light scanned the picture and reflected to a sensor which converted it into an analogue electronic signal. That same signal was then transmitted over telephone circuits to a receiver, which then converted the signal back into a visual image.<sup>266</sup>

However, the process was slow, and Reuters worked on enhancing the speed of pictures' transmission without harming their quality. With current transmitters at standard speeds of 60 and 120 rpm (revolutions per minute to measure a rotation's frequency) the transmission of a standard monochrome picture (8'x10 or 20'x25) took around 15 minutes at a speed of 60 rpm. In the US, UPI was operating with a transmission time of 120 rpm (9 minutes) while AP's transmission speed at the US market was at the rate of 144 rpm (The transmission of colour pictures took 40-45 minutes using UPI's domestic transmission format of 120 rpm, although both UPI and AP did not run many colour pictures on their networks at the time).<sup>267</sup> In simple words,

---

<sup>264</sup> See sections 4.4.2-4.4.6 in "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>265</sup> Mitch Kopleman, the 1985 assistant pictures editor for North America and the current Thomson Reuters vice president for broadcast services of the Americas, 2009.

<sup>266</sup> See a memo sent to Reuters North America (RNA) under "Pictures/briefing" Q&A, December 27<sup>th</sup> 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

<sup>267</sup> See sections 7.1.2-7.1.6 in "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London.



Reuters was hoping to make the entire pictures transmission process much faster, and in a business where technology was constantly changing and time was of the essence, one option to give Reuters an advantage was to switch from analogue to digital.

### **3.3.2 Getting ready for launch and plans on going digital**

Digitized transmission could solve the problem of 'fading'- a decrease in picture quality- at the more distant 'legs' of the network. It allowed pictures to be multiplexed together with other data and produced perfect pictures to be transmitted even over noisy lines and in bad conditions (bad weather, for instance, which could have damaged pictures transmitted analogically). In 1985, in order to make the transition from analogue to digital, Reuters had to use a converter as part of its transmission operations, and while AP and AFP were both using a 'Sytyin' converter at a bit rate of 7200 bps, Reuters was planning on operating its service with a newer unit manufactured by 'Hell'. Unlike the 'Sytyin' unit, the new 'Hell' one was able to compress as well as digitize using a simple differential encoding technique to reduce the data volume by a factor of 4:1.<sup>268</sup>

However, digitized transmitters were not, in themselves, the solution for speeding the overall transmission process. A magazine-quality picture, for example, required the resolution of 2048x1792 pixels. An average picture represented some 3.5 mega bytes of data which might have taken nearly 2 hours to transmit at a rate of 4800 bps (bits per second).<sup>269</sup> The key, therefore, to speed it up was either compression or by the use of higher bandwidth than was available. With the use of

---

<sup>268</sup> See sections 7.1.3-7.1.6 in "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid, sections 7.1.3, 7.1.5. The 'Hell' converter was supposed to be deployed at a transmission rate of 7200 bps on existing circuits or at 4800 bps on lines which were introduced in place of radio transmission wherever this was justified by line cost savings.

new compression hardware, while the cost of high bandwidth communications was gradually decreasing, Reuters would have the opportunity for substantially improving its pictures' transmission. In a rate of 4800 bps, a monochrome news picture would be transmitted in 3.5 minutes, a high definition one in 7, a colour picture in 10.5 minutes and a colour magazine-quality picture in 21 minutes.<sup>270</sup>

At the same time, research into the best receivers for clients- whether in the form of the liquid 'electrostatic' or the laser 'dry-silver'- to place at the clients' end was developed.<sup>271</sup> 'Soft-copy' monitors (which could receive analogue picture transmission but store them in digital form on disc, making them available to view on screen) were checked as well.<sup>272</sup> 'Digital desks' were designed to enable re-captioning, sizing, cropping and contrast enhancements with a click of a button or a mouse.

To absorb the new service into Reuters' world network, an editing desk was established in Washington to connect Reuters with UPI's US network while using it as a base from which to distribute the service in Latin, Central and South America. The Brussels' desk would be linked with Hong Kong which was served by a line from New York via Hawaii. Leased lines would replace existing radio casts in Latin and South America, the Far and Middle East. Reuters' fully developed digital network would include three main elements: the editing centre, the distribution node and the subscriber receiver. Editing centres would be established in Europe, North America and the Far East, and linked at a transmission speed of 56kbps- fast enough to ensure

---

<sup>270</sup> In a 56 kbps rate, the same one for linking Reuters' editing centres, a monochrome news picture would be transmitted in 18 seconds, a high definition one in 36, a colour in 54 and a magazine picture in 1 minute and 48 seconds (see "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, section 7.2.11).

<sup>271</sup> Ibid, sections 7.1.10-7.1.16. Reuters eventually chose the electrostatic 'Unifax II' that was used by UPI, probably given its low cost, although it did require liquid or dry toner and a stylus to reproduce the image and thus more maintenance to the chemicals.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, Sections 7.1.12-7.1.13. Muirhead was working on an electronic picture desk assumed to offer all the functions of an electronic darkroom. Its soft-copy monitor was based on the IBM-PC with plans for a 64kbt digital version in 1986 and a colour version a year later.

that all picture editors in all three desks would have equal access to the estimated daily sum of 500 pictures.

Each centre would have at least two editing work stations, where editors would be able to re-caption, crop, rotate pictures and more.<sup>273</sup> Nodes would be established in countries with great client-bases in order to store and forward pictures from the editing centres to and from clients, and from Reuters' photographers to the editing centres. The nodes were designed to have the storage of up to 120 pictures. Subscribers' receivers would be based on a micro-computer with the ability to decompress the digitally received pictures. In this way, they were able to print only the pictures they had finally selected (and thus save an estimated £4000 pa on printed pictures which were not chosen), view all the pictures on a screen, print picture captions on a line-printer and were capable of storing up to 50 pictures. With the addition of the right hardware and software, users could edit the pictures they selected as well. The entire network was designed to handle colour requirements once those became part of the service's daily use. Transmission through the network would be digital, and the system was designed to store and transmit images in a resolution of up to 2048x1792 pixels (almost twice the resolution of analogue to digital converters back then).<sup>274</sup>

The ground was set for Reuters to put its new born picture service in motion while, at the same time, pursuing the development of the world's first digital network for the transmission of pictures. They kept a close watch on their competitors, "If we don't do it" said Hans Owuerkerk, Reuters pictures' manager at the time, "AP who

---

<sup>273</sup>See "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London, sections 7.2.1-7.2.5.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid, see sections 7.2.4, 7.2.5, 7.2.10 and 7.3.6.2. Although each element would receive and transmit in analogue (at least in the first stages) given that the process would be based on clients' technology and existing hardware. The success of the digital transmission process was very much dependent on clients' receivers, and Reuters was well aware of that. As a result, a similar digital pictures' terminal was eventually developed and sold to users a few years later.

have their own development staff dedicated to their picture service, or AFP, who have access to considerable capital sums from the French tax payer, probably will".<sup>275</sup>

### **3.3.3 Straight into the cold waters of competition**

It was hard in the beginning. Most national agencies did not want to cooperate and supply their pictures to Reuters. The first priority was to find experienced photographers- mainly since there was no time for training- and have them deployed as soon as possible in order to cover stories in Germany and France. Nonetheless, the launch was seen as a success. In three months Reuters had 352 subscribers paying \$25 to \$53,000 a month. The ten largest subscribers (accounting for 30% of the service's monthly income) were the Sun telephoto (Japan), Keystone (Switzerland), Mainichi (Japan), Politiken (Denmark), News Limited (Australia), Pressensbild (Sweden), Lehtikuva (Finland), La Nacion (Argentina) and the Herald & Weekly Times (Australia).<sup>276</sup>

Reuters also began paying attention to the magazine market which consumed a great quantity of quality pictures. Although many magazines still used black and white prints, the market was moving to colour. With magazines' special needs in mind, Reuters wanted to offer perfect solutions to special requests and supply library pictures in advance. Thus, once all three electronic darkrooms became operational, one option was to supply clients with special offers of pictures other than those already received through their regular service, and decide whether they prefer them to

---

<sup>275</sup> Owerkerk cited in section 7.3.1.6 under 'Reuters opportunity', in "The Reuter News pictures service guide", December 1984, Reuters archive (RA), London .

<sup>276</sup> See a memo sent to the general manager from Hans Owerkerk under "News pictures- Marketing plan", March 28<sup>th</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 3-4.

be quality printed.<sup>277</sup> Another boost for the revenues from magazine subscribers was to sell them access to the Bettman's archives through Reuters' desks. Magazines often traded directly with the archives, but the new Reuters service meant that they could receive a copy of their chosen pictures and not miss their deadlines if the print did not arrive in time from the archives.<sup>278</sup>

Reuters studied its new market intensively, comparing the successes and failures of its service with that of its competitors. Who won in the competition for the best, most used pictures of major events was researched but so too were failures. In March, for instance, reports showed that Reuters was slightly 'losing ground' in the UK with 89 credits while AP had 139, but 490 for Reuters on Continental Europe with 494 for AP and 163 for AFP/EPA.<sup>279</sup> In June reports showed a loss on the Bangladesh cyclone to AP, "...who moved a photographer quickly into the area while we [Reuters] relied on a stringer. However, we scored well from Rome on the Pope Plot trial, renewed fighting and abduction of Finish UN troops in Lebanon, the French tennis championships, clashes between police and workers in a Paris factory and the Paris air show".<sup>280</sup> In August Reuters overtook AP in the UK for the first time with a play of 53% in British newspapers.<sup>281</sup> In January 1986, reports showed Reuters' pictures had its biggest success covering the Geneva summit between Reagan and Gorbachev on November 1985, including three 'double-trucks' (a pair of facing pages in a newspaper or a magazine with a similar visual content stretched on both) in

---

<sup>277</sup> See a memo sent to the general manager from Hans Ouwerkerk under "News pictures- Marketing plan", March 28<sup>th</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 8-9.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, P. 8-9.

<sup>279</sup> See "RE News Pictures monthly report" under editorial, March 29<sup>th</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 3.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, P. 2.

<sup>281</sup> See "News picture service- August report", August 28<sup>th</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

“Stern” Magazine, a first-time use of colour in the German “Die Welt” and front page pictures of the “Herald Tribune” on every day of the summit.<sup>282</sup>

Technical issues were also improved, including the quality of transmission from the 'far legs' of the network. A trial distribution of pictures via satellite using small dish receivers began in Latin American countries, and later in France.<sup>283</sup> Special attention was paid to the quality of cameras since photographers were still working with their own equipment (in Athens, for instance, it was mentioned in the reports once that a Reuters' staff photographer was using only his single 120£ auto-focus pocket Nikon).<sup>284</sup> As a result, on occasions bureaus had to rent better equipment. This was expensive. It eventually led to negotiations over a worldwide deal with Nikon to supply at a special rate the Nikon camera, and thus establish a professional standard for the service.<sup>285</sup>

Yet the picture service also immediately hit technical transmission problems. A few weeks after the launch, the biggest Brazilian regional paper in Bahia- “Correio Da Bahia”- complained about delay in receiving Reuters' pictures of the Brazilian president elect, Tancredo Neves, from his European state visit. This affected local editors badly. The pictures were 24-hours late, and there was no coordination between the pictures and the agency's textual news service. As it happened, a picture of the Brazilian president elect, together with the Italian president, was transmitted on January 25<sup>th</sup> at 15:00 GMT from the Reuters bureau in Rome to UPI New York via Brussels. And twenty minutes later an additional picture of the Brazilian president with his family during their audience with the Pope was transmitted via the same

---

<sup>282</sup> See “RE News Pictures monthly report”, January 6<sup>th</sup> 1986, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 2.

<sup>283</sup> See “RE Pictures Meeting- 3 July 1985” under “Minutes of RE Pictures meeting on Wednesday 3 July”, July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 2.

<sup>284</sup> See “RE News pictures September”, September 19<sup>th</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

<sup>285</sup> See “Minutes of RE Pictures meeting on Wednesday 3 July ”, July 11<sup>th</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 8 for the negotiations with Nikon.

route. But unfortunately for Reuters the pictures were not incorporated in the Latin American cast by mistake.<sup>286</sup>

On the same day, a picture of the Iranian prime minister was also requested in Nicaragua but was not provided since the Reuters' stringer was "...off base and his stand-in failed to provide the picture".<sup>287</sup> Not a good day for Reuters' pictures. In March, the "News limited of Australia" complained that a picture of the youngest heart and lungs transplant patient, the Australian toddler Brooke Mathews, was picked by the UPI desk and not cleared through Brussels for more than 8 hours. The Australians were furious about the delay in receiving the picture for major Australian human interest story.<sup>288</sup> Improvements had to be made, especially to Reuters' photo reporting strength in Central and Latin America. But mistakes were taken seriously and the services' managers thought them through, knowing that a first impression is crucial for the operation to become successful.

However, there was another problem. Would the service make profit? A pessimistic strategy memo forecast a loss of \$2.858 million, with revenues of only \$1.6333 million from 1985. On the one hand, the acquisition of the new 'Hell' converters would reduce communications costs by 25%. On the other hand, Reuters had to recruit more staff which would increase losses.<sup>289</sup> The size of the Reuters pictures service deficit was mounting, and although the heavy losses were sustainable in the short term, a solution had to be found before it was too late. The answer to the financial problem- it was suggested- was more investment in even more up to date technology and expansion, "The only justification of continuing the project is the

---

<sup>286</sup> This was usually transmitted daily from New York at 18:00-20:00 GMT.

<sup>287</sup> See a memo sent by Hans Ouwerkerk to the general manager and the service message attached to it regarding the two incidents, January 30<sup>th</sup> 1985, Complaints' file, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>288</sup> See a letter addressed to Charley McCarthy from "News Limited of Australia", March 11<sup>th</sup> 1985, Complaints' file, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>289</sup> See "RE Strategy meeting- News pictures and other media", April 29<sup>th</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

belief that a new product will provide us with important profits in the future” was one of the main conclusions of the memo.<sup>290</sup> Reuters needed to develop a colour/graphics product delivered at high speed, possibly combined with a client terminal.

In February 1986 the idea of a new technology designed to enable a video-to-still transfer was one means of improving the service’s technological position.<sup>291</sup> At the same time, Reuters brought in extra capacity. Negotiations with NBC on an exclusive licence to use NBC’s video images to generate still pictures were already in progress.<sup>292</sup> Meanwhile, plans were already on the table for developing a new ‘client terminal’ (a computerised infrastructure designed to enable the storage, processing and editing of Reuters’ pictures by editors at the client’s end). At least 100 terminals were required as soon as possible, because Reuters was anxious that AFP’s new darkroom ‘Pixar’ terminal would beat them.<sup>293</sup> So, in June, Reuters signed a contract with ‘Logica’ and the second phase of the development started.<sup>294</sup>

Reuters also planned to break into the market for fast, high quality, colour services. Concentrating on spot news and having the pictures delivered to subscribers the same day would give Reuters a head start in a market that had just began to enter the digital age. Using powerful transmitters, Reuters had to solve the problem of pictures quality but especially improve the pictures’ distribution speed (at that time colour pictures were delivered by air freight which could have lasted up to 48 hours to arrive to a client).<sup>295</sup>

---

<sup>290</sup> Smith cited in “RE Strategy meeting- News pictures and other media”, April 29<sup>th</sup> 1985, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 2.

<sup>291</sup> See “News picture report”, February 13<sup>th</sup> 1986, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 4.

<sup>292</sup> See “RUS News pictures Report”, March 5<sup>th</sup> 1986, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 2.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. See also “Monthly report”, February 28<sup>th</sup> 1986, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 2.

<sup>294</sup> See “News pictures report June 1986”, June 10<sup>th</sup> 1986, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

<sup>295</sup> See “Survey of the international colour news pictures market”, April 1986, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1-4.



In the mid 1980's, the main market for colour pictures was weekly magazines such as "Paris Match", "Stern" and "Time", and it was concentrated in Western Europe. Magazines published about 70 colour pictures a week: 25-30 of international news pictures, and the rest were feature pictures of travel, science, 'paparazzi' ('shots of coming and goings of personalities') or images from the arts. With the numbers of daily news papers and television outlets using colour pictures increasingly growing, such a new service was certainly worth considering, with a worldwide market of colour news pictures estimated at £30 million a year.<sup>296</sup> The market was largely served by the big Paris based photo agencies such as "Gamma", "Sygma" and "Sipa", and agencies such as "Magnum", "Contact" and "Blackstar", and no international news agency had yet set foot in the market. The high cost for the coverage of hard news, Reuters estimated, would lead to a withdrawal of the photo agencies from the competition, leaving Reuters with full control.<sup>297</sup>

Finally, in May 1987, Reuters announced the launch of its new Reuter News Picture Terminal (RNPT) - a compact electronic picture editing system designed to give picture editors more room for the selection, editing, processing and printing of pictures. Operated via Reuters keyboard linked to a microcomputer and a high definition pictures screen, it was said that the new terminal would save clients' valuable time and money, offering them 'greater creativity in layout'.<sup>298</sup> Picture editors could receive up to three inputs simultaneously from local, national and international sources, and the new terminal had a storage capacity of up to 120 pictures. Editors could view all the pictures in store in either a chronological order as

---

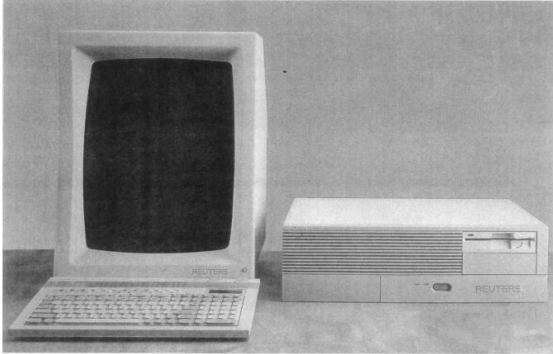
<sup>296</sup> See "Survey of the international colour news pictures market", April 1986, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 35-36.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid, P. 37, 42.

<sup>298</sup> See Reuters press release under "Reuters launches news pictures terminal", May 11<sup>th</sup> 1987, Reuters Archive (RA), London, P. 1.

16 mini pictures, or singly at full size (20x25 cm), and they could categorize each picture as well.<sup>299</sup>

Pictures could be manipulated, zoomed, cropped, rotated and given enhanced contrast, with a re-captioning option. The terminal would be installed in key picture bureaus and make delivery faster, as well as enhance the quality of delivered pictures.



*The Reuters news picture terminal (RNPT) launched in 1987 and designed to give picture editors more room for the selection, editing, processing and printing of pictures (RA.)*

For about £700 per month (based on the pricing system of its financial terminals), clients would be able to subscribe to the pictures service using the new terminal. The RNPT was also designed to communicate with standard picture receivers. While the

screen was designed for black and white pictures, a new separate preview screen for colour separations would be developed later, as well as an increased storage and an interface to scanners and high-speed digital printers. Analogue ports would be replaced by digital ones within 18 months.<sup>300</sup>

The development of the new RNPT by Reuters seemed like a clever business move. It was a good example of investment in order to make an impressive (but risky) entry into an existing market while exploiting the buzz of an already established brand such as Reuters. Those who wanted to go on using Reuters had to buy the terminal as a condition for using Reuters' quality service: it made clients completely dependent on Reuters. Reuters was taking the risk that the new technology would take the lead and competitors would lose ground and clients. However, if the terminal was not

<sup>299</sup> See Reuters press release under "Reuters launches news pictures terminal", May 11<sup>th</sup> 1987, Reuters Archive (RA), London, P. 2.

<sup>300</sup> See Reuters press release under "Reuters news pictures terminal- questions and answers", May 11<sup>th</sup> 1987, Reuters Archive (RA), London, P. 1.

successful, Reuters would lose substantial funding invested for research and development and risk its prestigious brand. But in the end, the development of the RNPT was a success.

### **3.3.4 Trying to connect all loose ends and turning digital**

However, the new service required changes to Reuters' organizational structure. The next development was the co-ordination of text and pictures, "It seemed to me", said Mark Wood, the European editor, "that our text and pictures reports were never going to mesh properly as long as direction was being given from two different centres in Europe... we were producing a first class picture service from Brussels and first class text from London. But coverage was not always harmonised and sometimes we had good text without pictures and vice versa".<sup>301</sup> In addition, during the late 1970's and early 1980's the European trade unions were strong- especially in London- making it far too expensive for a struggling agency such as UPI to base a pictures centre in London ("to cover a golf tournament here you would have to have a wireman, a technician, an editor and a photographer".<sup>302</sup>) There were over-manning and protectionist work agreements. Yet it was easier to negotiate with the unions with the backing of Reuters, and so the Brussels operation was therefore relocated to London where the pictures operation was integrated into it<sup>303</sup>.

In August 1988, a single desk with 21 staff combining London's photographers and the picture-editing team from Brussels was created, and news

---

<sup>301</sup> Wood cited in "Pictures desk moves to London from Brussels" in "Reuters world", September 1988, No. 56, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>302</sup> Steve Crisp, the 1985 head of the Reuters pictures Brussels desk and the Thomson Reuters chief photographer for the Middle East and Africa, 2011.

<sup>303</sup> Data taken from a memo sent to Charlie McCarthy by Hans Ouwerkerk in June 28<sup>th</sup> 1988, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

pictures were then fully integrated into the European central editing structure.<sup>304</sup> The Reuters picture service then operated with 135 staff in 33 countries and additional part time photographers. They were part of a team of more than 1,000 journalists in over 100 bureaus, providing news to 158 countries, and the picture service had exchange agreements with more than 20 specialist news photo agencies. Meanwhile, Reuters spent \$34.5 million on research and development. The service was then more vibrant than ever, thus ready to turn its operation fully digital and in colour at the beginning of the 1990's.<sup>305</sup>

Major changes would take place in the international news pictures market. Journalists and designers would have more control over their final print products, and it was believed that colour pictures and graphics could be integrated electronically on workstations within a couple of years. Moreover, a demand for high quality colour pictures was rapidly increasing in Europe, Japan and Australia as well as in the US, and it was obvious that Reuters' colour pictures had to be delivered in sufficient resolution and tailored for the needs of 'glossy' magazines and weekend newspaper supplements.<sup>306</sup>

Reuters' competitors were also trying to break into this market, investing heavily on new distribution technology at a negligible, or even at no extra charge, to their subscribers. AP on its side, for instance, had plans to give away its equivalent of Reuters' RNPT- the Leaf picture desk- to key subscribers and corporate members outside the US, and its new digital photo systems, photo stream, VAX picture desk and Leaf picture desk were in their final stages of development. PA based its pictures

---

<sup>304</sup> See "Pictures desk moves to London from Brussels" In "Reuters world", September 1988, No. 56, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>305</sup> See Reuters' brochures "Desktop picture power: The Reuters news picture terminal" and "Excellence in pictures: The Reuter news pictures service", both published by Reuters in 1987, Reuters archive (RA), London .

<sup>306</sup> See "Media Products Business plan- 1991-93", July 6<sup>th</sup> 1990, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1-2.

service on AFP technology with its electronic picture desks, Hasselblad's digital scanner and transmitter and Polycom satellite distribution technology, while all of PA's pictures were already shot in colour.<sup>307</sup> Specialised stock photo agencies such as "Gamma", "Sipa", or "Sygma" invested in colour negative scanning, editing and point-to-point transmission equipment to fulfil the vast demand for colour pictures of newspapers. And certain 'supplemental' agencies, such as the "New York Times" Syndicate or the "Los Angeles Times-Washington Post" were also emerging as competitors.<sup>308</sup>

As competitors caught up, Reuters needed technological upgrades to stay ahead. The RNPT was seen as limiting, with a user interface that was out of date four years after its launch.<sup>309</sup> Since the market was working with analogue based infrastructures, the transition both to digital and colour had to be taken in steps. Digital pictures would be delivered into a PC based RNPT controller with analogue or digital output to printers, and by using standard hardware and software platforms Reuters freed itself from having to supply printers to its subscribers.<sup>310</sup> New standards for the use of digital pictures technology had to be developed. Given that no digital equivalent for analogue standards were available, Reuters took an active role in establishing digital transfer protocols between systems and standard image compression schemes. One option had already proved effective in the form of a scheme established by the Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG), which was already supported by a small company in California (C-Cube), developing

---

<sup>307</sup> See "Media Products Business plan- 1991-93", July 6<sup>th</sup> 1990, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 2-3.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid, P. 3.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid, P. 10.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, P. 11.

coprocessors for the compression and decompression of images, although the JPEG standard was not finalised by the beginning of the 1990's.<sup>311</sup>

Between 1990 and 1992, Reuters planned to release a new high quality colour service, and improve the scanned resolution and digital transmission. The *RNPT Mac Bi-directional Interface*, permitted moving pictures from a Mac into the RNPT, and the *RNPT Controller* for receiving digital pictures and these to standard analogue and digital printers would both be launched within a year.<sup>312</sup> The transition to colour service was planned in two phases: at first, all three pictures editing centres would be linked at 19.2 Kbps while transferring colour separations at higher speed without losing quality. This was to allow for an average transfer time of 2.5 - 3 minutes per picture in monochrome and 7.5 - 9 minutes for colour (although colour pictures would still be at conventional resolution at that stage).<sup>313</sup> Subscribers in Japan, the US, UK, France and Germany would have the option of requesting up to ten colour pictures per day on demand. In the second phase, subscribers would receive colour pictures directly without any delays, and pictures would be in much higher resolution for high magazine quality.<sup>314</sup>

In order to boost sales of the picture service to TV stations and widen its circle of subscribers, a TV signal providing colour preview in television digital library systems via the RNPT would also be provided together with a new *RNPT Cache Server*. These allowed subscribers to access the Reuters digital pictures from their Macintoshes, PCs terminal or workstations, and import the pictures into their standard

---

<sup>311</sup> See "Media Products Business plan- 1991-93", July 6<sup>th</sup> 1990, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 11-12.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid, P. 12.

<sup>313</sup> See "Media Products Editorial plan- 1991-93 pictures", July 13<sup>th</sup> 1990, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 5.

<sup>314</sup> See "Media Products Business plan- 1991-93", July 6<sup>th</sup> 1990, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 12-13.

environments.<sup>315</sup> From mid 1991 all major bureaus could transmit digitally at the speed of 9.6 Kbps, with an average transmission time of 5 minutes per picture.<sup>316</sup> Network points with low reporting volume would use dial up modems rather than leased lines. Transmission from the field would still be analogue dial-up, while ISDN connections would become feasible in later stages.<sup>317</sup>

Prices went up.<sup>318</sup> At the same time, Reuters was already planning to establish its own strong ISDN accessible Multimedia Database Network (MDN). The idea was to offer a certain service supporting multiple products such as still images, news graphics, text stories and video clips to subscribers. Clients could have the option to ‘log in’ (dial-up) to the database containing multimedia products, search for items of their interest and download their selected information. The database would be based on free text searching, offering a preview or synopsis for selection purposes, and products would become available as soon as they were filed into the database.<sup>319</sup>

*Reuters price summary for subscribers, May 1991*

	Regular assignments		Special requests		Reuters or UPI file picture (non real time)	A Bettman archived picture
	Europe	Outside Europe	Europe	Outside Europe		
<b>Black &amp; White</b>	60\$ (40\$ for any extra picture)	145\$	70\$	155\$	45\$ (by air mail)	70\$ (by air mail)
<b>Colour</b>	175\$ (175\$ for any extra picture)	290\$	195\$	310\$	60\$ (by air mail)	115\$ (by air mail)
<b>Special assignments (Half a day)</b>	175\$ (+ expenses)					
<b>Special assignments (Full day)</b>	345\$ (+ expenses)					

<sup>315</sup> See “Media Products Business plan- 1991-93”, July 6<sup>th</sup> 1990, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 13.

<sup>316</sup> Digital distribution via specific networks, aimed at providing digital distribution to the principle colour markets in Europe, North America, Japan and Australia, would be faster and at the speed of 19.2 Kbps (see “Media Products Editorial plan – 1991-93 pictures”, July 13<sup>th</sup> 1990, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 5-6).

<sup>317</sup> Ibid, P. 6.

<sup>318</sup> See “Reuters news picture service: Price summary for subscribers”, May 1991, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>319</sup> See “Multimedia- Database” sent by Hans Ouwerkerk, August 4<sup>th</sup> 1992, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1-4 ; “Multimedia database” under “Note for the record”, October 12<sup>th</sup> 1992, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 2-6.

As news pictures were likely to be the first products available in the database, a company standard for image resolution had to be established for both transmission and editing to provide the high quality resolution that news magazines needed.<sup>320</sup> The database had to support different forms of file and data compression formats and different software as well. In terms of pictures, there were two main reasons for creating such a database: the first one was of legal and archival. By the beginning of the 1990's editors could change the text of a Reuters story or alter pictures using new editing software, and this exposed Reuters to legal actions.<sup>321</sup> To protect itself from potential law suits, and given the sensitivity of copyrights, Reuters had to store all of the images transmitted from any major picture desks in the same way it kept a record of all its text stories. The second reason was commercial. The increase in revenues from selling historical pictures was rapidly rising, and Reuters' revenues based on the use of pictures from the Bettman Archive and the retrieval of historical Reuters images available through 'Presslink' were estimated at the sum of £250,000 per year, with 60% from the Bettman Archive alone.<sup>322</sup>

There was a good reason to establish such a database since the only widely available media database for text, graphics and pictures was of 'Presslink', owned by 'Knight Ridder'.<sup>323</sup> Yet although 'Presslink' was planning to become a multimedia

---

<sup>320</sup> Kodak also attempted to set a commercial standard for photos on CD's at the time. Since Kodak was not considered a threat to Reuters in this area, and since Reuters pictures were considered, to some extent, as a potential source for Kodak's CD product in the days to come, a relationship with Kodak in the future was considered as well (see "Multimedia database" under "Note for the record", October 12<sup>th</sup> 1992, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 9-10).

<sup>321</sup> Reuters records from 1993 show that the pictures service's managers were already well aware of the possibility of one specific editing software- Photoshop- to be highly misused, operating to 'limit its spread' only to the supervised editing centres in Hong Kong, Washington, London and Paris (Hans Ouwerkerk cited in a memo "Regional desks- Interim solution", December 8<sup>th</sup> 1993, Reuters archive (RA), London).

<sup>322</sup> See a summary of the reasons for the establishment of the database in "still pictures databases" memorandum sent to Hans Ouwerkerk, January 8<sup>th</sup> 1993, Reuters archive (RA), London.

<sup>323</sup> Even though records show that Dow Jones had earned as much as \$75 million from database retrievals of its news services- a sum equal to one third of its total news revenues in 1993. AP was assumed to earn the estimated sum of \$50 million from databases that year, accounting for 15% of all its news service revenues (see "Database business", November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1993, Reuters archive (RA),



database, it had difficulties with telecommunication authorities. It was also considered too slow for pictures and not easy to access.<sup>324</sup> With the rapid growth in the numbers of personal computers at home and in businesses- an estimated 73 million PC's installed worldwide turning to 127 million in 1996- it was in Reuters' interests to maximise its revenues from this expanding market.<sup>325</sup>

However, the pictures market was already mature. Thus, assuming that most of its revenues would come from historical and non real-time photos, Reuters had to compete with major stock agencies such as "Sygma", "Sipa Press", "Gamma", "Magnum" and "Impact". It was also forced into competition with AP and AFP- both with already relatively thriving picture resale businesses developed- and with certain syndicated services such as "Knight Ridder/Tribune" (KRT) and the "New York Times" (NYT), having pictures available in their databases as well.<sup>326</sup>

A Multi-Media Server (MMS) would be launched in early 1995 in order to establish the Reuters on-line pictures database in which all Reuters' pictures holding storage rights would be stored.<sup>327</sup> And in November 1995 a multi-year agreement with Archive Holdings Inc., under which its archive division would manage the Reuters collection of original pictures, was signed as well.<sup>328</sup> With 650,000 negatives producing approximately 250 colour images on a daily basis, and with a network of

---

London, P. 2-4). Knight Ridder was an American media company owning various news papers and specialising in internet publishing which was originated in 1933 (Knight news papers) and 1892 (Ridder publications). The two merged in 1974, and with 32 news papers the company was considered to be the second largest news paper publisher in the US. In 2006 it was purchased by the American McClatchy Company for the estimated sum of \$6.5 billion (see [www.mcclatchy.com](http://www.mcclatchy.com)).

<sup>324</sup> See "Multimedia- Database" sent by Hans Ouwerkerk, August 4<sup>th</sup> 1992, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 2.

<sup>325</sup> See "Database business", November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1993, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 3.

<sup>326</sup> See "Multimedia- Database" under 'note for the record', October 12<sup>th</sup> 1992, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 8.

<sup>327</sup> See "Minutes of news pictures meeting held 28 June 1994, Las Vegas", July 11<sup>th</sup> 1994, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 1.

<sup>328</sup> Formed in 1991 by the merger of Pictorial Parade and Fredric Lewis Stock Photos and was one of four divisions of Archive Holdings Inc., a private company based in New York (see "Reuters New Pictures Available through Archive Photos" in a Reuters news release, November 7<sup>th</sup> 1995, Reuters Archive (RA), London, P. 1-2). In Reuters records from the early 1990's Reuters 'pictures' turned into 'images', probably given the transformation from film to computerised files.

around 1830 journalists, photographers and cameramen, Reuters seemed to be landing safely upon the grounds of its own little digital revolution.<sup>329</sup>

### **3.3.5 Same game, different settings - and what is yet to come**

By 1995 Reuters could process 250 colour pictures daily from around the world, transmit 100 of them to any individual client and send a full colour picture in less than 30 seconds of broadcast time to a client in Europe.<sup>330</sup> While pictures of the collapse of the Soviet empire would have taken hours to reach London in the past, they were rapidly transmitted via Reuters HSPN (High Performance Shared Network), the RMCi (Reuters Multimedia Contributor Interface) and the MDN (Multimedia Data Network), with a Reuters Browser that would soon allow for the news pictures service to run as a simple Windows program viewable on every PC.<sup>331</sup>

Digital cameras and laptops were also changing photographers' working practices. In the 1998 football world Cup finals in France, Reuters' new cameras and digital transmission technologies astonished news papers and magazines who received images of Brazil's opening tournament goal against Scotland just 7 minutes after the Scottish goalkeeper had surrendered.<sup>332</sup> The internet would lead the way for some major changes- both with clients' demands and the Reuters organizational structure- with on line departments meeting constantly updated deadlines for real-time changing pages over the web.<sup>333</sup>

---

<sup>329</sup> See "Reuters New Pictures Available through Archive Photos" in a Reuters news release, November 7<sup>th</sup> 1995, Reuters Archive (RA), London, P. 1-2.

<sup>330</sup> See "A tumultuous decade: Ten years of change in Reuters news pictures" in "Reuters World", Issue No. 104, June 1995, Reuters archive (RA), London, P. 20-24.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid, P. 20-24.

<sup>332</sup> Michel, U. (2000) The art of seeing: The best of Reuters photography. London: Reuters.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

However, the photo business had other, human, costs. Reuters had 28 journalists killed in conflict including five photographers: Willy Vicoy died in a rebel ambush in the Philippines in 1986. Robert Navas died when he was caught in an exchange of gunfire during the El-Salvador civil war in 1989. Hos Maina and Dan Eldon, along with TV soundman Anthony Macharia, were killed by a mob in Somalia in 1993, and Namir Noor-Eldeen- a young Iraqi photographer working for Reuters- was killed in Baghdad in 2007 with his driver, Saeed Chmagh, during a battle between US forces and suspected insurgents.<sup>334</sup> Knowing the pressures its journalists are under, covering events in dangerous environments, Reuters sees itself as a responsible employer. Its photographers have to attend hostile environment training courses in which they learn how to operate in war zones and the life threatening situations, as their profession requires.<sup>335</sup> There is also a hotline for photographers (and reporters) mentally exhausted from covering horrific events on a daily basis, and psychologists visit in 'sensitive' bureaux every once and a while (although, for many who work within the company's news division, this is hardly enough).<sup>336</sup>

Reuters has also won awards. Awards are important makers of prestige in the news business. In 1994 Dylan Martinez was photographer of the year at the UK Picture editors' Guild awards with a controversial image of crying school girls. A year later Ian Waldie won with a single image of Margaret Thatcher at the conservative Party Conference, and in 2000 Yanis Behrakis won the World Press Photo Images

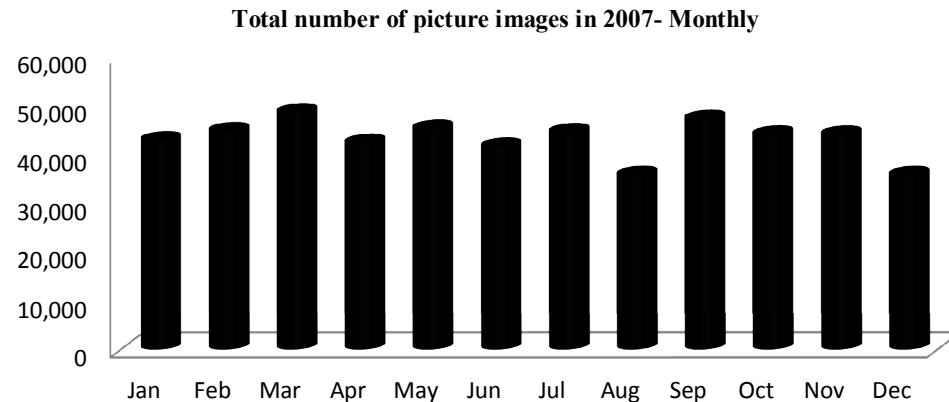
---

<sup>334</sup> Michel, U. (2000) The art of seeing: The best of Reuters photography. London: Reuters. See also the 'Freedom forum journalists memorial' website under 'Reuters' <<http://www.newseum.org/scripts/Journalist/orgDetail.asp?size=10&page=1&orgID=598>> [accessed January, 2011]; Lang, D. "Reuters photojournalist and his driver killed in Baghdad". PDN. 12 July 2007 <<http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/eseach/articledisplay.jsp?vnucontentid=1003611067>> [accessed April 2010].

<sup>335</sup> See, for example, Reuters' photographers blog for a detailed discussion of the hostile environment training course (Prakash, V. "Training for the unforeseen". Photographers blog. Reuters. May 8 2008 <<http://blogs.reuters.com/photographers-blog/2008/05/08/11373/>>).

<sup>336</sup> Every once and a while, so I was told, photographers, TV crews, reporters, editors and producers receive information in their e-mail boxes about this kind of guidance.

with a picture of a Kosovo Albanian funeral (Nonetheless, prestige can easily be jeopardized, and a damaged brand might take a long time to fix.<sup>337</sup> Brands are fragile).



*Approximately 515,000 picture images were produced in 2007 at an average of just under 43,000 per month (RA)*

In 2007 Reuters circulated 43,000 pictures per month, by 2009 it was 60,000. Its main image competitors today are Getty images Plc. and AP.<sup>338</sup> Amateur pictures taken by ‘citizen Journalists’ have also earned their place in Reuters pictures' website, forcing the agency and its competitors to come up with different solutions and find new ways in which these might be absorbed within daily routines and production processes. Given such changes, the story of the Reuters picture service might shed some new light on how international news agencies adapt to change in the new business and technological environments of today. Thus, with the business of international news mostly maintained by multimedia corporations operating in an unstable market with new entrants to consider, the story of the Reuters picture service might demonstrate how new flexible models in which technology is integrated into

<sup>337</sup> See “UK Picture Editors’ Guild Awards”, February 8<sup>th</sup> 1995, Reuters archive (RA), London; Michel, U. (2000) The art of seeing: The best of Reuters photography. London: Reuters. The story of Adnan Hajj from 2006 told in the introduction chapter is probably one of the most famous ‘shameful’ incidents the Reuters picture service is known for.

<sup>338</sup> See Handworker, C. “Tom Glocer, Reuters CEO: If people pay for a ringtone, why not pay to read 2,000 words?”. Consumerism. The Marker. 24 October 2009. Hebrew in origin, my translation. < <http://www.themarket.com/consumer/1.538405>> [accessed April 2010]. See a list of all Reuters editorial pictures by country from 2010 in appendix 1.0, P. 371.

business are required in order to supply the unique demands of news information in a digital world. And how useless these models are without visionary personnel to meld them into motion and prepare for future challenges.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter highlights the development of the competitive international market of news since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It emphasizes the importance of innovative technologies: the problems in developing them, and in rolling them out internationally in a rapidly and constantly changing technological business environment. It demonstrates the importance of ownership and control over the daily processes of production and its consequences and adds to the classic dispute over the business of news.

Some organizations have particular histories; they are responsible for what they have become and for what their futures might hold. Placing Reuters in a particular historic timeframe sheds new light on the meaning of the company's current moves strategically. The story of its picture service from when it was established helps clarify some of the different forces that govern its processes of production in the present.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The production process I: From story to product**

This is the story of the ways in which Reuters pictures get made. A picture is said to be worth a thousand words, explaining how one is produced seems to account for many more, so the story is divided into two parts: chapter 4 deals with the process at its 'local' stages, through the daily work routines of the pictures department in Reuters' bureau in Jerusalem. It is focused on the work of a Reuters Israeli photographer in the field and that of the picture editors in the office. Both are based on observations, in-depth interviews and their analysis taking place from 2005 to 2006. The next part, chapter 5, traces the process through all of the possible 'international' stages where a news picture might travel- from the Reuters global pictures desk, the magazine desk and keyword team, the global graphics desk and administration located in Singapore and sales. Finally, it looks at what a Reuters news picture faces when it is sold to a client- in this case "the Guardian"- and then picked again as data for analysis by the international desk. Both 'stations' are placed in London, and their analysis is based on observations and in-depth interviews which took place in 2009 and 2010.

I started this project with the photographer in the field in Israel at the end of 2005; then moved to explore the work of the pictures departments in Jerusalem and London; then to Singapore at the beginning of 2010, and finally in London for "The Guardian" and the international desk. Yet I discovered that the process itself is not, in any way, similar to such a progression.

In fact, I would argue, it is its chaos which I was most fascinated by along this journey- a unique structure operating by its own set of rules and regulations disguised as a daily routine. And it is this complex structure- a routinized chaos- which governs both the operators of this particular process along its different moments and sites as well as the spectators of its outcome- a news picture.

Like other cultural products, news pictures are thus the very same thing that keeps us together and pushes us apart. They allow a sense of place and belonging; nurture our existential sense of confidence. Understanding how they are produced and what cultural forces govern their production might tell us something about their careers, their history and their lives (for news pictures can easily get spiked and thus 'killed'). Taken as cultural artefacts, their production process may very well tell us something about our own.

#### **4.1 A note on Reuters pictures, their production and how this works**

Maintained in a 'real' and concrete organization (and not an amorphous industry) the production process of news pictures in Reuters is linear and one sided- an idea turned into a photograph and finally packaged as a product sold to local clients. Such an idea would go through critical 'gates' throughout the production process (a decision of a chief photographer to allow the transfer of a picture to the global pictures desk, for instance, or 'spiking' a picture and leaving it on the 'editing room's floor'; a photographer making editorial decisions in the field; an editor making editing choices in the office, or a client left unsatisfied with certain pictures taken by its request and therefore not having them published).

Different mediators and decision makers in different parts in the production process operate as particular nodes of power (whether as individuals, departments or organizations) performed at numerous crossings of conflict- fighting over status assets, acting as 'points of no return' throughout the entire process.<sup>339</sup> At these crossings, and conflicts, the organizational status of the various position holders, both vertically and horizontally, is established- whether as individuals (an experienced local photographer opposing a new foreign chief photographer), as departments (pictures vs. TV), as bureaus (the Reuters bureau in Jerusalem more 'valuable' to the organization as opposed to other bureaus), as organizations (Reuters as opposed to its clients) and industries. It is therefore an ongoing struggle between different sources of power- both inside and outside the organization- over the assets of cultural capital.

But focusing on the linear features of such process ignores a whole range of bidirectional delicate connections. An idea for a news picture, for that matter, can be delivered from the chief photographer to his photographers just as much as it may come from the agency's clients, an editor, from competing photographers or from the field itself. And a picture can be conceived from an idea the same way an idea is conceived from a picture taken by other public organizations and distributed to the agency in the past.

In the same way, Reuters' clients may bring influence to bear on the process of production by using a Reuters picture, or, on the contrary, choose not to go through with a Reuters picture at all. In that case, the tiny boost or publicity given to Reuters, when a particular picture is selected (or to any other agency when some of its clients decide to use the pictures taken by a different agency over Reuters' from a certain event), may have a direct impact on future processes of production. These can be in

---

<sup>339</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1986) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste*. London: Routledge.



the form of decisions over a line of stories to cover that can be taken, or procedures for future coverage to make; perhaps a particular photographer will be encouraged to 'improve' his skills in the future.

Therefore, it would be more accurate to take the production process of news pictures in Reuters as circular and linear- a process combining circles within circles and lines within lines, and all are connected and separated from each other heading in various directions, horizontally and vertically. Each of these circles and lines articulates a variety of beginnings, middles and ends chaotically maintained by the different position holders along the process, and all are interwoven with parallel processes of production operating similar circular-linear structures. These unique structures always maintain the footprints of additional circles of meaning, and thus express the articulation of cultural processes of production in full.<sup>340</sup>

Yet, this apparently chaotic process is maintained within a perfect set of rules responsible for its identification and distinction from other processes of production. As such, its daily routines bring to the surface the unusual pictures begging to be observed, and that which maintains such unique pictures as 'natural' for the observer- clear and purified- until their extraordinary importance (as visual evidence, as news) as opposed to other pictures, ironically, becomes unimportant and taken for granted by the spectator. It is precisely that routine, I would argue, that forces us to examine the dynamics through which such a process is socialized, which allows news pictures to become inseparable from the daily experience of the reader. This chapter and the following one are therefore an attempt to uncover the complex nature of pictures as signs and products and that of news as different forms of products and signs; and to

---

<sup>340</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg.

unpack the work environment of the international news agency responsible for a perfect reflection of reality and a production of one.

Writing about a process is a complicated task. Therefore, I decided to break it into three main blocs: the story, the photography and the product. The analysis is based on all three as part of a linear process, yet each stands on its own as a complete circle of production and meaning fed by the other blocs. The analysis of each expresses the bidirectional connections maintained inseparably at the vertical and horizontal levels of the process, and demonstrates the power relationships operated at its linear stages of operations. It is a description of a process responsible for the production of cultural products that are, at the same time, unique forms of signification.<sup>341</sup>

The language I use implies this process was operated mostly by men. This just reflects the reality, not a linguistic bias. During my field work with the Reuters photographer, most of the photographers (both Reuters' and of its competitors in the field) were males. In fact, apart from two local papers' female photographers (and a Reuters staff one originally from Colombia who was temporarily based in Jerusalem for back-up at the time) who I rarely came across, all the photographers were males. In the Jerusalem bureau all of the editors were females, and in the global pictures desk

---

<sup>341</sup> This would be a good place to mention that the choice to describe the process as linear (from story to product) does not imply, in any way, the production process of news pictures in Reuters is more linear than circular, but was demonstrated as such for two main reasons: the first is due to the limitations of space, forcing me to focus on certain aspects of the process and ignore others. In order to gain a broader perspective on the production process as a whole, it would, perhaps, have been wiser to analyze the production of news pictures using a tripartite approach- combining both Rosenblum's 'inside' perspective, Frosh's key concepts illuminating certain insights at the core of the process and observing the linear nature of it as did Lutz and Collins (see Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of photographic styles. New York: Holmes and Meier; Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg and Lutz, C. A. and Collins, J. L. (1993) Reading national geographic. Chicago Ill: University of Chicago Press). The second reason is due to the fact that during my observations I met the process at its linear stages. And as much as it struck me as linear, it was maintained as such for the different position holders whom I have followed. Thus, it seemed only right to stick to the process as it was taken by the photographer, the editors and the various practitioners I accompanied as an attempt to supply an accurate description of the complete process as possible.

in Singapore the numbers seemed equal. Managers, chief photographers and heads of departments are all males, and I was told more than once that, for some reason, it appears women are not considered good enough to become heads of Reuters picture departments.

## 4.2 The Story<sup>342</sup>

Like all good stories, this one had all the elements of conflict. Life and death flesh and blood; it burns from desire and covered (or cloned) with smoke. Like many popular stories, its hero is known worldwide and carries an international appeal- Thomson Reuters international multimedia news agency- with its local pictures operation in Jerusalem used here as one of its 'secret weapons'. Like many great stories this one also has pictures in it. Yet unlike any other story, this particular one has their production in its centre of attention.

The idea for a story for Reuters to cover may come from many different places. It can begin with the photographer, or the chief photographer, the local editor, the head of the bureau or the editors from the global pictures desk. Sometimes the idea may come from government offices or public organizations who alert Reuters to future events (press conferences, official visits, government meetings etc.).

---

<sup>342</sup> The term 'story' here does not appear in the analysis of the process simply as a meaningful site along the process of production, but rather as a term quite often used by photographers, editors and other personnel in the production routine. In fact, Reuters' news pictures were referred to me more than once as 'pictures telling the stories of the events', having news pictures treated as stories and vice versa. As a result, this unique form of storytelling in its photographic form as discussed at various moments in this project considers photojournalism as a narrative and professional photography as a narrative media. Thus, with classical approaches of news as a form of storytelling in mind, the news pictures discussed in this project will therefore express two levels of storytelling: pictures telling the story of news, and news telling stories with the help of photography; they lean on such observation from this point onwards (see Tuchman, G. (1976) Telling stories. In: *Journal of communication* 26 (Fall). P. 93-97, and Evans, H. (1997) *Pictures on a page: Photo-journalism, Graphics and Picture editing*. London: Pimlico for his discussion on news pictures and storytelling. For an additional discussion see also chapter 6, forth event).

At other times, a good story will come from an unexpected happening, in which case the photographer will have to drive to the event using the information supplied on his beeper device (also known as *pager*) from messaging groups he subscribes to; using scraps of information exchanged with photographers working for competing agencies he meets at stories; through people he knows personally (representatives, paramedics, police officers, TV crews) and through the agency's TV crews working close to photographers on a daily basis. Very occasionally, the photographer might find himself present at the scene of an event. This is the circularity of the process: it may be initiated at different points horizontally (from inside the agency, from clients or from the field) and vertically (from the photographer, the chief photographer, head of the bureau etc.).

Stories themselves are not fixed and often change dramatically, and the connection between events may be coincidental. On the day of the Israeli elections in 2006, for instance, the photographer accompanied Amir Peretz, the head of the Israeli Labour party, on his visit to his home town Sderot in the morning. At noon, and while working on sending his morning pictures, the photographer was suddenly called to drive to a road junction near Yad Mordechai- a Kibbutz nearby- where two civilians had been killed in a Qassam rocket attack. From that story he went on to the beach in the southern city of Ashdod to take pictures of Israelis having a swim during Election Day. After a short break he then continued to the city of Beit Shemesh (45 minutes away) to cover a religious ceremony taking place in one of the orthodox synagogues in the area, and finished his day, late at night, at the Labour party's headquarters in Tel Aviv as the election results were published.

A boring day, on the other hand, a photographer may find himself spending a whole day on a single developing story, and frequently he may arrive at the scene of

an event only to find it 'eventless'. Sometimes he arrives too late, sometimes nothing had happened. Then he may decide to give up the shooting, but often will prefer to wait for a better moment or just take 'atmosphere pictures'.<sup>343</sup> Events covered by Reuters pictures are thus similar to classical notions of news events.<sup>344</sup> News 'events' are often marginal; they are not always dependant on actual occurrences in the real world, but rather on the reconstruction of one in the process of their making.<sup>345</sup>

Editorially, a story may be rejected simply because it is not interesting: the chief photographer finds a certain story boring, at times it is the photographer himself who dismisses a story as not interesting, or not a 'Reuters' kind of story, or one already covered in different variations by competing agencies or Reuters itself in the past. The decision to reject a story may be executed in the local office of the department or by the photographer at the scene, where he decides whether an event is 'worth a picture' or simply has 'no story' in it –

"I was sent once to this demonstration. When I got there I noticed there were no people, no nothing, and no story behind it. They thought it would be a more dominant story, more serious. Sometimes it is the other way around, you arrive at the scene and have a feeling there is nothing there when all of a sudden something happens. For example, there was a demonstration of Druses in front of the Prime Minister's office and no one was there, perhaps one photographer, because it's a protest- people sit there for hours, do some shouting, nobody really bothers to take any pictures. Suddenly there was a huge mess going on; the protestors started to fight with the police, and all of a sudden it turned into a huge event attracting lots of photographers. So it could be either way. Sometimes there are events where nothing happens;

---

<sup>343</sup> These will be discussed later in this chapter. See also chapter 6, first event.

<sup>344</sup> See Gans, H. (1979) Deciding What's News. New York: Pantheon Books; Galtung, J. and Ruge, M. H. (1965) The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers. In: Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 2, No. 1. P. 64-90.

<sup>345</sup> See Seaton and her discussion on 'Pseudo-events' in Curran, J & Seaton, J. (2003) Power without Responsibility. London: Routledge (6<sup>th</sup> edition). P. 336-337. See also Harcup, T. & O'Neill, D. (2001) What is News? Galtung and Ruge Revisited. In: Journalism Studies Vol. 2(2): P. 261-280.

you arrive at the scene and the event does not develop into nothing. You look for a picture but there isn't any; one that could tell the story of the event when there is no event to tell a story from..."<sup>346</sup>

The 'intent' of a news story also changes according to the different position holders. It is the principle source of conflict in the daily work at the Reuters local pictures department. It demonstrates the effect the agency as a news organization has on its photographers and practitioners during the process of weaving the different stories to cover.<sup>347</sup>

The interest in one story or another may also reveal the direct connection between production and consumption. Selling the pictures to clients will eventually lead into their recontextualization (used now by different clients on different platforms with different goals in mind) and would eventually be read by audiences. Reuters' capacity to identify the 'right' story for their clients would result in the purchase and thus the use of its pictures by its clients, which are then read by the clients' audiences and fed back to the agency through its clients (requesting for stories of a 'successful' kind to cover, for instance). This is the example of the circular structures of the process, expressing different forms of bidirectional connections between production and consumption, between the consumer and Reuters' clients and eventually between the consumer and the agency with the mediating help of its clients. Choosing a story

---

<sup>346</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006.

<sup>347</sup> Gans, H. (1979) Deciding What's News. New York: Pantheon Books; Tuchman, G. (1973) Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected. In: American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 79(1), P. 110-131. The news interest at the different events is also a good example of what Lutz and Collins refer to as *intentionality*- the motive behind choosing a story to cover in National Geographic (Lutz, C. A. and Collins, J. L. (1993) Reading national geographic. Chicago Ill: University of Chicago Press). This issue will be discussed in depth later on.

to cover in Reuters is thus an essential crossing through which production and consumption are met and equally nurtured.<sup>348</sup>

A Reuters story may be chosen because others buy it, and Reuters was often described to me first of all as a 'provider of service'. Thus, it may happen that stories the photographer and the editors initially dismiss as 'uninteresting' turn out to be commercially interesting for Reuters as an organization. Then, the presumably 'uninteresting' image becomes worthy of attention, for they operate in an image market and have to learn from it.<sup>349</sup> Just as some events are seen as newsworthy, some are not and yet are still taken as important; as a picture editor said, "they say in pictures that news papers do not have a single page; there's always the front page and the one in the back".<sup>350</sup>

Photographers are also sent to make a magazine *feature* story, which are different from a day to day news coverage (categorized by the Reuters photographers as 'hard news- the 'here and now events'). A photographer may find himself dedicating more time and energy to make a feature shoot than he would for a hard news one, and often ends up with many more pictures from a feature story. The decision to create a feature may come from the chief photographer; because of a specific request of a client (who may also request a specific photographer for the task); by the editor, or may be initiated by the photographer himself. Making features is a response to one of Reuters pictures biggest competitors- the stock archive agency "Getty images PLC". Recently the agency has expanded into selling news pictures, in turn forcing Reuters and others to reorganize. It has 'seduced' more

---

<sup>348</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg.

<sup>349</sup> See, for instance, Mcquail on the effect of political and economic factors in Mcquail, D. (1994) Mass Communication Theory. London: Sage.

<sup>350</sup> Shely Alish, Reuters pictures editor working in the Jerusalem bureau, a record of a conversation, 2006.

and more of other news agencies' photographers and heads of departments to 'flip sides', and so the international news agencies were forced to grow their circles of clients and diversify. 'Features' are an example of such diversification, aimed at different magazines worldwide and designed to attract non-news clients to their businesses.<sup>351</sup>

The term *feature* is intriguing. Taken from the cinema and print journalism, news 'feature pictures' are an interesting distinction made in Reuters between hard news pictures- often taken under stressful time conditions- as opposed to features as less time sensitive.<sup>352</sup> Thus, 'features' and 'hard news' encapsulate two different structures of a photographic story: on the one hand the 'here and now' *representing reality*, and on the other a developing story taking far more time to produce- similar, in a way, to the work on a feature film- standing as a *construction of reality*. This observation between two separate and yet connected forms of a photographic news story clearly connects between news pictures and the dialectic nature of all pictures- responsible for a representation of reality and the construction of one. Yet even though such dialectics may seem at first as that which threatens the validity of news pictures, it is, in fact, overcome in Reuters simply by the distinct production procedures of features and hard news at different moments and sites, as well as the particular clients each kind is aimed for.

A photographer may be present in a 'non-news' event and yet recognize a photo opportunity. These events may seem to him as 'visually captivating', for example, but less ideal in terms of Reuters' news standards-

---

<sup>351</sup> Defoore, J. (2005) Reinventing the Wires: How Getty images is shaking Up the Wire service Business, and what AP and Reuters are Doing in Response. In: PDN. <[http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/eseach/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1000865082](http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/eseach/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000865082)>. See also a broader discussion on Reuters and its complex relationship with Getty in chapter 6, forth event.

<sup>352</sup> See a broader discussion on the term *feature* in chapter 6, forth event.



"A year ago there were all these demonstrations in road 6; about 20 religious orthodox came by and started to interfere with the bulldozers and their work. The police came by and they all started fighting. You could barely hear anything about it in the news or nothing at all, maybe something on the radio. But in terms of pictures it was amazing; a whole big mess which no one seemed interested in, but these were great pictures. The same thing with the Israeli West Bank barrier, where people are fighting every other day- 'leftists' with soldiers and everything- and this rarely gets reported. If no one was injured it is not reported at all and nobody says anything about a demonstration at all, simply because it happens every day. But these are great pictures, and many come to shoot on a daily basis- fighting, a great mess, tear gas..."<sup>353</sup>

The idea of 'good' pictures points to a constant struggle between the photographer, his artistic eye and the news organization he is working for. Thus, a 'good' Reuters picture is one that is eventually published by a great number of its clients, supplying greater publicity to Reuters and increasing the chances for broadening its circle of clients in the future. Events may be considered worth covering in the eyes of the photographer but worthless in terms of Reuters, pointing to the paradox of creativity that floats on the surface of production on a daily basis within the pictures department. When the photographer's creative perception meets the organization's, it becomes formulated as part of a broader cultural creative perception- that which maintains art as an excuse for making profit.<sup>354</sup>

Sometimes events become important not because of their 'pure' news value, but simply because often photographers from competing agencies are present. In such cases, the photographer may be sent to a 'minor' event or a 'non Reuters news' one

---

<sup>353</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006.

<sup>354</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1993) The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on art and literature. Cambridge: Polity press.

and will then have to use his journalistic judgment. An experienced photographer will probably not be tempted to cover an event just because competing photographers are at the scene. An inexperienced one, however, may want to cover the event despite its newsworthy inferiority. Both may be forced to cover an event by their chief photographer, even when it does not coincide with their own judgment. In one occasion, we were present at a ceremony in the memory of the former Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, during the opening of the Rabin centre in Tel Aviv next to an AP and EPA photographers. The event was short and an AFP photographer arrived late. In that eventuality, said the Reuters photographer, AFP would have to purchase pictures from the event since other agency photographers were present as well. Competing agencies have a great impact on the daily process in Reuters and often affect particular moments of production- here are external circles of production connected to the internal one.

The decision whether to send one photographer or another to cover a story is based on the photographers' experience, location at a given moment and on the significance of the events. The regional allocation at Reuters means that a photographer meant to cover events in the centre and North of Israel based on the department's allocation will not be sent to Jerusalem and vice versa. Nonetheless, when major stories erupt, the photographers are sent to locations on the basis of their experience, not their usual location. A veteran photographer will be sent to cover such events regardless of his usual location. Yet in most cases there is no distinction between the photographers, and they are all trained to cover all kinds of events, large or small.

The estimate of the photographers' experience is part of the department's inside politics; both the pictures department and Reuters itself are taken as 'political

clubs'.<sup>355</sup> When there is a dispute about the importance of one event or another, a veteran photographer may oppose his chief's opinion, and even convince the latter that a certain event is either crucial or not worth covering. An inexperienced photographer will probably follow the orders given to him. Conflict between photographers and their line managers, the department's editors or between fellow photographers influences coverage, and eventually helps form Reuters' reputation. A photographer in dispute with his chief, for instance, may be sent to cover 'boring' events and the less 'meaningful' ones, and might end up spending a day's work at a scene, waiting for an event to happen.

During my fieldwork I was caught in a long dispute between the photographer I accompanied and his chief of the department. The photographer would complain that the chief was not doing his job properly. The conflict between them led to the grounding of the photographer during the Disengagement in 2005 even though he was the most experienced photographer in the department at the time.<sup>356</sup> The dispute led to tension between the photographer and the chief. The photographer said how proper work relations may improve the overall workflow of the department, just as bad relationships may interfere with the daily routine -

"As far as news is concerned, consultations must be made at all times; you shouldn't just order people. If you are in bad terms with the editor and he does not recognize your abilities, it would eventually lead to a situation in which you will not want to have his advice at all. With us

---

<sup>355</sup> Tuchman, G. (1991) Media institutions: Qualitative methods in the Study of News. In: Jensen, K. B. & Jankowski, N. W. (eds) A handbook of Qualitative methodologies for mass communication Research. London: Routledge. P. 79-92.

<sup>356</sup> The Disengagement Plan was proposed by the former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, accepted by the Israeli government on June 2004 and enacted in August 2005, in which all Israeli settlers would be evicted from the Gaza Strip and from four settlements in the northern West Bank. The Disengagement plan was considered one of the biggest news events of the year, and the fact the photographer was grounded and not allowed to take part in the event even though he was the most experienced photographer in the department made him feel it was personal regardless of his abilities as a photographer and a journalist. A few years after I finished my observations, the photographer was facing yet another inside conflict with one of the department's editors (who became a senior one in the Jerusalem bureau later on) which led to his resignation in 2010.

[Reuters] it's even more important, because the chief of the department has to be a foreigner. He is not familiar with the area, the local culture, as I am. He may find a certain event important when, in fact, it is not relevant at all, because he is not from here.

...

For example, there was once an event in Tel Hai. If he would have asked for my opinion I would have said there's nothing there, but he didn't and told me to drive up there and didn't care about anything.

...

With Reinhard [the former chief] it was different. He wouldn't consult me in person, but he gave the producer and me the space we needed to do what we knew best. So we would consult with each other, and he would rarely interfere unless it was something he felt he should be a part of.

...

Consultations have to be made at all times. If you are forced to make a drive when you don't really feel like it- and it's a long drive, 4 hours- than its bad. Like with Reinhard- there is a mess in Lebanon, what do you say? Should we drive up there or not? Do you want to? And I would have said yes or no. It's not a terrorist's attack or something, it's a developing event, so you can't always know for sure. With Oleg [the chief at the time] it's not like this. Something happens- go! Nobody even asks for your opinion. There was an event in Kenya where they tried to take down an Israeli El-AL plane three years ago- a huge story. The same day there was an explosion in a guesthouse full of Israelis in Kenya and three were killed- first the plane and then this. Reinhard called me up- What's happening? What is this story? I told him- someone tried to take down the plane, an explosion in Nairobi, several Israelis were killed. He asked me- what do you think? Can we go? He would consult with me; give me the option to make

the decision. He told me to do what I think is right. Check it out, organize it...this was how it happened.<sup>357</sup>"

This segment is cited in length because it demonstrates several elements that are crucial for the daily work of photographers in Reuters. First, the photographer describes the delicate relationship between him and his boss which has considerable impact on work in the field. An embittered photographer will lack motivation and will probably take 'mediocre' pictures. A photographer with higher moral and satisfied with how he is treated in the department may do his job better. This unique relationship between the chief photographer and his photographers, to the work in the field and finally to the end product points to a bidirectional connection- an inner circle in the production routine: the chief delivers his instructions on stories to cover to his photographers and editors and confronts their pictures, as these are injected back into the system as successful or bad ones.

This interview also illustrates Reuters as a central crossing of belonging and alienation: a chief who does not understand the work done by the photographer in the field (and thus belongs to a different occupational community within the department- "a manager who is not a photographer" as described to me). At the same time, he is a foreign chief (by definition), and therefore does not belong to the national community as well. When the tension between the different position holders starts to rise, the photographers would turn to patriotism ("he is not from here...he does not understand"), transforming a unified department into a collection of several national communities (local vs. foreigners) and a multi-professional one (managers vs. field workers, photographers). Whenever the working relationships in the department are

---

<sup>357</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006. Oleg was the chief photographer of the pictures department in Jerusalem at the time I did my observations.

in good order, national borders dissolve, making the pictures department work as a well orchestrated system through which the work of the photographers, the editors and their chief is maintained as one. Such struggles also raise the problem of journalists and the communities they belong to- both professional and the national- and their inability to operate within the boundaries of both at the same time.<sup>358</sup>

### 4.3 The Photography

In 2005 the Reuters pictures department in Jerusalem included 15 photographers: four Israelis (one Arab Israeli), nine Palestinians and two foreigners- thirteen with contracts, two as staff and only one female. During major events the department is reinforced with additional staff photographers (around three), and sometimes with an additional chief photographer to help out as well.<sup>359</sup> Most of the photographers were photojournalists in their past, and many worked as free lance, before joining Reuters. Nonetheless, the minute they joined the agency they were taking pictures right from the start (unlike, for instance, the photographers observed by Rosenblum.<sup>360</sup>)

Photographers are allocated according to specific 'covering areas': in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. One is responsible for covering events in the north and central Israel, and five are always placed in Jerusalem (three Israelis and two foreigners, among which is the chief photographer himself). Five photographers are placed in the

---

<sup>358</sup> Zandberg, E. & Neiger, M. (2005) Between the Nation and the Profession: Journalists as Members of Contradicting Communities. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 27(1): P. 131-141.

<sup>359</sup> A chief photographer is the term used to describe the head of the pictures department, operating as a photographer as well. During my observations, the Greek chief photographer came to help out given the heating events in Gaza and the Israeli northern border at the time. In the past, so I was told, he was the one replacing the current chief for short periods of time and came to help since the work in Greece was at low volume at the time.

<sup>360</sup> Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of Photographic Styles. New York: Holmes and Meier.

West Bank- one in Ramallah, one in Nablus, one in Hebron, one in Kalkilia and one in Janin- and three in Gaza.<sup>361</sup> The allocation to the different districts is made by the chief photographer.

Whenever an event erupts and there are either no Reuters photographers nearby or all of them are busy, the agency will then use the services of free lance photographers: photographers known to the department from the past, or who have offered their pictures to the department. A free lance photographer usually receives the equivalent of \$75 per picture, but in special cases- when rare pictures are involved- the fee may rise up to thousands of dollars per picture. Reuters may also purchase images from citizens who happened to be present in a certain event and took some pictures. Some of the photographers said how- when they arrive at a story- they will look first for someone who happened to be at the spot and managed to take some pictures, and after that will they start to shoot themselves-

"One day I was sent to the neighbourhood of Kiryat Yovel in Jerusalem short after a suicide bomber attacked at the entrance of a supermarket. When I got there, a guy came to me and said his 12 year old son had just come out of a photography store nearby only seconds after the explosion. He took some pictures with his pocket camera which he owned and was wondering whether the agency was interested in his pictures. I had the film developed in the office, and it turned out the kid took this 'extraordinary' picture- a long shot of bodies lying around near the entrance of the supermarket. After some negotiation we decided to buy the picture for the amount of \$250".<sup>362</sup>

---

<sup>361</sup> In 2010 things have slightly changed. There are now five photographers in Gaza, one in Ramallah, one in Nablus, three in Jerusalem and one in Tel-Aviv. The photographers in Hebron and Kalkilia were found redundant, the one in Ramallah was fired and the one in Janin replaced him, leaving Janin with no photographers as well. The allocation of photographers varies according to the different events; where there is a developing news story, there will be a Reuters photographer allocated for the area.

<sup>362</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, a record of a conversation, 2006.

The consumer can initiate the process of production; sometimes it is the photographer who purchases the picture and the consumer who makes the shoot and then supplies the picture to the agency. Such an event may demonstrate yet another moment in which consumer practices are injected right into the heart of the production process- a circle entwined with additional circles of production.<sup>363</sup>

The allocation of photographers is essential given the unique geopolitical circumstances in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. In order to cover the entire area, and since photographers with Israeli nationality cannot enter the West Bank or Gaza (and vice versa), Reuters employs both Israeli and Palestinian photographers. But the division within the department is also made so that Reuters can demonstrate its coverage is balanced by employing photographers from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This also explains the rule that the chief photographer and all other Reuters heads of departments in Israel have to be foreigners. The aspiration for a balanced coverage is an inseparable ingredient along the processes of decision making in a news organization, but also dictated by the organizational structure itself.<sup>364</sup> It also shows how Reuters is subject to several codes of objectivity- whether representing itself as a balanced news organization free from any external interests dedicated to uncover the 'true' nature of events (having facts conceived as aspects of the world itself); operating under a dominant and thus validated view of news (and thus submitted to a neutral representation of both sides of the conflict), or strictly dependant to market forces (and thus make its news products acceptable to all clients).<sup>365</sup>

---

<sup>363</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg.

<sup>364</sup> Gans, H. (1979) Deciding what's news: a study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek and Time. New York: Pantheon.

<sup>365</sup> See Schudson's observation in American journalism during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> and from the sixties onwards in Schudson, M. (1978) Discovering the news: A social history of



From the minute information is received about a story, the photographer goes after 'the picture of the event', as described to me once by an experienced photojournalist working for one of the biggest local news papers in Israel, "if after an event you are having difficulties to choose between 5-6 pictures, this simply means you've missed the picture". The 'event's picture' is that same one which "tells the story, without reading any articles or having a background attached- a picture that speaks for itself".<sup>366</sup> The search for that rare moment guides the photographer at the scene of events and governs the photographic process as a whole. It is that unique combination of time and space he is after; it is a cosmic moment captured in the camera's lens, making an extraordinary tripartite connection of the present (the event just happened), the past (the picture has now become historic evidence) and the future (the aspiration for the picture's eternity); a memory of an event in reality that happened and will thus never happen again.<sup>367</sup>

Once a decision to cover an event has been taken, the photographer will focus on the particular needs for covering the specific event. He prepares the best route to take in order to arrive on time, special documents if needed, specific lenses to take from the office and timetables. He will take the advice of other photographers, and contacts about the importance of the event, how to cover it and what it means. The photographer therefore belongs to a broader occupational community whose members are helping each other at times of need (competing

---

American newspapers. New York: Basic books. See also Zandberg, E. & Neiger, M. (2005) Between the Nation and the Profession: Journalists as Members of Contradicting Communities. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 27(1): P. 131-141.

<sup>366</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, a record of a conversation, 2006.

<sup>367</sup> Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography. London: Fontana; Sontag, S. (1979) On Photography. Harmondsworth: Penguin & Bazin, A. (1967) The Ontology of the Photograph. In: Gray, H. (ed) What is Cinema? .Vol 1. Berkeley: University of California Press. P. 9-16.

photographers, for instance), together with members of other occupational communities (security personnel) helping him to achieve his goal as well.<sup>368</sup>

#### 4.3.1 The tools

The gear used by the photographer is basic and stays with him, although he might add additional accessories because of the special requirements of a particular event. Usually, the photographer carries two digital cameras (Canon es 1 d mark 2): one with a wide lens 16x35 for close ups, facial expressions and posters. The second has a long 80x200 lens which he will use for better focus and for portraits, to get a closer look at particular details and for getting a more 'closed' shot. The photographer also carries two cameras in case the memory card in one of the cameras becomes full, so that he can switch to the second one in which he has an additional memory card, and when one camera all of a sudden stops working ("this happens a lot..."). Both cameras are always ready for use.

Reuters photographers have been using Canon cameras for some time, although other possibilities were recently discussed (such as the new Nikon camera.<sup>369</sup>) Whenever a business possibility like this emerges, various competing factors need to be taken into account. For Reuters is a huge and powerful international organization, enjoying the success of a well known and a prestigious brand, and there will be major implications to both companies in the future once a deal such as this goes through.

---

<sup>368</sup> Gregory, K. (1983) Native view Paradigms: Multiple cultures and culture conflicts in organizations .In: Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 28(3), P. 359-376.

<sup>369</sup> During my observations in the London bureau, a meeting was held with a Nikon representative. Apparently, Reuters considered switching to Nikon for some time, and two of the more experienced photographers in the bureau (including the chief photographer himself) were already testing the new Nikon camera during their daily work.

Reuters wants the best equipment at the lowest cost. Signing a deal with Nikon will probably allow Reuters to enjoy a substantial discount from Nikon, for this will probably mean that all of Reuters photographers worldwide will switch to Nikon, and thus the company will have to purchase a great deal of equipment in advance. Nikon, on its side, will supply its equipment to Reuters at a lower cost than it would if it was for a smaller and unknown company. Then Nikon will be able to ride on the Reuters name, which may very well increase its sales in the future.

But there are also risks on both sides. Should the Nikon equipment prove less resilient than promised, Reuters will lose out to its competitors until its front line photographers are supplied with alternative cameras. Nikon will then have to face legal implications, but more importantly a direct hit at its own brand and one which might take quite some time to recover from. Reuters, therefore, may hold the key for the success or failure of secondary industries offering their services to an additional circle of clients other than news' on a daily basis (in this case Nikon, which also offers its equipment to the masses). However, these may have a huge impact on Reuters daily routine and possibly on its name in the future just as much.

Apart from the cameras the photographer carries a pouch with additional accessories such as flash, a pair of batteries and extra memory cards- just in case.<sup>370</sup> He carries his Mirs device, his own private mobile phone and his beeper device subscribed to a number of messaging groups.<sup>371</sup> Most of the time he will depend on

---

<sup>370</sup> During his daily routine his cards contain the capacity of 2G. Nonetheless, after his dispute with the chief photographer, his new supply was said to have been delayed and he was left with only a single 1G card which he found was extremely hard to work with.

<sup>371</sup> Mirs is a wireless telecommunications company based in Israel and a subsidiary of Motorola, providing a wireless service using integrated digital enhanced network. The communication device itself supplied by the company is named Mirs as well. It is a mobile phone which can also be used as a handheld transceiver with a powerful speaker phone, making it easier to communicate with the photographers in the field.

the information supplied by MADA (Israeli paramedics), the Israeli police, ZAKA, the IDF spokes persons and others if necessary.

A Reuters photographer always carries his most up to date press card. Such a certificate is given to Reuters' photographers working in Israel by the Israeli government press office (GPO) once their journalistic practice is proven, and permits a free entrance to privileged locations like military bases and government offices. Nonetheless, the GPO is run by the Israeli government and thus encapsulates that very conflict Reuters encounters on a daily basis in countries where geopolitical circumstances are complex.<sup>372</sup> However, creative solutions are found to cope with such conditions: beeper devices are often used by journalists subscribed to the information services of various messaging groups supplied by different public organizations on a daily basis. A reporter covering legal and court issues, for instance, subscribes to the information services of the legal system's

---

<sup>372</sup> According to data published by the Israeli government press office (GPO), an Israeli press card shall be given by the office to "a citizen or resident of Israel, over the age of 18, who fulfils the following cumulative conditions:

- (A) He is employed as a journalist in the State of Israel, full-time, by the Media, and this is his primary occupation;
- (B) It has been proven to the satisfaction of the GPO that he was Engaged in Press Work in the Media on a permanent basis during the year prior to submission of his application for granting of the Card, and it is the intention of the Media with which he works, to employ him for a period of at least one year from the date of submitting his application for a Card.

When a foreign journalist (who is not an Israeli resident) is discussed, a press card shall be given "to a person who is over the age of 18 and is not a citizen or resident of Israel, who fulfils the following cumulative conditions:

- (A) He is employed in the State of Israel, full-time, by the Media, as a Journalist or Press Technician or Media Assistant, as the case may be, in the news field, and this is his primary occupation.
- (B) It has been proven to the satisfaction of the GPO that the person was active as a journalist or served as a Press Technician or Media Assistant in the news field in the Media, in Israel or abroad, on a permanent basis, during the year prior to submission of his application for the Card.
- (C) It has been proven to the satisfaction of the GPO that it is the intention of the Media with which he is employed to employ him in the State of Israel, in the news field, for a period of at least one year from the date of submission of the application for the Card

(Data taken from the GPO's website <<http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/PM+Office/Departments/GPO.htm>>). Nonetheless, Palestinian journalists are not considered 'foreign journalists' by the state of Israel. Some do receive their press cards, but others are not entitled for 'security' reasons. This, of course, is highly significant for an international news agency, employing both Israeli and Palestinian photographers.

messaging group, and a crime reporter working in Jerusalem is probably subscribed for the services of the Jerusalem police's messaging group.

Some messaging groups have no limitations or special requirements. To be subscribed for the services of the 'Yesha' messaging group, for instance, all you need is a written letter from the beeper company.<sup>373</sup> However, and given the unique geopolitical circumstances in Israel, some groups do have special requirements and their members are therefore carefully selected. To join the Israeli police or the paramedics messaging groups, for instance, a reporter must supply proof of his employment as an experienced journalist in a well known news organization, and has to be approved by security procedures. Since some information supplied by some messaging groups is highly classified and only available to those with high security clearance, it will not be supplied to all subscribers automatically. A reporter subscribed for the information services of the Israeli police, for that matter, is not classified as highly as, say, the chief of police. Both hold beeper devices, but the journalist is not updated with the same information.

However, the process is not very well organised in Israel, and leaves plenty of room for personal relationships and string-pulling. A well connected reporter might easily get clearance for some of the more classified messaging groups, even when the information received from such groups is not at all necessary for his daily work. On the other hand, for 'security reasons', many Arab journalists working in Israel are not authorised to receive the information supplied by the messaging groups of the police and the paramedics (considered the most useful by journalists in Israel). Since Reuters has to employ Israeli, Palestinian and foreign journalists in order to cover the region and supply a balanced coverage- and since, in Jerusalem,

---

<sup>373</sup> Some of these organizations are pirate ones and do not require any authorization at all ("Hazala Yesha", for instance, is apparently operated by an ambulance driver).

they share the same office- Reuters' Israeli and foreign journalists also find it difficult to subscribe to the services of such groups. As a result, there are only a few devices subscribed for such services used on a daily basis by the pictures department in Jerusalem, but more than that the issue is very much kept in the dark-

"When I was working as a free lance photographer in Jerusalem I bought a pager. After some time people started to recognize me, and I managed to subscribe for the services of some of the messaging groups. A good friend of my wife, for example, helped me join the paramedics'. I remember that when I tried to join the Jerusalem police messaging group, they gave me a hard time, and I was authorised only after I went through security procedures and only when I became a bit more familiar. It is pretty rare; the police don't give these authorizations easily...when I just started working for Reuters I remember asking Reinhard [a former chief photographer of the pictures department] what to do with my pager, and if I should be getting one from the agency. He told me that I should hold on to mine and use it, and the agency would cover the expenses. Today my pager is one of the only devices in Reuters subscribed for the police's information services. I know for a fact that today the Israeli police do not let Reuters join its messaging groups, and the reason for that is obvious".<sup>374</sup>

Where local conditions in sensitive areas make it difficult for Reuters' personnel to receive information of events, the solution takes the form of glocal mechanisms- an unauthorised beeper device supplying valuable information from local authorities,

---

<sup>374</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, a Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, a record of a conversation, April 2006. Journalists need personal authorization in order to subscribe for the services of certain messaging groups, but beeper devices change hands easily and can therefore be used by a number of journalists working for the same organization- even if they were not personally authorised by the authorities.

allowing Reuters' local employees to cover news events for the international market.<sup>375</sup>

The photographer drives a normal domestic car which cannot cope with rough terrain or unmarked roads, and when a story breaks that requires driving on unmarked roads, the photographer might find himself in trouble. During one of our field trips, we arrived at an army base in the north to cover the firing of Israeli cannons at Lebanon after a confrontation had occurred between IDF and Hezbollah soldiers near the border the day before. The cannons were positioned deep in a field covered with mud, with no possibility of getting any nearer using the photographer's car.

Eventually we were forced to wait for

an AFP photographer with his jeep to drive us through. Whether an event gets covered may be the result of technical limitations dictated by the organization- driving a private car instead of a jeep, for instance- and a



*Some roads are not passable with normal domestic cars, Israel, 2005.*

potentially successful coverage can easily turn into a missed opportunity.<sup>376</sup>

The photographer usually carries an extra flash, additional lenses (28x70, a 300 and a 14), monopod (used to stabilize the camera), a first aid kit, a bullet proof vest, a negative camera and a bag with an extra set of clothes (in case he finds himself having to spend the night away from home). He will also carry a yarmulke and a hat for use when shooting in religious events and funerals, and a set of 'unobtrusive' cloths. Whenever he is aware of a shoot in advance- in religious neighbourhoods or during particular religious ceremonies - he may even put on a costume or wear black

<sup>375</sup> Robertson, R. (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) *Global modernities*. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44.

<sup>376</sup> Tuchman, G. (1978) *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: Free Press.

clothes in order to become unnoticed in the crowd; to be present and not present at all, "aware of his intrusive role, a press-photographer minimizes his presentation of self by dressing conservatively, by making sure there is nothing flamboyant about his appearance and by engaging in the choreography of the unobtrusive".<sup>377</sup>

Apart from his regular gear, the photographer carries a computer backpack with an IBM laptop. The bag also contains a fast internet surfing card (3G), an electric divider with several electrical outlets and a long electric cable, a card reader, internet cables (a phone cord- in case there is no wireless connection at the scene), a network cable and a sun shield (whenever the natural lighting is too strong for him to look at the screen). In many cases he will leave his computer in the car, but whenever he needs to send the pictures quickly he will carry the computer on his back. If he finds himself shooting a violent event he will carry as little as possible so that he can move quickly from one spot to another -

"...During a violent event you already know you need to carry as little gear as possible, because you're running and need to hide, and not get hurt; 'light', this is what we call 'moving light'- two lenses, two cameras, that's it; an extra battery; no computer, no nothing; a bullet proof vest and a helmet".<sup>378</sup>

---

<sup>377</sup> Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of Photographic Styles. New York: Holmes and Meier. P. 23.

<sup>378</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, a Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006. At one occasion the photographer showed me a yellow helmet which he borrowed once from one of the Israeli soldiers and never gave back. The yellow helmet is used by the military rescue units at times of earthquakes and similar disasters. In such cases those soldiers are authorized to come without their uniforms, but the yellow helmet is their 'ticket' into the scene of events. In events such as these (the collapse of the Versai hall floor in Jerusalem during a wedding in 2001, for instance), the photographer may enter the scene looking as if he is one of the rescue teams and take pictures.



### 4.3.2 Fieldwork

Arriving at the scene of a story, the photographer joins his competing colleague photographers and other key figures that might be holding valuable information. Most of the photographers are already familiar to him from covering news events in the past, and some will be friends on their time off despite working for competing agencies. Although on rare occasions, a photographer can be misled by a colleague (even though "this rarely happens today..."). In the same way, the photographer might find himself at places familiar to him from his work in the past, in which case he may already be familiar with certain figures- body guards, for instance. Such a relationship might come in handy since acquaintance may ease security checks. It might lead to some valuable information about how to get to an event or how it is going to run; it might save the photographer valuable time at his work. A bad impression left in the past, however, might lead to an opposite reaction, and a photographer who found himself in a personal dispute may have to find his own way in without any help from others on the spot.

Once arriving at the scene of events he will focus on how to address the shoot. When it is a pre-arranged photo opportunity (two political leaders shaking hands), he will be guided in advance. Frequently, he finds himself at events similar to ones he shot in the past, in which case he will spend some time thinking about his shoot already on his way to the scene -

"...It's pretty trivial...during demonstrations you want to see an expression, placards. It already comes natural for us, spontaneous; you already know what you need..."<sup>379</sup>

---

<sup>379</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006.

The photographer anticipates that social behaviour he intends to document from his experience from similar events in the past.<sup>380</sup> Such anticipation in advance, however, might also point to the format of news pictures. For the photographer searches certain conceptual formulas- basic elements needed for what, in his eyes, makes a 'successful' picture (an expression or placards in a demonstration, expressions of grief, tears, a coffin or bodies in a funeral as shall be demonstrated in chapter 6)- attributed to conceptual patterns of newsworthy events (a demonstration, for instance) and finally as part of a broader meta-pattern of creativity. It is a conceptual formula in the head of the creative photographer, executing the organization's standard for a creative shoot- "...a specifically corporate form of creative control".<sup>381</sup>

The photographer focuses on the actual shoot, he will try to get the best position available in order to get the right angle (sometimes this is done before the event) and he may often find himself fighting over a spot with other photographers. At one occasion, we were in the lobby of a hotel in the city of Tel Aviv where Phil Collins was staying. The production managers signified an imaginary line on the ground, forbidding the photographers from crossing it. Collins, they were told, would stand on the other side of the line for approximately two minutes and



*Photographers at work I (Israel, 2006)*

would then go on to a press conference with access only to TV crews. The imaginary line was pretty short (especially given the vast number of photographers present at the

<sup>380</sup> Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of Photographic Styles. New York: Holmes and Meier.

<sup>381</sup> Ryan, B. (1992) Making Capital from Culture: The Corporate Form of Capitalist Cultural Production. New York: Walter de Gruyter. P. 29. .

spot). The photographer I was with was thus forced to act quickly and found a great spot, leaving his colleagues furious.

The photographer will not 'intervene' in an event given his 'professional values'. Nonetheless, he will not hesitate to shoot an event interfered with another photographer, taking the event as pure as long as he himself did not interfere with its natural occurrence. Events are seen to the photographer, at first, as pure- the true nature of things- and their successful coverage might only be possible if only the scene is left uncontaminated. For only then the perfection of the photograph's analogy is kept intact.<sup>382</sup> Thus, he appears to be operating under rather classical notions of journalistic objectivity- taking journalists as free from any external interests, dedicated to uncover the true nature of events, and the act of photography itself as non-intervention.<sup>383</sup>

Whenever the photographer arrives at a scene and decides, together with competing photographers, that there is not enough room for all of them, the option of going through with a *pool* is then discussed. Should they decide to go through with a pool, the shoot is executed by one of the biggest agencies' photographers (Reuters, AP, AFP and EPA) at its turn, and the pictures are then sent to the other three right away. In most cases, the decision to go through



*Phil Collins in Israel: Some lines are meant to be crossed. Gil Cohen Magen, Israel 2005*

<sup>382</sup> Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31.

<sup>383</sup> See Schudson's observation of objectivity in journalistic practice in early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Schudson, M. (1978) Discovering the news: A social history of American newspapers. New York: Basic books; Zandberg, E. & Neiger, M. (2005) Between the Nation and the Profession: Journalists as Members of Contradicting Communities. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 27(1): P. 131-141. See also Schwartz, D. (1999) Objective Representation: Photographs as Facts. In: Brennen, B. & Hardt, H. (eds) Picturing the Past: Media, History and Photography. Chicago: Illinois, University Press P. 158-181; Sontag, S. (1979) On Photography. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

with a pool is made in the office by the editors and chief photographers and communicated to photographers in the field. Often the problem of space is known in advance. At other times, the decision to go through with a pool comes from the bottom-up- decided between the photographers in the field- and only then delivered to the office.

The decision to go through with a pool is mutual but has major implications, since all agencies receive the same pictures from the event. But when the decision comes from the field, it is more complicated, since such a call requires a full cooperation from all the photographers involved at the scene. If only one photographer decides not to go through, he might leave his colleagues without a picture. At the day of the Israeli elections, for instance, we were present in the city of Sderot when the photographer made plans to shoot Amir Peretz- the head of the Israeli Labour party- while placing his vote. When we arrived at the scene, the room in which the voting took place was small and could only contain one photographer and a single TV crew. Many photographers were present and they all argued, until a decision was made to go through with a pool. The decision was mutual- both for pictures and for TV- but even after a decision was already made, the photographers were not satisfied and were left at the entrance of the room just in case the pool would not go through and they would have to fight for a spot. Eventually, the picture was taken by an AFP photographer. Competition is strongly felt at all times in the production routine and has major effects in the field; nobody wants to be left without the picture.

During the photographic process the photographer has to be alert to the event and fully aware of his colleagues' motion at all times, as they are with his- especially those with little experience in the field. His different camera angles will soon be

imitated, if only for the fear of missing the picture of the event, and sometimes he will receive help despite the highly competitive conditions. In many cases, the photographer collaborates with the agency's own TV crews. They arrive together to a scene and help each other to get a good spot. Sometimes, however, TV crews might get in the way of pictures- whether by placing a microphone in the frame, extra personnel struggling on a tight spot, a change of lighting etc. As the event evolves, the photographer must give some thought to his memory cards (whether these are full or not); to his camera (is it in good condition?), or to the right lenses, and have the agency's clients in mind as well-

“If something happens in morning time- the elections, for example- then it is easy to deliver the pictures because it is morning everywhere; even in Singapore it is 6 hours ahead, in Australia it is 8 hours ahead; there is enough time to make the papers deadlines. But if I am shooting something at 16:00 in the afternoon, then it becomes right on the borderline... it affects the shooting, especially when it comes to speed. You know you have to be quick to take your pictures and send them, and, of course, it has a major effect on how I work; I have little time. For instance, if in Israel it is 16:00, then in Singapore it is 22:00, and they are already closing the papers there, in Japan. United States is 7 hours back but Europe is two hours ahead. So, if you are shooting something in 20:00, then the computer is with me. It is on my back.”<sup>384</sup>

Since the agency mainly works with an international circle of clients, the photographer must take into consideration the working hours of clients abroad and international deadlines throughout and on his way to the events, given the time differences. Shooting late faces the photographer with a strict time frame: he must make sure his pictures are sent before the papers are closed abroad. In such cases, he

---

<sup>384</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006.

may even have to leave the event early and miss a picture or two in order to send his pictures in on time. He will quite often carry his laptop on his back to save time. Accordingly, whenever he has a scheduled shoot in the morning, it allows enough time since most of the news papers abroad make their deadlines later during the day in Israel time-

"I am fully aware whenever newspapers around the world are just about to be closed. It's always on my mind. If I am under a strict time frame because of the papers abroad, I am working fast. As soon as I already have something- 2-3 pictures- I send them right away...for example, there was this suicide explosion in Pardes Hana even before they opened road 6, and it's a two hour drive getting there, it was obvious we were not going to make it. But there was a channel 1 TV camera guy on the spot who happened to live nearby in Carcur, and he uploaded his video materials pretty quickly to channel 1...we just grabbed one frame from TV and managed to send a single picture from the event until the rest arrived later on. The next day the picture made an international play, worldwide, front page ... since we are committed to our international clients, and due to the pressure of time, we managed to send one right away. And it proved to be the right thing to do; the papers were waiting for a single picture before closing the paper. By the way, this is also the difference between us and local photographers working for Maariv or Yedioth [two major Israeli news papers]. After taking their pictures they can rest, have something to eat; they have time. We often have to send our stuff straight from the car..."<sup>385</sup>

Deadlines around the world are carefully thought of at all times by the photographer, who needs to decide what pictures to send (to choose the right ones on his own or

---

<sup>385</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, a record of a conversation, 2006.

decide whether to grab a frame from TV), when to send them (based on the deadlines abroad), where and how to use his gear accordingly<sup>386</sup>.

In many ways, the photographer has to determine the event's level of newsworthiness or its 'meaninglessness'- lack of news value. When an event's level of newsworthiness is in question, it faces the photographer with one of the most important moments during his daily routine in which he has to decide when the job is done. Different events come to different endings- at times it is a moment when the peak of the event had passed, at times it is formally declared (a press conference, a meeting between politicians), and sometimes it had just dropped its level of newsworthiness-

"Sometimes events end up by themselves. Sometimes there is a peak. The event starts slow, nothing to shoot, and suddenly something happens...I was once with Amir Peretz [the former head of the labour party] in Sderot. It was nice and pleasant, people wanted to shake his hand, all of a sudden a group of old people jumped over him and started to kiss him. He fell on the floor and I just knew that was the peak of the event. You know you won't have anything like this. So you stay for a couple more minutes and then you're off. That's it, you already have your picture, you have what you were looking for and then the rest can be really mediocre. Or, on the other hand, you may find yourself in a demonstration and nothing happens- pretty slow, you take one picture, maybe two. But sometimes it's a heated demonstration- with settlers, for instance. You have some great pictures and the event isn't over yet, but you decide to leave because you already have the pictures. There might be a chance that something happens when you leave, but you need to send the pictures as well. You have a feeling your job is done, you already have what you were looking for... in time you have a better sense- you know what to look

---

<sup>386</sup> Robertson, R. (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) Global modernities. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44.

for. In time you become more experienced and know when to leave.  
When it's done...".<sup>387</sup>

In major events there are often a few Reuters photographers present, and the work is shared between the photographers to get the widest coverage. Then, the more experienced one usually runs the shoot and shares the workload with his colleagues.<sup>388</sup>

#### **4.3.3 A final touch before takeoff**

When the event has ended the photographer goes on to send his pictures. He will change his position to a more convenient spot nearby- a coffee house, for instance. Sometimes it is decided after a single event had ended, and sometimes it will be at the end of the day after shooting in a number of events, and it is often based on the importance of the events and the speed in which his pictures need to arrive. Often, the photographers decide on a place to send their pictures from with their competing colleagues, and they all join the process as well. Places with a wireless connection option are preferred in advance, but the photographer is well prepared for additional places that lack wireless facilities. Since the sending process takes time and his laptops' batteries are limited, it is often best to have lots of electric sockets available at the chosen spot. During an important event with little time at hand, the photographer will often prefer not to use his battery, for the sending process might be extremely sensitive at times when speed is of the essence, and a computer crash can be a catastrophe.

---

<sup>387</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006.

<sup>388</sup> See chapter 6, second event for a broader discussion.



During the sending process he will copy all the pictures shot into his computer. In a 'regular' event a photographer shoots approximately 100-300 pictures (depending on the different events, how they develop and how important they might seem to the photographer in terms of clients), and he should have some time left for filtering and the sending process as well. Using his fast card reader (USB 2) the pictures are copied relatively quickly and the photographer will then begin filtering the pictures using his AcDsee software. In AcDsee all pictures appear as thumbnails, from which 5-20 are selected and are then sliced again, having the best ones selected for distribution. When sending time is crucial, the photographer will usually look for the 'picture of the event' first, and immediately start to work on it to send it first; the next ones are 'atmosphere pictures'.<sup>389</sup>

In many cases, the photographer will ask for the help of a stranger's opinion in order to select the best pictures from a story. Using an external opinion during the sending process is interesting in itself. It settles with Berkowitz' paradigm repair, for the news photographer is maintained between two conflicting dimensions of objectivity: he is a journalist and therefore committed to the value of objective reporting given his profession, and at the same time bound to operate within the constraints dictated by the photograph during the act of photography.<sup>390</sup> The eye of a so called naïve spectator is not 'bribed' with the camera's lens, and seen as objective by the photographer- pure and uncontaminated, allowing the photographer to make the best choice available. Combining a stranger's view with the act of selecting the right pictures to send from an event demonstrates how the act of news photography is seen by the photographer as limited and castrated- an act contaminating, by definition, his sight and thus interfering with his process of selection.

---

<sup>389</sup> See chapter 6, first event for a broader discussion.

<sup>390</sup> Berkowitz, D. (2000) Doing Double Duty: Paradigm Repair and the Princess Diana what-a-story. In: *Journalism* 1(2): P. 125-143.

Using an 'external' eye points to an additional moment in which production and consumption are entwined, only this time the consumer plays a number of roles: for a moment the photographer is helped with the opinion of an outsider in an attempt to identify how the picture is received by the audience (“wow, this is a great picture!”, or “this is a hideous picture”). Then the external spectator performs as an external editor (he may influence the photographer to send a specific picture or spike another). And he is also the consumer, exposed now to the final product in its 'rough cut' at a very early stage of production.

Once the best set of pictures is selected, the photographer will then start editing using Adobe's Photoshop 5.5 software.<sup>391</sup> The process of editing varies from picture to picture, but often the photographer uses a number of specific editing tools on a daily basis. Usually the original picture will be slightly cropped, the contrast of colors adjusted, saturation, color leveling and unnecessary 'stains' will be removed (“these stains are in the camera's lens, not a part of the picture itself. Otherwise you are not allowed to do it”.<sup>392</sup>) After the Hajj story during the second war in Lebanon, Reuters issued a brochure with specific instructions on how to edit pictures in Photoshop (“A brief guide to the values and standards of Reuters”). The brochure was distributed to all of Reuters' pictures departments worldwide, in order to 'reduce' photographers' own judgment in the field substantially. Among the set of instructions, for instance, are precise levels of colors a photographer may change, particular cropping angles, saturation percentages and more. Photoshop also has a new *history* application, allowing editors to look at all editing actions used to edit every picture

---

<sup>391</sup> I was told that all of Reuters photographers are working with the same software. Attempts were made in the past to work with advanced ones but these turned out to be full of bugs and thus it was decided to stick to this specific one.

<sup>392</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, a record of conversation, 2006.

before it was sent by a photographer in the field. And all Reuters photographers have to enable this option under the software's preferences.

The digital editing process is a source for a number of theoretical perspectives regarding the photograph's ontology- whether containing traces of reality in its analogue form or released from the constraints of reality in its digital one.<sup>393</sup> The endless possibilities of digital editing allow the photographer to govern his photograph and offer complete domination of its visual elements, having the opportunity to transform the photograph into a 'new' document.<sup>394</sup> Yet the Reuters photographer uses the digital editing tools and 'touches' the photograph's visual elements not in order to push the picture away from reality (as in the case with stock images, for instance), but, ironically, to bring it closer. The digital editing tools, in this case, are the means of empowering the photographic document's objectivity- as a photograph, as news.<sup>395</sup>

During the editing process the photographer will also connect his computer to the internet. The connection options vary from time to time, and he is prepared for a number of situations: whenever there is a wireless connection available, surfing might become faster, but sometimes such networks are secured and not always available. And at times these might accidentally crash just when surfing speed is needed the most. Therefore the photographer has a 3G card (Orange) with which he can quickly connect to the internet and surf faster, having almost no interruptions with only a

---

<sup>393</sup> Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography. London: Fontana; Sontag, S. (1979) On Photography. Harmondsworth: Penguin & Mitchell, W. J. (1992) The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post Photographic Era. Cambridge, MA: the MIT Press.

<sup>394</sup> Robins, K. (1995) Will Image move us still?. In: Lister, M. (ed) The Photographic Image in Digital Culture. London and New York: Routledge. P. 29-49.

<sup>395</sup> In the digital era, the editing tools accessible by Photoshop are similar to Barthes' trick effects, only in this case they are not seen by the photographer as the means to hide a connoted reality behind the 'objective' mask of denotation, but rather to embrace the photograph's objective status- as if it is, indeed, a message without a code (Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31. P. 21).

basic network needed for surfing (such networks are usually easy to find in most cities). Whenever his card is not working properly, he has a similar Cellcom (an Israeli mobile phone company) backup card, and he may also connect through his Mirc device with a network cable and a phone cord.

Using the internet to send the pictures is crucial: it saves time and gives the photographer fewer worries to deal with in the field. This means that he can shoot a number of events per day without wasting precious time sending his materials to the office. Nonetheless, special attention is still given during the sending process, for the photographer alone is there to decide, unlike in the past when digital technologies were not available and more personnel were involved in the process-

“...Me and Reinhard [the former chief photographer] discussed once the difference between film and digital photography. He told me that in the past it was a completely different story. He himself, for instance, was sent to take pictures of the Berlin wall falling. Although everyone knew this was a huge story, he said it took him a number of hours until he got to the office, and several more until the pictures were published at all. Today it is, of course, completely different. Sometimes I shoot in an event, send my pictures and after 30 minutes I already see my pictures published in various news websites. This clearly makes the whole process much faster, but it also forces me to be extra cautious and make no mistakes, because it is very difficult to fix them later on”.<sup>396</sup>

Using an on-line distribution technology is similar to the use of telegraph technology at the time. It allows for the distribution of content through means of transportation at

---

<sup>396</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters photographer working in Israel, a record of a conversation, 2006.

maximum speed and minimum cost, and represents a new definition of time and space using new technologies of distribution.<sup>397</sup>

When the editing process is finished, the photographer writes the captions. Browsing through Reuters' website he will try to locate a story written on the event by the text department. If one is found, the relevant details are copied in order to keep his writing as succinct as possible. But if there is no story available to take details from, he will have to work on the captions on his own. Internal Reuters software is then used in which the caption is written and the pictures catalogued, and Babylon is at use to avoid spelling mistakes as well ("it is not appropriate if you are having some spelling mistakes..."). Sometimes parts of a caption are already created before arriving at the scene of events- in case 'similar' events were shot in the past.

The Reuters photographer has to speak universally; his picture must speak the language of all people, his captions need to be written in 'perfect' English (some of the bureau's photographers do not speak 'good' English. Then the caption is written by the editor in the office). Writing captions for pictures is a good example of a shift between several levels of representation: the first is a verbal description of the photographer's experience (he was at the scene) in which an epistemological gap between the photographer's experience and its verbal representation is in play.<sup>398</sup> The second is the verbal transition from Hebrew to English. The shift, therefore, comes into play from the private to the public first, and then from a 'local' public to a 'global'

---

<sup>397</sup> Frosh, P. (2000) The Image Factory: Stock Photography, Cultural Production and the Image-Repertoire. PhD, Jerusalem: Hebrew University; Giddens, A. (1991) Modernity and Self- Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

<sup>398</sup> Peters, J. D. (2001) Witnessing. In: Media, Culture and Society, 23(6). P. 707-723. Now that the image has to be described in words, a change of structures is in play, for the description signifies "...something different to what is shown" (Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31. P. 19).

one, for the verbal description of the experience is public.<sup>399</sup> And the Western public- where many of Reuters' powerful clients are placed in- usually speaks English.<sup>400</sup>

This is an example of mechanisms activated at the captions' writing process by the photographer in order to tailor Reuters' pictorial products for the needs of an international market, with the strong Western markets in mind: working on his captions, the local photographer needs 'perfect' English writing skills (and thus has Babylon at his service since 'it is not appropriate to make mistakes'), and local editors will write the captions whenever a photographer's English skills are not 'sufficient'.<sup>401</sup>

When the picture is edited and its caption completed, it is sent via an internal network. If it is sent directly to the Singapore global pictures desk, the photographer will contact one of the desk's editors using an application similar to Microsoft's MSN. The two will consult on specific visual elements in a picture, certain details in a caption or just to have an update on which pictures were sent and their numbers. At times he might be asked to rewrite a caption, and sometimes an argument regarding the editing of a certain picture occurs, for the editor in Singapore can re-edit the pictures if he wishes to do so, although this rarely happens-

“Not long ago I sent a couple of pictures from a certain event and added my captions. For some reason someone in Singapore insisted that I should change the captions. I refused and he called up the editor in charge who immediately solved this in my favour. After all, I was at the event and not him, so it's pretty obvious...”<sup>402</sup>

A conflict between a photographer and an editor from the global pictures desk in Singapore expresses an interesting moment in which the picture and the referent are

<sup>399</sup> Peters, J. D. (2001) Witnessing. In: *Media, Culture and Society*, 23(6). P. 707-723.

<sup>400</sup> See a broader discussion in chapter 6, second event.

<sup>401</sup> See Robertson, R. (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) *Global modernities*. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44.

<sup>402</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters photographer working in Israel, a record of a conversation, 2006.

struggled for.<sup>403</sup> In this case, there is a complex relationship between the photographer, the referent and the act of photography, and between different personnel (the photographer and a distant editor) working from the 'local' and the 'international' levels of operations. For the photographer, the eye of a stranger- a local waiter in a coffee house where he sends his pictures from, for example- is considered 'closer' to the scene of events than that of a Singaporean editor. He would fight to 'own' his picture (as well as the overall act of photography), have the advice of a stranger and ignore the opinion given by a distanced and foreign editor. For him it is his testimony that matters the most, for he was present, both in time and in place (he was there and his testimony is the most representational of all). Then comes an anonymous spectator in the local sphere (he was not present at the scene but 'belongs' to this particular place given his local nationality). Finally, the editor in Singapore who is part of a distanced sphere (he is not from 'here') and therefore found the least relevant.

When captions are completed, the pictures are sent away one after the other according to their level of importance and the time of the sending process (additional pictures from the same event are often allocated the same caption that was given to the first picture that was sent). All pictures are either sent directly to the global pictures desk in Singapore or to the office of the department at the local bureaus. The decision whether a photographer sends his pictures directly to Singapore or to the local bureau first is a political one made by the chief photographer. And often the most experienced photographers are approved to send directly to Singapore as a show of appreciation and respect. An order given to a photographer to send his pictures to the local office first signifies his relatively low status amongst other photographers in the bureau. For this means his pictures are observed and filtered one last time before

---

<sup>403</sup> Sontag, S. (1979) On Photography. Harmondsworth: Penguin; Berger, J. (1972) Ways of seeing. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

they are sent directly to Singapore. Such a decision is also a good example of the internal policy of the department, changing with the personal opinion of the chief photographer in position, and might indicate of internal conflicts over organizational power in the department.

Of course, a decision such as this may heat an ongoing dispute or settle another, and might have a huge impact on the daily routine of the department in general. At a certain point throughout my observations, the chief photographer decided that all pictures must go through the local



*'A pack of lonely wolves' (the photographers of Reuters, AP & Getty sending pictures together, Israel 2006)*

office first regardless of the photographers' expertise. The photographer I accompanied was the most experienced in the department and used to send his pictures directly to Singapore for some time. He was deeply offended and described how such a decision may affect his work on a daily basis. Nonetheless, after the Hajj story during the second war in Lebanon, a decision was taken by the upper management that all Reuters photographers should send their pictures to their local bureaus first in order to avoid future alterations, and enforce extra filtering mechanisms for Reuters pictures before they are sent to clients.

The Jerusalem bureau is seen as a sensitive one given the unique geopolitical circumstances in the area, and although some of the more experienced photographers are still allowed to send their pictures directly to Singapore, pictures are usually sent to Jerusalem first. The decision to have all the pictures sent to Jerusalem first is also applicable today because of the fast distribution technology. With a 3G transmission



speed, a picture is quickly sent to Jerusalem by a photographer in the field and may be received in Singapore in less than a minute, and thus have little effect on the overall distribution speed as well.

Usually, the photographer checks to see whether his pictures have already *returned*.<sup>404</sup> He will go through central news and pictures websites- ‘Yahoo’ or ‘Scanpix’, for instance- to see whether his pictures were selected and published by certain clients on the account of his colleagues, and if so at what time. With the pictures ‘returned’, a circular structure is in play: they were sent to the local office by the photographer, then to Singapore, then to clients and finally published for public view. When the photographer faces his published pictures, his visual consumer practices are revealed as well- he is an agency photographer, who is at the same time a news photography consumer, and thus also part of a broader culture of news photography consumption. A picture which has ‘returned’ is injected straight back into the heart of production after it was distributed to its clients and then published for the eyes of an international audience- an idea turned into a photograph, a photograph into a product.

#### 4.4 The Product

The Reuters Jerusalem bureau is divided in two main spaces: the first is the main hub where the personnel of Text and TV are set in a cubical structure of some sort and make sure to keep an eye contact at all times. The second is a separate room where the pictures department operates. This unique allocation of space points to an interesting aspect relevant to the bureau’s daily routine: both Text and TV are located

---

<sup>404</sup> A ‘returned’ picture is the term used to describe a picture sent to clients and was then published on their platforms. The picture was sent first by the photographer who now witnesses his picture published as a spectator and a consumer.

in a joined space and share valuable information on the daily events. They maintain eye contact at all times, and whenever information is received on a story, TV crews are usually notified on the spot and fly away.

However, information is often received too late at Pictures since they are placed in a separate room, and sometimes not received at all. This strange allocation of space in the local bureau settles with an ongoing inside competition between departments as well. Despite the feeling of mutual collaboration and organizational solidarity, several employees in pictures shared their views on some sort of unhealthy competition taking place between pictures and TV, and some believe it is because news websites are running video news segments on their platforms as well. Thus, during events when exclusivity is top priority, web clients often prefer to upload videos over pictures. In a way, this competition urges the different crews and photographers to get to the scene as soon as possible, and thus serves well with Reuters. However, such tension is eventually not healthy. For it may come to extreme situations in which TV will not share its information with Pictures on purpose-

“It occurred in several occasions; something happened and we did not know anything about it. When we started to get the information in our beeper devices and prepared to take off, I noticed there is no one from TV in the office. I asked someone where they are and was told they were already gone. I mentioned this once to Reinhard [the former chief photographer], and he put it in simple words: we are in competition with everybody”.<sup>405</sup>

---

<sup>405</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Israeli Reuters photographer working in Israel, a record of a conversation, 2006. See Gregory and her observation on occupational communities within the organization in Gregory, K. (1983) Native-view paradigms: multiple cultures and culture conflicts in organizations. In: *Administrative science quarterly*, Vol. 28(3). P. 359-376. In the days to come, arrangements have been made to move the local bureau in Jerusalem to a different spot. In the new office all departments are now sharing one big space.

However, a competitive environment is also maintained in the pictures department itself. Even though photographers usually work on their own and rarely come across fellow photographers from the office, they are fully aware of their work, skills, famous pictures and working relationships in the department. Often photographers show their appreciation whenever a colleague's picture receives good reviews, and they offer comfort whenever a shoot did not go as planned. In addition, in order to provide an incentive, the Magazine desk publishes the 'best of the 24



*Photographers at work II: 'We are in competition with everybody' (Israel, 2006).*

hours' pictures and the 'best of the month' worldwide on the Reuters pictures' website. Thus, a photographer whose pictures have earned such respect is immediately embraced by his colleagues.

In a sense, both incentives might also demonstrate Reuters' forms of success performed in a number of levels: a published picture on Reuters' website is a motivation boost for the local photographer and evidence for having executed an 'excellent' Reuters picture. Then these successful published pictures from the work at the bureau are fed straight back into the heart of production. For a photographer who did not do the honour would aspire to take his future pictures 'the Reuters way' to increase his chances for having a picture published on the Reuters' website and thus gain political power inside his department. Finally, this incentive also keeps the department and its photographers highly motivated as the means of serving the agency's goals: a photographer fulfilling the goals of the local department (in news and photography); a local bureau fulfilling the Reuters goals for success on

international scales (how many pictures published as the 'best of 24' or the 'best of the month' from photographers working in a particular bureau), and eventually as an international organization fulfilling the goals of success on international scales as opposed to competing international agencies and local organizations. These are then absorbed into a more general financial success fulfilled by increasing the agency's circle of clients, gaining a wide publicity as possible- to local clients as cultural mediators, and eventually to the audience of consumers.<sup>406</sup>

There are five computer stations in the office: one for the chief photographer whenever he is not shooting, one for the editor and three for editing in case one of the photographers comes in and wishes to edit his pictures.<sup>407</sup> There is an additional computer next to the editor's station. This computer is operating 24/7 and has the FTP World constantly running (an internal network available to access in all of Reuters bureaus worldwide). With the help of the FTP World, the editor can browse through pictures distributed by Reuters worldwide on a daily basis (including the ones from Israel).

On the FTP the pictures appear in their final form as they are received by Reuters' clients. And on the editor's station a national FTP runs as well (this can be viewed only at the local bureau), where the editor can browse through all the pictures coming in from the local photographers on a daily basis. Using the national FTP, the

---

<sup>406</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg.

<sup>407</sup> The official title of the editors in the office is "editors, picture desk", although, in terms of their daily work, they were described to me as having to deal with little editing. In fact, the photographers in the field described the work of the so called editors as similar to production and thus treated them as 'producers' more than 'editors'. This, of course, is an interesting observation to make, considering job descriptions as a good example of the relationship between job titles and power and thus a pure symbol of organizational status. For editing is considered by the photographers as a highly powerful process and part of their own daily judgment, and taking that title from them would clearly jeopardize their status. In the days to come, one of the experienced editors in the office insisted and finally received a "senior photo editor" title, placing her 'above' the other editors in the department as well. Since 'editors' is the term used by the practitioners themselves, I chose to stick with it throughout the analysis.

editor is capable of uploading or downloading pictures based on the department's daily needs. In addition, there are two TV sets in the room: one constantly screening Reuters feeds worldwide in order to get updated with the recent news events covered internationally, and the other shows CNN.<sup>408</sup> The editor is thus constantly updated with 'local' events (with the help of telephone sets and her beeper device), and also in tune with 'international' events (watching CNN and Reuters Feeds) - a circular process of information exchange from the agency to local and international news channels (CNN, which feeds on a similar circular process) and from those channels back to the agency.

Above the editor's station a board is hung on the wall covered with essential documents needed for her daily routine: the editors' weekly shifts and schedule; a list of useful telephone numbers (the one of the technical support team or the international desk in London); a note with the pool rotation ("1. AFP 2. AP 3. EPA 4. Getty 5. Reuters"), and a page with a list of the names of all the new ministers in the Israeli government in English and in Hebrew. There is also a list of all the free lance photographers (stringers) in Israel the department works with on regular basis (around 100)- all clarified by several regions in Israel, having the names of the local papers they work for on a daily basis attached.<sup>409</sup>

Those stringers are of great use for the editor, for she will often purchase their pictures from events which are not covered by Reuters and send them to cover certain events whenever there is no Reuters photographer available. Whenever pictures are received from a stringer, he will sometimes request for his pictures to appear as 'Israel

---

<sup>408</sup> 'Feeds' are raw video footage of news stories from around the world covered by Reuters TV that are roughly cut. These feeds are received by Reuters' TV and web clients, edited and eventually aired by local TV news outlets and websites. Feeds range from around 30 seconds to a few minutes each and are received with a script containing a shot list and a story line attached. Nonetheless, feeds are seen by Reuters producers as news items on their own right, and often it was not received well whenever I addressed these as 'rough cuts'.

<sup>409</sup> Stringer is a photographer not on the full-time staff.

Out', in which case his pictures are eventually sent to Reuters clients worldwide with the exception of the Israeli clients. A "Maariv" photographer often selling his pictures to Reuters (working freelance as well), for example, does not wish to see his pictures published by "Yedioth Ahronoth" (both major Israeli news papers). However, local clients are fully aware of such an arrangement with the agencies, and it was described to me more than once as a 'circle of silence' (although the request to 'Israel Out' a picture can also come from certain public organizations, such as the government press office (GPO) and others).<sup>410</sup>

#### **4.4.1 The office**

There are two pictures editors in the office sharing a morning shift (8:30-14:00) and an evening one (14:30-20:00). The morning editor is responsible for events occurring during the early morning hours and the evening one for those late at night (the editors can work from home as well where each has a Reuters computer). Both editors carry a beeper and Mircs devices and are updated with the recent events at all times. They will share the information on the events of the day and those planned for the next one when handing their shift to their fellow editor. And during major events, or whenever there is a lot of work to be done in a single shift, they will both be present at the office and help each other.

On her way to work the editor will listen to the news flashes on the radio (in Israel those are aired by the hour). During her shift she will listen to the news on the radio, browse through various news websites ([www.fresh.co.il](http://www.fresh.co.il) for instance, where news is constantly updated) and go over the morning papers (the local "Haaretz",

---

<sup>410</sup> The process in which certain regions are restricted for distribution is discussed in depth in chapter 5.

"Maariv" and "Yedioth Ahronoth", the "Herald Tribune" and the "Jerusalem Post"). Throughout the day, she will also peek at the TV diary- just in case there are unfamiliar events planned for the day. And she will notify TV on pictures received from public organizations (the GPO, for instance) - perhaps there was a TV camera present as well, and therefore some video footage that might be useful for the TV department.

The different events will then get uploaded into the department's computerized diary, where they are only mentioned schematically. In addition, the events of the day will be described in Reuters' 'World diary' (maintained as a website), where the events are presented in more detail, and both diaries will be regularly browsed whenever an editor starts her shift. The Reuters world diary is received by the international desk in London, where information on all the daily events covered by Reuters pictures worldwide is processed daily.<sup>411</sup> The world diary can be accessed from every computer using only a username and a personal password- where the editor can browse through the different events in specific countries around the world- and during the shift, information on new events is constantly updated.

Most of the time, the editor is busy coordinating the different photographers and deals with events planned in advance. She will update the chief photographer on the different events if necessary, and make her own decision on who to send and where (although, at times, she will notify her chief later on). The information on the different events is received through a number of channels such as mail, fax or a pager. In rare occasions, a photographer might notify the editor of an event without her knowing about it in advance (information often received from Palestinian photographers working in the West Bank or Gaza, for instance). During the day, most

---

<sup>411</sup> See the discussion on the international desk in chapter 5.

pictures are injected into the national FTP by the different photographers in the field, and some are sent to the editor via e-mail. Then the chief photographer will be contacted and browse through the pictures of the day using his laptop (and pictures received via mail are uploaded to the FTP by the editor as well).

The chief photographer will then select the best pictures of the day and tell the editor on what pictures she should work on during her shift. The decision on which pictures to send to Singapore and which to spike is taken by the chief, and he is also the one giving the instructions to the editors on what changes to make during the editing process in the office before the pictures are sent to Singapore. The selected pictures then go through a quick editing process ("I am not really doing the editing, I just organize them...") using Photoshop- mostly cropping and playing with the levels of colours if necessary.<sup>412</sup> If several pictures with no captions are received, similar ones from the past are traced and their captions are copied ("like pictures of Gilad Shalit [the Israeli captive soldier who was recently released]. There is no need to change the caption...").<sup>413</sup> In other cases, a new caption will be created based on a written story on the event from Text, information given by the photographer in the field or both. In such cases, the editor will usually stick to the department's policy and regulations and copy the second sentence of the caption from the first sentence of the story written by Text. And the terminology used in the caption (names, for instance)

---

<sup>412</sup> After my observations were completed in Israel, and probably due to the Hajj story, photographers were encouraged to do as little editing as possible in the field. In many cases, so I was told, editing pictures with Photoshop appears to be very hard to execute in the field given the fact that laptop screens used by the photographers are not in great quality and due to constant changes in lighting at the different scenes as well. The new Apple screens in the Jerusalem bureau are calibrated with the ones in Singapore, and so the editing nowadays becomes more as part of the editors' daily work- both in the local office and in the Singapore global pictures desk- and less for the photographers to pursue in the field. Even though it is barely used in the Jerusalem department, Reuters pushes its new Paneikon to be used in the field on a daily basis, allowing photographers to send their pictures faster without using any editing at all (see a broader discussion on the Paneikon in chapter 5).

<sup>413</sup> Today, and a part from cases when Paneikon is used (in which case pictures are just sent to the office with no captions attached and are not edited as well), all of the pictures from the West Bank are sent with captions while only some are sent by the Israeli photographers with captions attached. When time is of the essence, it is often preferred that the captions are added by the editor in the office, since it might save valuable time.



will be similar to the one used in the Text's story.<sup>414</sup> Whenever pictures with captions are received by the desk, the editor will enter the internal FTP and go over their spelling with the help of Babylon-

"Sometimes it's pretty trivial, so I already know what happened there. I go through the web and read about the event, so in such cases it is not that difficult. Or sometimes I ask the photographer to explain to me what exactly happened at the scene".<sup>415</sup>

The editor's view demonstrates a different perspective from that of photographers' in the field. As an editor working in the office she does not feel it necessary to be present at the event in order to write the most accurate caption; a photographer's description from the scene of events, or finding out about an event with other means of information, are found satisfying enough for her to feel confident about her caption. Thus, the fact the editor is absent from the scene of events and yet taken by her superiors as capable of writing the captions (as a perfectly expectable norm maintained in the office) places the editor as part of a greater imaginative new sphere- where the presence of some of its members is acknowledged even when they are physically absent. And it therefore allows for the daily routine of Pictures to go through with no interruptions, even when the editor is not physically 'there'- at the scene of events- to witness.<sup>416</sup>

Seeing herself capable of writing the caption without having the need to be at the scene of events can be explained by loading the experience of seeing a visual representation of the event (looking at a picture) with a similar testimonial value of the physical experience of one (in which case, she would have witnessed it with her

---

<sup>414</sup> Today, every caption receives a tagged title of some sort called a 'slug'. A violent event between Israelis and Palestinians, for instance, appears as 'Palestinians/Israel/violence'.

<sup>415</sup> Shelly Alish, Reuters Israeli producer working in Israel, a record of a conversation, 2006.

<sup>416</sup> See, for instance, Giddens, A. (1991) Modernity and Self- Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

own eyes by being physically present at the scene).<sup>417</sup> Two forces of experience are in play here: the editor is not 'there' and cannot testify in first hand to the event itself (given the norm of her profession as a journalist). Yet at the same time she is very much present- she witnessed the event's picture- and therefore, to her eyes, perfectly capable to describe the event in words. This play between two forms of experience eventually allows the editor to stick to the classic codes of objectivity maintained by the journalistic profession- where facts represent the true nature of things- even when she was not there to experience. Then she can write her captions based simply on pictures, and have her journalistic values intact. Then those pictures are no longer simply representatives of real events, but rather a pure reflection of things as they are.<sup>418</sup>

The editors' level of English is also of the essence, like photographers'. An editor with excellent English skills can work on captions easily and improve the workflow in the office substantially. On the other hand, an editor struggling with English may slow things down-

"It's easier to communicate in English in the office- with bosses, reading mails... I was looking recently for two editors to hire, and I will not have someone on the desk that needs to use Morfix [a popular Hebrew-English dictionary website used in Israel] ...people who can't think in English, because this can affect the daily flow...it's more like Text than TV. In TV one of the most important things is to send stuff away as fast as they can, but for us if there is a typo- especially in our captions- we take it very seriously".<sup>419</sup>

---

<sup>417</sup> Ellis, J. (2000) *Seeing Things: Television in the Age of Uncertainty*. London, I. B: Tauris. This also coincides, in a way, with what Peters calls 'presence-at-a-distance' (Peters, J. D. (2001) *Witnessing*. In: *Media, Culture and Society*, 23(6). P. 707-723. P. 717).

<sup>418</sup> Schudson, M. (1989) The sociology of news production. In: *Media, Culture & Society*, 11: 263-282; Schwartz, D. (1999) Objective Representation: Photographs as Facts. In: Brennen, B. & Hardt, H. (eds) *Picturing the Past :Media, History and Photography*. Chicago: Illinois, University Press. P. 158-181).

<sup>419</sup> Sharon Perry, Reuters senior pictures editor working in the Jerusalem bureau, September, 2009. Sharon was hired by the Reuters pictures department in Jerusalem in 2005. She was born in America and moved to Israel a few years back, and described how she thinks it turned out great for the

Sometimes the editor will send pictures she selected herself; if the chief is busy covering an event and does not have time to look at the pictures of the day (the best pictures "...capture a moment, and have an element of composition in it".<sup>420</sup>) She will do the same whenever pictures taken by the more experienced photographers are received by the office, and has little time to deal with pictures herself ("you can always count on the veterans...".<sup>421</sup>) When a picture is taken by a less experienced photographer, she will wait for the chief's opinion.

When editing and captioning are complete, the pictures are then sent by the editor to Singapore. Reuters' picture stream process (PSED) includes the photographer's and the event's details, the caption, the date and the exact time with every picture (once completing the details update and the caption's edit, the pictures are then sent to Singapore via the software's interface as well.<sup>422</sup>) The editor will check that the pictures have arrived at the global pictures desk in Singapore by chatting on-line with the Singapore editors who will double-check the details.

The editor also deals with the daily routine- going through the photographers' mobile phone invoices, or making hotel reservations for photographers who have to spend the night away from home. She deals with the photographers' broken equipment and warranties, or purchases new gear, handles pay checks and deals with the department's vehicles. She is also the one who solves any delays- whenever a

---

department since they never had anyone with fluent English skills before. In the days to come, and after my observations were completed in Israel, she became a senior photo editor in the Jerusalem bureau. Nonetheless, it has come to my attention that in TV it is, in a way, preferred that producers come from different countries and have different accents- perhaps in order to make Reuters seem more international- but good English skills are mandatory. In the Jerusalem department most of the Palestinian photographers communicate in English with the editors as well.

<sup>420</sup> Sharon Perry, Reuters senior pictures editor in the Jerusalem bureau, September 2009.

<sup>421</sup> Shelly Alish, Reuters pictures editor in the Jerusalem bureau, November 2006.

<sup>422</sup> The sending process has slightly changed since my observations were completed in Israel. Instead of using the Reuters picture stream (PSED) to send the pictures, editors are now using 'Photo mechanic' - a browsing software allowing the editors to browse for pictures coming in through the FTP, add captions and store the complete ones in the same interface. 'Photo mechanic' is also used in Singapore by some of the editors, from which the pictures are downloaded as well. This will be further discussed in chapter 5.

photographer is being held somewhere- and will negotiate between the different authorities in order to allow a photographer to get to scenes or simply pass through a military barrier.

It is the editor's job to maintain contact with outside institutions and public organizations, such as military officers or soldiers from the spokes person unit. Often, a good relationship with such sources makes all the difference to photographers in the field. When a picture is sent to Singapore, the editor checks the pictures on the world's FTP. As they now appear alongside Reuters pictures worldwide right after going through the global pictures desk in Singapore and then sent to clients. Then she will start working on the production of a new idea.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

So the process of picture production has unique circular-linear structures. The production process is also an open circle of production that interacts with external circles of production. The 'local' sites of production are an arena in which social power and control are constantly struggled over. The production of news pictures is also shaped by functional issues and technical aspects of production dictated by the agency's need for routine. In order to cope with the requirements of international markets- when its products must combine international appeal and yet be tailored for the particular needs of local clients- global mechanisms are also important. And the audience plays a key role as well.

These unique features of production are reflected not only in the 'local' levels, but also throughout its 'international' stages, where pictures are eventually published

by Reuters' clients and gathered back by Reuters as data to improve future processes-  
from product to story.

## Chapter 5

### The Production Process II: From Product to Story

#### 5.1 Final Stop (I): The Global Pictures Desk in Singapore and Sales

From an earthquake in Haiti to the Golden Globe ceremony in Los Angeles; from a fashion show in Paris to explosions in Kabul, greetings from the Reuters global pictures desk in Singapore. Once the pictures are processed in local picture desks by editors or sometimes photographers in the field, most of Reuters pictures end up here before they are distributed to clients around the world.<sup>423</sup>

The global desk has only been fully operational since 2005 (although a smaller version has been working since 1990's and was in charge of Asia after Hong Kong desk was handed over to China)- with another desk operating in Washington and the main hub located in London. The original idea for the three desks was to bridge the time zone gap and was based on the main Reuters' organizational structure, but this was also possible because during 1990's there was not a large daily volume of pictures.<sup>424</sup> With the digital era, however, this changed, when "...everyone went bananas...with the big memory cards everybody started to shoot like crazy..."<sup>425</sup>

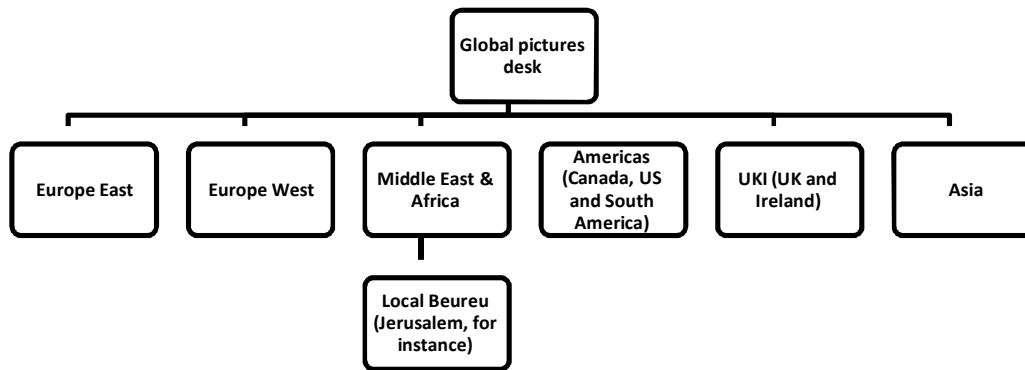
---

<sup>423</sup> All but pictures taken in Germany, Austria and Switzerland that are sent to the Western Europe pictures desk placed in Berlin during day time. In less sensitive areas, or in countries with a low working flow (some only have a single Reuters' photographer working on a daily basis), some of the photographers send directly to Singapore. In areas considered 'sensitive', like in Israel and the occupied territories, pictures from big events would go through the local bureau first, and so do pictures taken by photographers whose caption writing skills are not 'sufficient'.

<sup>424</sup> The main desk in London, for example, was operating from 8am to 12pm, and so pictures taken during the night London time were sent to the other desks.

<sup>425</sup> Petar Kujundzic, Deputy Editor, Global Pictures Desk, 2010.

## Reuters pictures regional network, 2010



*All pictures are sent to the Global pictures desk in Singapore apart from those taken in Germany, Austria and Switzerland that are sent to the Western Europe pictures desk placed in Berlin during day time.*

Soon the desk in London was unable to handle the huge flood of pictures, and lots of good pictures were lost (“...they were spiking pictures because they were busy and I think this was hurting us big time because we had award winning pictures being spiked...”.<sup>426</sup>) Singapore was attractive because of the low cost staffing and maintenance, English as a spoken language and a highly educated workforce, and the three desks were finally absorbed into one global pictures desk which became fully operational in 2005. The funeral of Pope John Paul II on April was the first big event successfully handled by the desk. Paying less, speaking English and overcoming time differences, the decision to place the global picture hub in Singapore is an example of glocal mechanisms required from an international organization to cope with the demands set by an international market.<sup>427</sup> At the same time, this also puts Reuters' organizational structure under what Robertson defines as the ‘glocal condition’ and

<sup>426</sup> Petar Kujundzic, Deputy Editor, Global Pictures Desk, 2010.

<sup>427</sup> See Robertson, R. (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) *Global modernities*. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44.

the inevitable experience (here the subject is the organization) of a 'universal particularity' and 'particular universality'.<sup>428</sup>

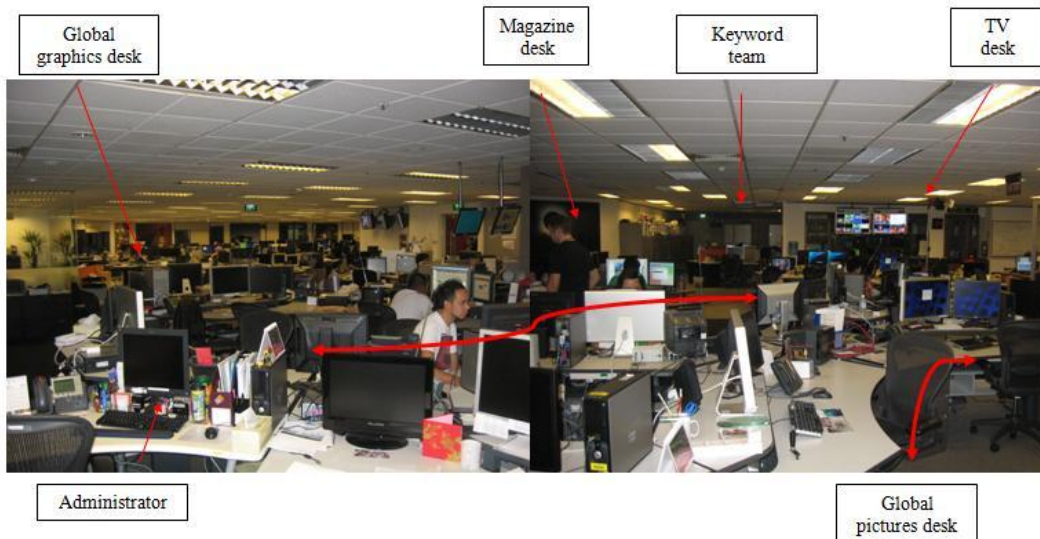
Operating as the final stop for the traffic of Reuters pictures before they are sent to clients, the global pictures desk is capable of handling a daily work flow of 1700 pictures a day (and up to 2000 on a busy one). It works around the clock. The desk is operated by several sub editors, senior sub editors and EIC's (Editors In Charge). In contrast with photographers in the field, there are many female editors. The desk is managed by the deputy editor alongside the Asia editor, with additional pictures units such as the Magazine desk, the Keyword team and Graphics- all sharing the same open space alongside Asia's TV and Text.

The desk itself is not as big as one would think it would be considering the number of pictures going through its systems: two broken lines close to one another consist of four working stations each, with every station formed in a shape of an open cubical having three sub editors and an EIC sitting back to back to additional three 'subs' and a senior sub editor. In a similar linear structure are the stations of the editor in charge, his deputy and that of the chief photographer of Asia- all capable of observing their desk closely- sitting next to the administrator of the global desk as well. A few meters away is the Magazine desk with three work stations in a similar structure, in the corner the Keyword team of three, and nearby is Graphics.

---

<sup>428</sup> See Robertson, R. (1992) Globalization, social theory and Global Culture. London: Sage. P. 100. Naming the desk the 'global pictures desk' might suggest that it is meant to serve the international market (although, in terms of operations, certainly not more than the 'local' sites of production), yet it is based on pictures flowing in from the 'local' bureaus. A similar case, both in structure and in process, is demonstrated with the 'international desk'. See section 5.3.





All units are within shouting distance of one another and exchange valuable information all the time. Despite the massive work flow, the daily routine here is surprisingly pleasant unlike a hectic news room. There is a calm working environment that is crucial for the daily routine here; placed in a distant location and far from the scenes of events, the editors work in 'sterilized' surroundings and therefore, it is said, make the 'right' decisions, "...bombs are not flying around so here we are pretty comfortable, we are trying to make the environment so they [the editors] can focus on their job".<sup>429</sup>

The belief is that good editors on the global desk should be detached from events. Yet it is their distant location that creates tensions between the global editors and the photographers (whether the editors are indeed authorised to work on pictures if they did not shoot them at all, or change a caption). Witnessing takes different forms at different sites along the production line and constantly shifts between representation and experience- with pictures not simply as evidence of the real but rather as a testimony of ongoing struggles between departments and personnel over

<sup>429</sup> Petar Kujundzic, Deputy Editor, Global Pictures Desk, 2010.

different forms of power and control.<sup>430</sup> Then again, with so many pictures to deal with daily, no one here really has time to spare. With one-time plastic boxes flying in and out and fast food eaten in front of running pictures, there is reason to believe very few can actually remember how the indoor of the canteen looks like during lunch time. For an outside observer this leaves little room for mistakes: this is the front line of an enormous factory, a magnificent machine in work.

The TV desk is right next to pictures. At times, it is useful to have access to raw footage to 'grab' pictures from, when there are no other images available- pictures from riots in Iran, for instance- although it also works in reverse (even though the first pictures, it appears, often come from TV). Communication between personnel is important, and although the technology on the desk is the most advanced available, it is not sufficient. Above the EIC station, for instance, there are three computer screens with pictures that are sent to clients within the main regions running nonstop. Each screen shows pictures from a different region: one from Asia, one from EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) and one from the Americas. Given their location, they can be seen constantly by the editor in charge who can immediately spot a transmission problem if a picture already sent does not appear on one of the screens, and he can also make sure pictures were sent in the right colours.

The 'Japanese phone' is behind the deputy editor. Japan is the home country of one of Reuters pictures' greatest clients (given the high circulation and great volume of publication of Reuters pictures by Japanese clients). Since many of the Japanese clients do not speak English and their requests are not fully understood by the editors on the desk, it was decided to dedicate a line to deal with requests from Japan and its

---

<sup>430</sup> On the global desk, surprisingly, a physical presence in an event can actually interfere with the 'witnessing experience'; now that its 'copy' (the picture) is handled by a distanced editor, both in time and in space, it therefore becomes more reliable and its witnessing value is increased (see Peters for the challenges of 'witnessing' in Peters, J. D. (2001) *Witnessing*. In: *Media, Culture and Society*, 23(6). P. 707-723).

number was delivered to Japanese clients as their 'customer service' line. When it rings, Japanese speaking editors take the call. Requests from Japan are still accepted in 'regular' telephone sets, and the 'Japanese phone' is not taken too seriously, but may still cause a certain excitement on the desk whenever it rings.<sup>431</sup> When the global pictures desk is fed back with valuable information (requests from Japanese clients) at particular moments of production, a circular structure is in play. When an operational environment is tailored for the needs of particular regional clients (a special telephone set, specific language skills required from certain editors on the desk), production and consumption are entwined.<sup>432</sup>



*The 'Japanese phone', Singapore 2010.*

The proximity of the editors is also important. Once an editor starts working on a series of pictures, for example, he will notify the senior sub editor so that no other editor starts to work on the same series. Or a photographer might send a picture to the desk and then realize he misspelled a name in the caption or had got the story slightly wrong. He will then call the desk, and an editor receiving the call will ask his colleagues to "hold the picture". While pictures are quick to fly by the editors on the global pictures desk, this cautionary could make the difference between a successful picture and a fiasco.

**The Global Pictures Desk-** Operating 24 hours a day, the working flow of the pictures desk is divided into 3 shifts: the morning shift (7:00- 15:00), mid day shift (15:00-23:00) and the night one (23:00-7:00). Every shift is managed by one EIC, one senior editor and several sub editors (2-3 in the morning shift, 3-4 in mid day and 5-6 in the night shift considered the busiest). In a morning shift 100-300 pictures run

<sup>431</sup> The term 'the Japanese phone' was the one used by the editors on the desk.

<sup>432</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) *The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry*. London: Berg.

through the desk and are sent to clients, during a mid day shift 300-500 and in a night shift 600-900. A single sub editor handles approximately 100 pictures per day (although it might rise to 150 or 200). Around 40 editors operate the desk on a daily basis, and although shared between the members of a relatively big group and done on computers, the work here is extremely hard and physically demanding at times. With night shifts the busiest, editors find themselves in a constant struggle to stay awake and work under high pressure. A single editor works 5-7 nights every couple of weeks and is given some time to recover before his next morning shift (although with 1000 pictures dealt with on busy nights "...I don't think we could run like this forever".<sup>433</sup>) The organization has to accommodate the extreme conditions of work.<sup>434</sup>

Given the high work volume editors cannot 'close the shop' for lunch and are advised to walk around and stretch their legs every once and a while. And while working on computers during an 8 hour shift, they sit on special ergonomic chairs bought especially for that reason and use recently purchased bigger Apple screens. In addition, and whenever there are pre-planned big events to cover- the winter Olympics or the world cup soccer tournament, editors from the desk are sent to help out and have a chance to meet some of the photographers in the field in person and thus gain a different perspective on the Reuters pictures production routine.

From the minute a picture is received, it goes through a highly structured procedure: a picture not needing much work might 'fly' in less than a minute from the second it was received by the desk. A problematic picture, however, might take an hour to work on or even more. It may require contacting a photographer who is not always available and is tagged as 'untransmitted' only to be dealt with later on. All pictures are sent in the same JPEG format and in two different sizes: an original

---

<sup>433</sup> Petar Kujundzic, Deputy Editor, Global Pictures Desk, 2010.

<sup>434</sup> Tuchman, G. (1973), "Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected", In: American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 79(1), P. 110-131.

received by the desk is sent directly to the Reuters archive (RPA) and to several clients (mostly magazines and third parties as mediators selling in the name of Reuters in countries with no Reuters sales representatives.<sup>435</sup>) A clone (and other clones thereafter) is sent to all other clients within a standard range of 2200x3500 and in the size of 700kb.<sup>436</sup> Most of the work on the desk is done by sub editors, senior sub editors and EIC's, who operate a relatively simple process of traffic. And while EIC's mainly monitor the operation and senior sub editors give a hand, it is up to the sub editors to carry most of the weight on the desk.<sup>437</sup>

*Sub Editor-* Most of the pictures moved by the global desk go through the hands of the sub editors, each working on approximately 100 pictures a day and up to 30,000 pictures a year. With such volume experience is acquired fast; 'subs' are considered to be highly professional as they need to be, for one press of a button might turn the global desk from the company's prestigious front line into a broken last line of defence.

On a regular shift a sub editor goes over his mails, for sometimes pictures are sent by photographers via mail when communications is bad, and receives special requests from clients as well. He has the Reuters "Kobra" (the Reuters 3000x text) constantly at his service in order to get updated with recent stories covered by Text, and an AOL screen in which he might contact photographers by chat if on-line. He uses different software to get updated with pictures already sent (the 'Photomechanic' used also by most of the photographers in the field, for instance, or the Reuters 'Media browser' ) and is constantly updated with new pictures coming in via the 'MED'- the

---

<sup>435</sup> See the section on Sales.

<sup>436</sup> Pictures received in above or below the range would be corrected accordingly (2200/3500). Different pictures are sent to clients based on specific restrictions to specific regions or clients. See my discussion later in this chapter.

<sup>437</sup> Some sub editors, however, do not move pictures at all and have different job descriptions given their particular positions- working on the magazine desk or the keyword team, for instance.

'Media Editor', also known as the 'File'.<sup>438</sup> And once a picture is stored on the PSED software with its metadata filled and then sent from the field via the FTP, it immediately becomes ready for use on the global desk.<sup>439</sup>

Trying to improve the transmission time of pictures from the field to the desk, the Reuters "Paneikon" software was launched in 2005 and allows photographers to transmit their pictures from their cameras directly to editors, who can be located miles away from the scene of events and yet work as if they are on site. The software is mostly used during big events when a huge amount of pictures needs to be transmitted in a very sensitive time frame. In such cases, when both the photographer and the editor are logged into the system, once the pictures are taken by the photographer they are automatically transferred to the distant editor, edited and sent to Singapore or even directly to clients (a process known here as 'Direct inject') in a matter of minutes. Apparently, 'Paneikon' gives Reuters a huge advantage in big events over its competitors, and some editors have glorified its wonders ("... it's sometimes embarrassing. When we already finished sending our pictures, other editors are still spending time looking for them".<sup>440</sup>) Even though it was ready to use for a number of years, it is still mostly used for big events- the winter games or the Olympics, for instance- and was first fully operational during the 2006 Olympic Games in Beijing.

Every now and then it is also used on smaller events with high news value. On one occasion in the past, heavy fighting had emerged in Kabul. Given the stressful situation the Reuters photographer had to get in and out fast, taking his pictures with

---

<sup>438</sup> Candida Ng, Senior Sub Editor, Global Pictures Desk 2010. AOL is also preferred as the best way to communicate with photographers since some are stringers and do not have access to Reuters' own application.

<sup>439</sup> The PSED (Picture Stream Editor) is a Reuters development used by its photographers for some time. In 2004 a new software called the Photomechanic was released and is used by most of Reuters photographers ever since, although the PSED is still used by photographers working with older laptop computers. In both cases, once a picture is sent by the photographer it is transferred via the FTP (File Transfer Protocol) into a huge server located in Singapore and then automatically 'pushed' to the 'Med' and ready to be checked and moved by the global pictures desk.

<sup>440</sup> Pablo Sanches Quiza, EIC, Global Pictures Desk, a record of a conversation. 2010.

little time to send them away. Since this was a big news story, the desk in Singapore was asked to operate the 'Paneikon', and since all the editors on the desk were busy, an available editor in Japan was traced. Operating the 'Paneikon' from his side he was then able to receive the pictures in real time and send them on in minutes. Nonetheless, the software is still not used on a daily basis since it requires two people to operate (a photographer and an editor). During small events many photographers usually shoot and edit on their own. In addition, it requires a very good internet connection which is still not always available in all countries and places (but it appears the process is about to be changed in the very near future).

The use of 'Paneikon' substantially challenges the gaps which occurred in the past between the events, the transmission of pictures and editing processes. It allows a detached editor to work on raw footage as if he was at the scene of events, making him capable to make corrections on real time accordingly without the pressure which often accompanies live coverage. It also solves the problem of intermediaries such as runners, who often need to shuttle memory cards between photographers and on-site editors during big events, and therefore reduces costs. Developed by an ex Reuters photographer and the current North American news picture editor Garry Hershorn, the 'Paneikon' (the word itself is a combination of the Greek 'eikona' for *image* and 'pagcosmios' for *global*) gives Reuters an advantage over its competitors. Being part of a long history of technological innovations developed by Reuters as the means of improving its processes of production, the 'Paneikon' overcomes the obstacles of time and place and is thus an important tool at the service of an international agency.<sup>441</sup>

---

<sup>441</sup> See Irby, K. "Super bowl XLI coverage: A new era with all the comforts of home". Poynter. 3 February 2007. <<http://www.poynter.org/uncategorized/80603/super-bowl-xli-coverage-a-new-era-with-all-the-comforts-of-home/#>> [accessed January 2011]. 'Paneikon' clearly allows Reuters to have better control over time and space. In that sense the development of 'Paneikon' and its uses can also stand here as a good glocal mechanism in order to overcome the difficulties dictated by the needs of an international market and the inevitable limitations forced upon the industrial production of news

A sub editor works on a number of pictures from series sent by a particular photographer and then moves on to the next one. Series contain between three pictures (considered a very small set) and up to around 60-70 (an unacceptably large one), although in such cases, "... we usually notify the chief photographer to tell the photographer to relax. Sometimes they think we work for them and do not understand how an international agency should work".<sup>442</sup> Practitioners from different departments do not always share the same views. Their daily job requires different skills and they are often dealing with different pressures. When stories or routines require the combined force of different departments, the tension may rise, turning a shared working environment into an arena in which members of two occupational communities fight over organizational status and different forms of power and control.<sup>443</sup>

The process of 'moving' a picture is relatively simple and highly structured: once received by the desk each picture is cloned, checked for manipulated possibilities (often by using the 'Levels' tool) and then corrected if necessary by checking Contrast, Shadow Highlight, Colour Balance, Curves, Levels, Crops, Brightness and Sharpen. The use of Photoshop is taken seriously here and dealt with special care- especially after the Hajj incident- and the corrections process now has little room for personal interpretation. Sub editors are strictly trained and the agency's guide lines for a proper use of Photoshop are published. The desk's operations guide (2008) is authoritative and kept up to date. It supplies a new sub editor with

---

pictures at its local sites (Robertson, R. (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) Global modernities. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44).

<sup>442</sup> Pablo Sanches Quiza, EIC, Global Pictures Desk, a record of a conversation, 2010.

<sup>443</sup> See Gregory, K. (1983) Native-view paradigms: multiple cultures and culture conflicts in organizations. In: Administrative science quarterly, Vol. 28(3). P. 359-376); see also Bourdieu's discussion on classes and classification in Bourdieu, P. (1986) Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste. London: Routledge.



instructions about the proper use for Photoshop and guides him through every step of the process (examples for bad use of Photoshop are also available within the operations guide including Hajj's picture, only this time it is for the use of training).

Nonetheless, altered pictures are still sent to the desk every now and then. Often these come from national agencies or government offices, and Reuters' editors give special attention to cloning, extra colour corrections, a



*A doctored picture recieved by the desk: so many sheep, which ones are cloned?*

shadow going the wrong way or pictures pasted together.<sup>444</sup> Editors are also well aware of legal issues a single picture might cause and carefully examine pictures arriving from 'sensitive' regions such as the Middle East. Pictures of commercial products- logoed plastic bottles containing chemical materials in a picture which were said to have been used for making a bomb- are also changed. Occasionally, pictures sent by new stringers can raise an editor's suspicions, although,

"... really this is only a matter of over photoshopping to make the picture look better...people use different standards so what might look perfect to them might look way over photoshopped to us. In that case we would ask for the raw file and fix it..."<sup>445</sup>

Usually badly photoshopped pictures taken by new stringers are spotted by the local chief photographer and dealt with on the spot. It takes time until a new stringer is authorized to send his pictures directly to Singapore. Special consideration is therefore given to pictures received by secondary sources if only to avoid an incident in which an altered picture accidentally slips and reaches the client's end, jeopardising the prestigious Reuters brand. Good Reuters photographers are therefore not only

<sup>444</sup> In many cases such pictures are sent from North Korea, although quite often 'badly' photoshopped and thus joked about.

<sup>445</sup> Drew Fritz, EIC, Global Pictures Desk 2010.

measured by the quality of their pictures, but also by their Photoshop skills. Whenever a new photographer sends pictures, he will first have to meet the Reuters standards for editing before he could join the circle of trust. He will have to be Reuterised.

Once the 'Transmit' button is pressed, each picture is sent to clients and its mark on the MED turns from grey to a green dot. A red dot means there was some kind of a problem with transmission (in which case another clone is sent to clients but changed from 'Original' to 'Correction'). All pictures are checked for restrictions and tagged. Thus, a picture sent from an organization in China with the condition that it would not be circulated in China is tagged 'China out'. Pictures sent to all clients, for example, are tagged 'Medwas' (MED Washington), 'Medlon' (MED London), RONL (Reuters on-line clients- Yahoo, for example), Asia, AONL (Asia on-line), APC (European, Middle East and African countries), USA, Canada, SAM (South America) and 'Philip' (clients in Philippines).



*More doctored pictures: Two pictures made into one (up); Perfect lines but where did the shadows go? (down)*

Culturally sensitive pictures are tagged 'CSP'. Those are often pictures the editor considers might be offensive- nudity, for instance- in which case their CSP tag automatically leaves out the Middle East, USA and all On-line clients from their circulation. Tagging a picture as CSP is a decision made by the sub editor based on his own judgment. Some pictures fall within a 'grey area' in which the editor will ask for the advice of his EIC. During the annual 'Australia Open' tennis competition, for

instance, the picture of Jelena Docik, the Australian female professional tennis player, was sent to the desk. Looking at the picture the editor felt as if Jelena's nipples were visible through her shirt, and with the EIC's second opinion decided to tag the picture as CSP.

In order to smooth the distribution process and tailor pictures to the needs of local clients (in this case by preventing the distribution of potentially offensive pictures), the CSP category is a fascinating glocal mechanism at the moment of transmission.<sup>446</sup> Aimed at an international market and yet tuned for the particular needs and possible limitations local markets and audiences might require, and as part of an elaborative technological infrastructure of distribution, the CSP tagging can also be seen as the means of reinforcing existing communities and establishing contact (in this case a business relationship between local organizations and an international agency) which is similar, in a sense, to what Wellman addressed as “global connectivity and local activity”.<sup>447</sup>

Captions are also written according to strict rules based on ‘what, who, when, where and why’. The second sentence is usually taken from the first sentence of the event's story as it is written by Reuters Text (although editors still go over the entire text story in some cases just to make sure the first sentence fits perfectly), then 'Reuters', 'Country', 'Name of photographer' and 'Category'. Sub editors often surf the web to verify names and facts in captions using Wikipedia and Google as their favourite search engines (“I don't know how we could function here without

---

<sup>446</sup> See Robertson, R. (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) Global modernities. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44.

<sup>447</sup> See Wellman, B. & Hampton, K. (1999) Living networked on and off line. In: Contemporary Sociology: 28(6) p. 648-654, P. 651. See also the discussion on CMC (computer mediated communication) and their uses in the village of Netville in Hampton, K. & Wellman, B. (2002) The not so Global Village of Netville. In: Wellman, B. & Haythornthwaite, C. (eds.) The Internet in Everyday Life. Blackwell publications: London. P. 345-371.

Google..." ), and professional websites- IMDB for entertainment (International Movie Data Base), or 'Yahoo Sports' for sport- mostly relied on.<sup>448</sup> In some cases it is very hard to verify a certain name or position, and editors come across errors from time to time. During the Golden Globe ceremony, a picture of the actress Vera Farmiga hugging a man was sent to the desk with a caption stating that the guy next to her was her husband, Sebastian Roche. Using Wikipedia for verification, with the help of the IMDB website, the editor found out that Farmiga divorced Roche in 2005 (although under 'Sebastain Roche' in Wikipedia it says 2003) and that she married Renn Hawkey in 2008, who appears to be the man in the picture.

Using Wikipedia and Google as secondary sources of information has been acknowledged as an essential tool for journalists and researchers.<sup>449</sup> Wikipedia is the largest example of what has been described as 'participatory journalism'; it works as the means for "...engaging the news audience to participate in the process of rationalizing Web content, crafting the news and contributing knowledge in the *media ecology*".<sup>450</sup> Although the dependability of its content was said to have improved, and even though parts of its editorial policy are strikingly similar to certain operational policies adopted by different news organizations, it still deserves special attention when discussed in the context of news making, mainly since in a Wiki "...all users are potential users and editors".<sup>451</sup>

---

<sup>448</sup> Sim Wei Yang, Sub editor, Global Pictures Desk, a record of a conversation, 2010.

<sup>449</sup> Lih, A. (2004) Wikipedia as participatory journalism: Reliable sources? Metrics for evaluating collaborative media as a news source. Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> international Symposium on on-line Journalism, April 16-17, 2004, Austin: Texas. P. 1-31.  
<<http://online.journalism.utexas.edu/2004/papers/wikipedia.pdf>>.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid. P. 2, italics in original.

<sup>451</sup> Rafaeli, S. Hayat, T. and Ariel, Y. (2009) Knowledge building and motivations in Wikipedia: Participating as "Ba". In: Ricardo, F. J. (ed.) Cyberculture and New Media. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi. P. 51-68. P. 51. See for instance its Neutral point of view (NPOV) as the guiding principal in Lih, A. (2004) Wikipedia as participatory journalism: Reliable sources? Metrics for evaluating collaborative media as a news source. Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> international Symposium on on-line Journalism, April 16-17, 2004, Austin: Texas. P. 1-31. P. 4 <<http://online.journalism.utexas.edu/2004/papers/wikipedia.pdf>>.

Wikipedia allows anyone to add, change or delete content on any of the (Wiki) articles. And these are not reviewed by professional editors, but their content is monitored by visitors, while only a few users (called ‘bureaucrats’ and ‘administrators’) are privileged to suspend the editing of an article in case it was vandalised.<sup>452</sup> As such, its content was seen as a form of collective knowledge and thus taken as “dynamic, relational, and based on human action...”, depending on “...the situation and people involved rather than absolute truth or hard facts”.<sup>453</sup>

When used as a common tool by journalists, this form of knowledge building clearly raises challenges in terms of accuracy and balance when it comes to the daily routines of news making, and even Wikipedians have expressed their own concern about copying information into Wikipedia; some information is inaccurate.<sup>454</sup> In a sense, the use of Wikipedia on the global pictures desk points yet once again to the circularity of the process- when the daily routines of production are fed with information distributed by groups which are part of its consumer audience (Wikipedians, in this case). In turn, these groups rely on news information when creating their new (Wiki) articles and re-editing the information on existing ones.<sup>455</sup>

Significant unidentified figures in pictures cannot be ignored and are called in the caption ‘unidentified guests’ or ‘unidentified people’. Editors look at stories of other agencies in order to verify specific details since, in many cases, competing

---

<sup>452</sup> Rafaeli, S. Hayat, T. and Ariel, Y. (2009) Knowledge building and motivations in Wikipedia: Participating as “Ba”. In: Ricardo, F. J. (ed.) *Cyberculture and New Media*. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi. P. 51-68.

<sup>453</sup> Von Krogh, Kazou and Nonaka cited in Rafaeli, S. Hayat, T. And Ariel, Y. (2009) Knowledge building and motivations in Wikipedia: Participating as “Ba”. In: Ricardo, F. J. (ed.) *Cyberculture and New Media*. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi. P. 51-68. P. 3.

<sup>454</sup> Rafaeli, S. Hayat, T. And Ariel, Y. (2009) Knowledge building and motivations in Wikipedia: Participating as “Ba”. In: Ricardo, F. J. (ed.) *Cyberculture and New Media*. Amsterdam-New York: NY. P. 51-68.

<sup>455</sup> Lih, A. (2004) *Wikipedia as participatory journalism: Reliable sources? Metrics for evaluating collaborative media as a news source*. Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> international Symposium on on-line Journalism, April 16-17, 2004, Austin: Texas. P. 1-31  
<<http://online.journalism.utexas.edu/2004/papers/wikipedia.pdf>>.

agencies carry pictures from the same events. Spelling of captions is checked (often verified with the "Chambers" website) and kept in the British English style. Pictures sent from the US with captions in an American English style are left as such ("...since some American clients get a bit iffy if they see a picture sent from the US with the captions written in British style..."<sup>456</sup>) At times, spelling of captions might be a bit tricky- whenever, for instance, American editors write or correct captions of pictures taken outside the US in 'American', although in such cases the editors are notified and the desk sticks to its British spelling rules.

Produced as the means of attracting clients internationally English is favoured for captions, since most (but not all) of Reuters pictures' major clients are located in the West, where mass culture was already said to have been centred, and that it "...always speaks English".<sup>457</sup> Yet, even the English language is a source of dispute rather than consent, and an example of inner conflicts. On the global pictures desk it is the English skills of Singaporean editors that are met with the British English standards and often in conflict with the American ones.

In fact, such conflicts become more apparent, as more Reuters employees are from non-English speaking countries and work in Reuters' local bureaus around the world (the case is similar with foreigners positioned in bureaus at English speaking countries as part of Reuters international relocation schemes). Local workers become priceless when at the service of an international agency, for, as discussed earlier, they will probably find it easier to travel, communicate and make local relationships

---

<sup>456</sup> Jacinta Goh, Sub Editor, Global Picture Desk 2010.

<sup>457</sup> Hall cited in Maynard, M. & Tian, Y. (2004) Between Global and Glocal: Content Analysis of the Chinese Web Sites of the 100 Top Global Brands. In: Public Relations Review 30: p. 285-291. P. 287.

(although such relationships are not only the result of a shared language) which often become essential in order to achieve a successful coverage of local events.<sup>458</sup>

In such cases, and whenever English skills are required for the job, photographers and editors whose English is not sufficient in terms of Reuters standards are then forced to send their captions to English speakers who will then make the ‘necessary’ English corrections. That is also the reason why new open positions for Reuters bureaus around the world (either in pictures, TV or Text) maintain a language section as part of the skills required: applicants are required to be fluent with English and the ‘local’ language.<sup>459</sup> Thus, the ‘best’ Reuters’ employees are fluent both in English and in the languages of the regions they are employed in (fluent in other languages as well, they become a valuable asset for an international agency). Languages are a good example of the glocal condition. These skills are needed to meet the demands of a complex international market and are a key element embedded inside the organizational structures and routines- often as the means of inner conflicts and dispute (British English vs. American)- and turn the international

---

<sup>458</sup> These issues were discussed earlier in chapter 4, where the writing of captions was particularly addressed in the case of Reuters’ local bureau in Jerusalem. See also the discussion made in chapter 6, second event.

<sup>459</sup> As part of the application process for new positions in Reuters, language requirements are also used in Reuters as political tools. Thus, a position published by a certain head of bureau in a certain country, for instance, might seem as if it is open for all applicants but, in fact, tailored for a particular candidate, should a certain manager wishes for a particular staff position to be held by an applicant from his bureau, and might then use the language section to pursue such a scheme. A position in the Jerusalem bureau which requires fluent Hebrew skills, for example, immediately eliminates non-Hebrew speakers, making Israelis seem as perfect candidates. On the same note, it should also be mentioned that some applicants might be selected for a certain position even if their language skills are not sufficient, when such decisions are usually taken from ‘pure’ political reasons, and that many employees are often required to study the local language and are sometimes being paid to do so. English speakers who work in English speaking countries and only speak English are often considered good enough. However, should they desire to transfer to different positions in other countries, they will have to learn the local language (at least up to the level their job requires, and depending on the position applied for).

news agency and its moments and sites of production into an arena in which cultural identity is constantly struggled for.<sup>460</sup>

In certain occasions, sub editors have to prepare a template for a picture already sent and move it to clients. Some pictures are accidentally sent with a word misspelled or names referred to wrong figures in the picture. Sometimes the editor will notice such a mistake while working on a picture. In other cases, a photographer might realize a mistake has been made and contact the desk after his picture was already sent to clients. Or clients may see a mistake was made in a picture received from Reuters. In such cases a 'Caption correction' template is made by a sub editor (once a decision was taken by the EIC). Then the picture is added to the template with the wrong caption and its correction and sent to clients the regular way and framed in a bright red.

In rare cases, Reuters might have to use a 'Picture kill' template, representing a picture sent by mistake and yet spiked by the company. The rare case of a 'picture kill' might come from people who do not wish their picture to be published and contact Reuters with the request to remove the picture from its files. Other cases might be in the form of sensitive political issues or legal issues- in which case the company lawyers positioned in London and Paris will then have to deal with under special circumstances. Once a 'Picture kill' template is made, it includes a caption stating the reasons for 'killing' the picture, that Reuters withdraws its rights over the picture and that it should be removed from all archives immediately, and it is framed in bright red as well.

---

<sup>460</sup> See Robertson, R. (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) Global modernities. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44.



Once a claim to kill a picture has been received by the desk, all units are notified- the magazine desk, graphics, on-line department and third party agents- in an attempt to identify the source of the picture as soon as possible.



Reuters picture templates: 'Caption correction', 'Picture kill' and 'Highlights'

In some cases, a demand for a picture 'kill' might be received for an archived picture. Sometimes a picture which was distributed based on a Pool agreement in which Reuters is excluded from is accidentally sent to Reuters and then to clients, in which case the other agencies will ask Reuters to kill the picture.

In specific cases, certain pictures are 'regionally killed'- a picture sent from Mexico with an instruction to leave Mexico out from its circulation ('Mexico out'), for instance. Such pictures are often sent to Reuters by national agencies, in which case Reuters will then send a 'Picture kill' only to regional clients. With pictures being 'killed' (they are placed in a 'bloody' red frame) and thus maintain a



Editors at work, Singapore 2010

symbolic circle of life on their own right, such templates demonstrate yet once again the unique open circular structure governing the process- between the audience of consumers, between clients and between competing agencies.<sup>461</sup>

<sup>461</sup> Other templates might include 'Highlight' (extraordinary pictures, often three a day, and sometimes more than three or no pictures at all which are framed in yellow; 'Exclusive' for a specific exclusive and extraordinary picture framed in yellow as well; 'Coverage highlight advisory' as a summary of the covered stories of the day framed in blue, or 'Images of the year' with a grey frame.

Senior Sub Editor- Most of the senior sub editors and sub editors come from Singapore, and being part of the Reuters global pictures service is their first job. This works very well both ways, since the global desk is interested in young people it can teach from the start- 'Reuterise'-

"...The people we hire would not have much of experience and that's fine. We are not looking for people with lots of opinions; we will give them their opinions, our opinions...at first it's a shock. That's ok, slowly slowly we'll teach you and then you'll end up someone who's doing it our way".<sup>462</sup>

However, some background in photography might be useful, for it might take just a few months for an ex-photographer to learn the job and a couple of years to become highly qualified for someone with no prior knowledge of photography at all. In addition, those who were previously photographers will probably communicate better with the photographers in the field (knowing that an attempt to chat while a photographer is working on a caption, for instance, might be extremely annoying at times). Or that photographers can be working in highly dangerous conflict environments and it is best not to disturb them with questions on colour corrections or an unclear caption. In such cases, more experienced editors will usually handle the pictures-

"...When a photographer is with the American army or in Afghanistan...especially with any Middle East pictures, we assign the more experienced deskers [editors] to work on them. At the beginning there was this girl who was quite new and she did not know what an RPG meant and asked the photographer and he went crazy".<sup>463</sup>

---

<sup>462</sup> Dennis Owen, EIC, Magazine Desk 2010 talking about potential candidates for the Global Pictures Desk.

<sup>463</sup> Candida Ng, Senior Sub Editor, Global Pictures Desk 2010.

Both examples illustrate what it means to be a 'professional editor' at different departments, how moments of production reflect a struggle between occupational communities over status and control and how these are constantly involved with consuming practices.<sup>464</sup> For the magazine editor in charge, the perfect editors to hire are those with no prior knowledge- *tabula rasa*, with 'no opinions' of their own. The ideal is that they should acquire their professional skills throughout extensive training until they become completely 'Reuterised' and ready to make editing choices on their own. Yet these editors are 'highly experienced' visual consumers (and often apply visual consumer practices in their daily editing routine) long before they were hired to work as editors on the desk. Then, their new skills acquired as editors on the Reuters desk will not be the only visual knowledge absorbed by the editors as if they were some empty vessel, but added to an already comprehensive and sophisticated set of consuming practices of visual culture, putting their production and consumption practices simultaneously into work throughout their daily routines.

On the global desk, however, editors with photographic experience are taken as more 'professional' even though their daily work requires 'seeing' rather than 'taking' pictures- as if ex-'professional photographers' are better spectators than others. At the same time, and even though they all work together towards the same goal, a clear line is drawn between the work of editors and that of photographers, and borders that should not to be crossed are established (editors should not ask 'useless' questions).

A senior sub editor starts his shift half an hour early, goes over his mails and focuses on the desk report left by the earlier shift. He then begins a process described

---

<sup>464</sup> Gregory, K. (1983) Native-view paradigms: multiple cultures and culture conflicts in organizations. In: *Administrative science quarterly*, Vol. 28(3). P. 359-376); Bourdieu's discussion on classes and classification in Bourdieu, P. (1986) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste*. London: Routledge.

as 'fighting the grey dots'. If it has been busy, some of the pictures are left over to be dealt with when things go back to normal. Given that some pictures require more attention than others- with a problematic caption, or needing several colour corrections- and since the desk is designed to move all pictures in no longer than 5 minutes per picture, some are left for later and appear as a grey dot on the main working screen.

Once a problematic series is received by the desk, a single picture is usually sent to clients ("just to release the pressure from the photographers. Sometimes they are very nervous and when they send their pictures to us all they care about is whether the pictures were sent to clients, but we see the bigger picture") and the rest of the series is dealt with later on.<sup>465</sup> Sometimes several series are received by the desk at the same time, in which case a full set might be left behind and the senior editor committed to prioritize ("...Children are nice, animals are nice but some pictures are more important than others, like pictures from war zones".<sup>466</sup>) Some pictures are more important than others, some positions are only about taking pictures (the photographers), others are 'privileged' to see the bigger one (now the editors have the upper hand).

In addition, the senior editor goes over 'Top Pix' (top pictures) and gets a sense of the biggest stories of the day, and makes sure all sub editors are working only on one set each. Since senior editors have a broader scope of what comes in as opposed to sub editors who are often too busy moving pictures, they also control the traffic of new series coming in and prioritize them by their importance to the different sub editors and check that everything is under control every once and a while. Sometimes subeditors have tense relationships with some photographers, and senior editors will

---

<sup>465</sup> Candida Ng, Senior Sub Editor, Global Pictures Desk 2010.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

help to calm things down, and they will also help moving pictures, although not as much as sub editors do. The overall output of the desk will be observed by the editor in charge.

*Editor In Charge (EIC)* - An EIC starts his shift an hour earlier so he can get a good sense of the big stories first. He goes through his mails from the last shift and focuses on the last desk report.<sup>467</sup> He then goes through the 'Top Pix' and the 'Supplemental Code Top Pix', looks at spikes and unspikes a good picture ("although it is pretty rare that a picture was spiked and another was unspiked".<sup>468</sup>) And he also enters the main 'File' and goes through the main stories of the day by flipping over the pictures sent during the earlier shift. He goes over his favourite news website ("...every EIC goes over a different website. I personally prefer the Stern and Der Spiegel because they are very good and, of course, because they are in German"), watches the news in a small TV set at his station (usually BBC World or CNN) and gets familiar with the recent news stories of the world.<sup>469</sup> The Reuters 3000x text software called "Kobra" is always open on one of his screens, from which he is constantly updated with the recent stories under 'Top News' delivered by Reuters Text.

Many of the EIC's were photographers in the past and some have been working for Reuters for more than 30 years. Some, however, are Singaporeans who had no or little experience with photography or editing. They are all considered highly professional and capable of managing all of the work on the desk, even at its busiest moments. The EIC has to be on top of things: he has to make sure the system is operating like a clock, prioritize certain stories over others at times of pressure, spike bad pictures and take a decision when it comes to sensitive issues-

---

<sup>467</sup> The desk report summarizes the number of pictures sent in a single shift as well as the number of pictures spiked.

<sup>468</sup> Joachim Herrmann, EIC, Global Pictures Desk, a record of a conversation, 2010.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

"...If it's a big news event then we would move it [a picture], even if it is not in such good quality...we would not move it if it is too gory, in the sense that it is too face on. ...in certain countries we cannot show nudity. We try not to censor pictures, but in certain cases we would try not to send to the masses, we won't send it on line... if it is part of the story, if it is not gory for the sake of gory then we would move it".<sup>470</sup>

In one occasion, for instance, the senior sub editor discussed with the EIC on whether to move a long shot picture of a pile of bodies of Haitian victims from the earthquake. Given its news importance and that it was judged 'not too gruesome', it was moved to Magazines, to the Reuters archive, South America and Asia, but restricted from USA and Canada. Although sometimes series are prioritized simply when a deadline had passed (pictures received from Asia in the middle of a night shift when deadlines had passed in Asia in Singapore time, for instance).

The EIC also has to make sure no pictures are sent before a story was published, although sensitive issues can also come in the form of a complaint submitted by a furious sports fan. With the mushrooming of blogs and websites, sports fans watch closely for pictures online (such is the case with Yahoo). If a name is misspelled, they contact the Reuters customer service immediately and send a complaint form over the net. Reuters distributes to clients but its pictures are closely monitored by the audience of consumers, whose complaints are injected straight into future processes of production.

Unlike the case with senior editors and 'subs', EIC's frequently come from outside Singapore. When their daily routine is observed up close, their origin and local news practices demonstrate the glocal condition both in the service's organizational structures and processes of production. Reuters has its own career structure. Career

---

<sup>470</sup> David Loh, EIC, Global Pictures Desk, 2010.

opportunities are an incentive for employees to excel in their positions, so they will be potentially qualified for better positions with greater responsibility, and are a good management technique for keeping personnel highly motivated. Opportunities help build an organizational hierarchy and a successful organizational pyramid in which the best qualified employees will (hopefully) achieve the highest positions with greater responsibilities as well as access to sensitive information and strategic decisions. They also help to prevent employees (often in sensitive positions) from defecting to competing organizations.

When such career patterns are observed in an international news organization, opportunities become available at different countries and thus in different bureaus, turning Reuters' employees into potential organizational cosmopolitans shifting between different countries in their rise up the ladder.<sup>471</sup> Such opportunities also represent Appadurai's dynamic model for the idea of the global economy and global cultural flows, demonstrating certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics with the specific case of *Ethnoscape* when "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals, constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree".<sup>472</sup> Those ambitious Reuters' employees, constantly aspiring to move to new bureaus around the world, also represent a popular dilemma in which "...more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move".<sup>473</sup>

---

<sup>471</sup> See Tomlinson's idea of cosmopolitan in Tomlinson, J. (1999) Globalization and culture. Blackwell publishers: Polity.

<sup>472</sup> Appadurai, A. (1996) Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. P. 33.

<sup>473</sup> Appadurai acknowledges that there are 'stable' communities, but that the 'warp of these stabilities is shot through with the woof of human motion'. Ibid. P. 34.

Through a glocal prism, the daily demands set by the international organization are then met with local practices of news making routine. On the global desk, for instance, it is a German EIC in Singapore after applying for a position on the global pictures desk, at a distant location from his place of origin where he was working in a 'local' site. As his position requires, he is then constantly updated with the current news stories: he relies on local platforms of information (German news websites), and at the same time gets updated with international news broadcast channels (such as BBC world and CNN). He monitors the daily flow of pictures coming from local bureaus to the global desk and on to local and international clients, and at the same time pays special attention to sensitive pictures with the ability to restrict their distribution.

During a 24 hour circle, 30-50 of the best pictures of the day (an average of 10-15 per shift) - "the cream of the crop"- are picked and categorized as 'Top Pix', and around 80-100 as 'Supplemental Code Top Pix' (the category was added a year ago).<sup>474</sup> With clients subscribed to the services of several agencies, clients might receive up to 4000 pictures a day. With the new option of Sup. Top Pix, 'good' pictures are now easier to find and the searching process is done faster.

The decision to 'Top Pix' a picture was described as being based either on its high news value or its 'visually captivating' qualities or both. The picture's news value, however, is overreaching: "...if it's from the top of the news it will go in. Even if the picture is not really great, not powerful and with bad quality it would still be Top Pix".<sup>475</sup> Yet pictures with less news value but that can 'cause a certain emotional reaction' from the spectator will also go in. This means that although 'Top Pix' are checked regularly by the EIC and can be untagged, the decision to tag a certain

---

<sup>474</sup> Angie Tan, EIC, Global Pictures Desk, 2010.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid.



picture is taken mostly by the sub or senior sub editors and leaves room for personal interpretation based on the editor's personal interest and taste. Those pictures chosen, not because of their newsworthiness, may be categorised as visually captivating, as one senior editor explains-

"...by visually captivating I mean pictures that do not have a great news value but that are visually fantastic...I for example like silhouettes, I like sunsets, animals. For a while I remember telling myself to stop Top Pix silhouettes and sunsets because they are very predictable. For me a good Top Pix is a picture that makes you go wow!".<sup>476</sup>

In many cases a sub editor will ask other opinions when having difficulty in deciding whether a certain picture is good for 'Top Pix' or not. In choosing 'Top Pix', the background of an editor plays an important role. Those who were photographers in their past will probably not choose pictures such as sunsets, for instance ("...in thirty years being a photographer I took only one sunset picture, in Israel; maybe two...it is a nice colour but you have to have a very good reason to do it".<sup>477</sup>) That is why editors here are told to think in a broader perspective, and their selection for 'Top Pix' is said to be based on the biggest stories of the day- whether financial or sports- and on the demand for pictures worldwide ("...in a global pictures desk you have to think globally").<sup>478</sup> Thus, an editor in Singapore might find a picture of an elephant on the street unremarkable, although in the US and Europe-

---

<sup>476</sup> Candida Ng, Senior Sub Editor, Global Pictures Desk, 2010.

<sup>477</sup> Petar Kujundzic, Deputy Editor, Global Pictures Desk, 2010. Photographers in the field, so it seems, are also aware of the Top Pix selection process. I was told of a photographer located in Gaza once, for example, who joked with his fellow photographers at the fact that he was just going for a few minutes to shoot a 'Top Pix' and take a picture of a sunset.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

“...the only way to see an elephant is to go to the zoo. And even in the zoos they don’t have elephants as well. You cannot have prejudices if you want to be a good global editor, you have to be flexible”.<sup>479</sup>

Both categories demonstrate a number of intersecting levels in terms of representation. First, Reuters being the biggest international news agency, meaning that its 'Top pictures' become the most valuable representational texts of world occurrences as opposed to pictures distributed by Reuters' competitors. Then, 'Top pictures' might also be the highest form of representation as opposed to 'regular' pictures distributed by Reuters, while these are often based on 'big stories' as opposed to 'small' ones. And finally, when assessed for their news value or visual powers, it is the pictures' newsworthiness which is the more powerful value. It becomes the key element throughout their process of selection- even when these are not 'great', not 'visually powerful' and are of 'bad quality'. Newsworthiness is demonstrated here as that which represents worldly occurrences the most.

'Top pix' are also selected for their saleability. Then, they have to be 'globally appealing' and the editors on the desk are told to 'think globally' (yet why is it that an elephant walking on the street is globally appealing?). Their selection is therefore done mainly from the coverage of 'big stories', which might appeal more to international clients. These clients are given wider choice through the addition of 'Supplemental Top pix' as well and not lose valuable time searching, with both categories demonstrating the 'best' visual summary of world events.<sup>480</sup>

---

<sup>479</sup> Petar Kujundzic, Deputy Editor, Global Pictures Desk, 2010.

<sup>480</sup> I was told that some clients are only subscribed for 'Top pix' services and this makes the entire subscription process slightly obscure. For such clients eventually pay less, since they receive only the small amount of the daily top pictures as opposed to all other clients who receive 'regular' pictures as well. However, they end up receiving the best pictures of the day which are eventually those that are often used by all clients anyhow.

Throughout the selection processes of 'Top pix', the photographer-editor struggle comes into play again. An editor who worked as a photographer in the past often sees himself as more experienced at selecting 'Top pix' based on his own personal experience as a photographer. Here, and unlike the need described by EIC's earlier to hire editors on the magazine desk with no prior experience in photography (and are thus easier to 'Reuterise'), whenever the selection processes of 'Top pix' are at stakes, editors are considered more professional if they have previous photographic experience.

Finally, this unique process of selection represents yet another moment in which production meets consumption, when visual consuming practices come into play at a critical moment of selection. Such is the case, for instance, when an editor chooses pictures as 'Top pix' simply because she 'likes' them (sunsets and silhouettes, or just pictures that make her go wow!) or might, at the same time, be rejected by another editor simply because he favours others (is it that the editor who worked as a photographer in the past rarely Top pix pictures of sunsets simply because he dislikes such pictures in the first place?). In that sense, such consuming practices can easily be seen as weapons in the battle over power and control, considered now in the light of cultural taste. Those same consuming practices helping an editor to Top pix certain pictures over others and another to reject them might represent a higher sense of cultural taste or a lower one (in this case an editor captivated by pictures of sunsets and silhouettes, and the one who seems to despise them), and that which separates between the masters and the commoners on the desk.<sup>481</sup>

Editors are told to put aside their personal friendships while categorizing pictures, for good friends can sometimes take bad pictures and vice versa. Detachment

---

<sup>481</sup> See Bourdieu's discussion on classes and classification in Bourdieu, P. (1986) Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste. London: Routledge.

is essential for a successful selection process. That is also the reason for the small number of photographers who are believed to be able of editing their own pictures (“...because you bring not only visual parts but also the smell, the sound, your impression from the field. You could be very wrong”.<sup>482</sup>) Taking news pictures is a unique moment in which photographers are in constant dialogue with their surroundings, and one which quite often requires combustion of senses- placing the photographic moment far beyond that which is seen.<sup>483</sup> Yet it also forces photographers and editors to have the special needs of clients in mind.

**The Magazine Desk-** The editors on the magazine desk work in a different time frame from other Reuters’ desks. They create packages of pictures based on new or old images (or both) from the Reuters archive. While most of the pictures received by the global desk are ‘good to go’, the pictures in the magazine desk are carefully categorized (sometimes it is done pretty quickly) and selected for different packages sent to clients via Reuters sales representatives. For the work here is about trying to think what pictures could be reused and resold- to bring 'dead' pictures back into commercial 'life'.

The desk was set up to supply the needs of magazines (although the archive existed from 1995), and its circle of clients today is based on news- with additional publishing companies- now that the magazine market appears to be unstable, and with those who do manage to survive in it seem to increase their on-line presence. Those estimated changes in the pictures market have forced the editors of the Reuters archive to adjust and diversify its line of products, and some of the packages compiled

---

<sup>482</sup> Petar Kujundzic, Deputy Editor, Global Pictures Desk, 2010.

<sup>483</sup> The complex relationship between the photographer, an event and the photographic event is demonstrated and discussed in depth in the following chapter throughout the analysis of four selected events covered by a Reuters photographer in Israel.

(with a remarkable similarity to stock) could be easily seen as the result of changes in the international pictures business environment.

The Reuters pictures archive, its daily production routines and constant business considerations show an interesting relationship between the Reuters archive and the Stock industry. These also illustrate aspects of photographic meaning through the particular case of news pictures, stock images and their processes of archiving. To begin with, much like the case with stock, news pictures can also be seen as participating "... in the selective categorization and representation of reality".<sup>484</sup> Like all photographs, they can be seen as *objects of classification*, when- much like the genre of documentary photographs- their value as high realism relies both on their particular context and specific visual content, turning their 'indexical singularity' into 'the basis of a type'.<sup>485</sup> And like all photographs they too can easily be seen as *agents of classification* constantly involved in the categorization of objects and people around the world, often using their testimonial powers in the name of the real and the natural, and thus part of an '*archival* paradigm of visual representation'.<sup>486</sup>

When news pictures are seen as agents and as objects, this points to an additional archiving structure- a general principal 'above' discourses similarly dual in nature, that uses all photographs as its representatives, "... a generalised, inclusive *archive*, a shadow archive, that encompasses an entire social terrain while positioning individuals within that terrain. This archive contains subordinate, territorialized archives: archives whose semantic interdependence is normally obscured by the

---

<sup>484</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 91.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid. P. 92.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid. P. 93, italics in origin. See also Sekula, A. (2003) Reading an archive: Photography between labour and capital. In: Wells, L. (ed) The photography reader. London: Routledge. P. 443-452.

'coherence' and 'mutual exclusivity' of the social groups registered within each".<sup>487</sup> Thus, as objects of classification, said Frosh, photographs are "... created for and/or stored in *actually existing archives...*", and as agents of classification "...they are produced according to the archival paradigm of various social institutions and discourses (the state, medicine, social science, geographical research, etc.) by which the natural and social worlds are mapped and ordered".<sup>488</sup> Specific photographic archives such as Reuters' are therefore "... 'contained' by the general, epochal and epistemic archive that organizes the knowledge and representational practices of 'an entire social terrain'".<sup>489</sup>

When any kind of photographs are placed in the catalogue of a commercial archive, they are no longer 'unique originals of experience' but rather as part of a group of generically equivalent visual forms only to become an exchangeable commodity available for purchase and evaluation 'like goods in a market place'.<sup>490</sup> Once archived, news pictures become genetically transformed (but not entirely), re-programmed only to acquire additional meanings (although not necessarily on the account of their already existing ones) when positioned in a new and thus additional system of classification (now they are also specifically part of the Reuters archive). Then, to a certain extent, their photographic meaning becomes 'liberated' (and yet

---

<sup>487</sup> Sekula, A. (1986) The body and the archive. In: October, Vol. 39 (Winter). P. 3-64. P. 10. Italics in origin.

<sup>488</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 95-96.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid. P. 95-96. See also Sekula, A. (2003) Reading an archive: Photography between labour and capital. In: Wells, L. (ed) The photography reader. London: Routledge. P. 443-452. P. 444, and Leong's discussion on whether uniqueness and originality is to be achieved with photography at all in Leong, S. T. (2009) A picture you already know. In: Klein, A. (ed) Words without pictures. Los Angeles: Lacma. P. 250-262.

'lost'), for they are de-contextualised and can therefore be reused and thus resold time and time again.<sup>491</sup>

Yet most stock images are already produced specifically in order to strip them from their original and thus privileged status once they are archived, and therefore lose their singular, particular 'sensuous existence of phenomena' early in the processes of production.<sup>492</sup> They are produced for an already existing system of classification (a stock picture of a 'romantic couple' aimed in advance for the category of 'romantic couples' in a stock archive). News pictures in an archive, however, are grouped not necessarily as the means of eliminating their singular status but rather, to some extent, in favour of its celebration, for it is their singular, 'one of a kind' status that loads them with their extraordinary value and separates them from all other images.<sup>493</sup>

Once placed in the archive of the biggest international news agency targeted at an international market, Reuters archived news pictures become a collection of the world's 'perfect' reflections (these are news pictures, and they are Reuters'), and the Reuters archive accurately cataloguing the 'ensemble of reflections'.<sup>494</sup> Then they become both a celebration of an extraordinary singular experience (as visual evidence of news events that occurred once and will never occur again), and yet similar to generic visual forms (they are now archived together with other pictures on the basis of an abstract visual equivalence); a collision between the particular and the universal, single and multiple, different and repeated, the 'local' at the service of the international,

---

<sup>491</sup> Sekula, A. (2003) Reading an archive: Photography between labour and capital. In: Wells, L. (ed) The photography reader. London: Routledge. P. 443-452. P. 444-445.

<sup>492</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 97.

<sup>493</sup> In fact, Frosh mentions how, even in the case of stock images, the 'repression of the indexical' is not entirely successful, and that the dominance of generic encodings is threatened and challenged by the singularity of the referent (Ibid. P. 98).

<sup>494</sup> Sekula, A. (2003) Reading an archive: Photography between labour and capital. In: Wells, L. (ed) The photography reader. London: Routledge. P. 443-452. P. 446.

and can therefore be distributed and sold to specific markets and clients and transform according to their particular needs.<sup>495</sup>

The magazine desk is operated by six editors in Singapore and two in Paris, and most of its daily production is done here on 5-6 shifts (although not all shifts are constantly staffed) from 9:00am to 6:00pm. Paris is the most influential centre for magazine publications; it has a large Reuters sales team and a senior pictures manager, and it is mostly used for monitoring the process in France from up close. The Paris magazine team is also in charge of selecting 'Top pix', from which some will be chosen for Reuters' 'The best of the month' and 'The best in the last 24 hours' during week days and appear on the Reuters pictures website (in weekends these are selected here), and given the time difference, it might also help monitoring the work of Singapore's junior staff during the night. The decision to position the desk's main operations in Singapore was an issue of funding, since it is far cheaper to staff here than it is in Paris, although it appears the high proximity to the global desk is crucial for the magazine's daily routine as well. This way, magazine editors in Singapore can easily ask for pictures from the global desk itself and even have direct communication with photographers, for instance, where as in Paris this would have been more complicated.

Editors on the magazine desk react to breaking news and work on instant packages. Those are often considered the easiest of packages to compile here, since news items are said to 'die' quickly, and thus their stories often carry a clear beginning, middle and an end- a number of pictures received by the global desk from a movie premier, for instance, which easily turn into a nice package containing key pictures

---

<sup>495</sup> See, for instance, Leong's discussion on photography and repetition in Leong, S. T. (2009) A picture you already know. In: Klein, A. (ed) Words without pictures. Los Angeles: Lacma. P. 250-262.



from the premier itself. Although events spread over a number of days or having too many 'similar' pictures from will obviously take longer to package.

Most of the time, however, magazine editors work on long-time packages-themed packages such as 'animals in snow'- going back into the archive and selecting those pictures which seem the most appropriate. Here as well there is an obvious connection between news pictures and storytelling, with photojournalism considered as a narrative and professional photography as a narrative media.<sup>496</sup> Thus, the process of packaging pictures on the desk is similar to a story with a clear beginning, middle and an end. In that sense, editors on the desk are capable of creating stories not just by selecting news pictures from events, but also by grouping them together as part of a package which becomes a story in itself. Any single event may be represented by multiple images under many different categories in the archive, and therefore a reading of a single story might invite multiple viewpoints- placing vision 'beyond the individual'.<sup>497</sup> It allows for stories to be 'easily digested' by international clients, and more appealing for an international market.<sup>498</sup>

The magazine desk deals with 300 projects daily. Some are quickly compiled and some are slowly created over time. These projects fall within two main categories: some decided on the spot and others dealt with for months and months on a daily basis. Some of these projects are reused. A big story that had recently broke on Mark McGwire- the former US baseball player who admitted to taking steroids throughout

---

<sup>496</sup> See Tuchman, G. (1976) Telling stories. In: *Journal of communication* 26 (Fall). P. 93-97 and Evans, H. (1997) *Pictures on a page: Photo-journalism, Graphics and Picture editing*. London: Pimlico for his discussion on news pictures and storytelling.

<sup>497</sup> Leong, S. T. (2009) A picture you already know. In: Klein, A. (ed) *Words without pictures*. Los Angeles: Lacma. P. 250-262. P. 261. Even though, like many other 'professional' photographers, Reuters photographers always create series of images while covering an event, and thus can be seen as maintaining archiving techniques early at the scene of events as well.

<sup>498</sup> Barthes refers to additional meanings once an image is juxtaposed with others as well (see Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31). Nonetheless, weaving a story with the help of multiple images instead of a single one might also create an opposite reaction, forcing a rather closed and 'individual' reading of stories and thus, as a result, make them less appealing.

his career- immediately brought up his pictures from the archive given their huge demand. A package of 30-40 pictures was then chosen out of a total 900 McGwire pictures from the archive to supply clients with a good up to date collection to choose from.

Editors in a regular shift in the magazine desk often work on packages and deal with special requests from clients. Such requests are common and turn up as a request for a new crop of a known picture, or a raw file of another. In such cases, and mainly since these are often very specific and thus considered 'real profit' in real time (unlike packages in the archive in which pictures are just 'waiting' to get picked from), the editor will often contact the photographer directly. Once a raw file of a picture is sent to the desk by a photographer, it is added to the archive by the editors. If, however, a request is made for the exclusive use of a picture by a client for a specific period of time aimed at a specific market- an Italian magazine requesting to have exclusive rights over two pictures from the earthquake in Haiti for a period of six months, for instance- restrictions of use are added to the picture in the archive, and sales are notified.<sup>499</sup> Special requests are handled first since these are frequently time sensitive. It may take a while to get a hold of a photographer, for instance, and make the deadlines around the world on time-

"...When our shift starts at 9:00 in the morning, that's 21:00 at night east coast time. It's too late for Europe, too late for Asia, so if we are chasing the US, then in a few hours they are going to sleep and a whole 8 hours would go by and we would miss the deadline".<sup>500</sup>

---

<sup>499</sup> These are considered relatively rare. In such cases, those would appear within the picture's caption in the archive as well and removed once the period of exclusivity is over (with, of course, a removal notification to sales). I was told, for example, that a certain picture is paid for its exclusive use by a certain bank and its restrictions are renewed every year.

<sup>500</sup> Dennis Owen, EIC, Magazine Desk 2010.

Once the editors go over special requests, they will then read through the 'File' from the last picture viewed yesterday and up to the last picture received using the MED or Media Archive.<sup>501</sup> On a 'normal' day with no big stories, the desk uses around 300 pictures from which 100-150 are new pictures received by the global desk and the rest taken from the archive. Whenever there is a big event- the Oscars, for instance- the total number of pictures may go up to 600 from one event alone. In the case of big events such as the Oscars, the package is then broken down to a number of packages such as 'Arrivals' or 'Backstage', although in some cases a single package might contain a great number of images as well- President's Obama's inauguration, for instance, from which a single package of 100-150 pictures was created from the event alone ("...you can't really pick 20 pictures from such an event, and that's ok. At the end we supply our customers with a search result...".<sup>502</sup>)

Some packages only contain one picture- a satellite image of the UK completely covered with snow, for example- although usually packages contain at least 10 pictures, since some clients would rather have a selection to choose from on their own. Archives are aimed at attracting clients and this is what they are structured for. Big events producing a great number of pictures are then broken down to a variety of packages ('arrivals' and 'backstage' if it is the Oscars). For different clients have particular needs in mind, different working environments and a variety of positions and particular staff limitations to deal with on a daily basis, and a diversified archive based on a considerate packaging system is essential in order to try and catch their attention.

---

<sup>501</sup> Although the MED is quick to view, editors on the magazine desk might not be aware of certain restrictions tagged to specific pictures (such as 'No Archive' or 'No Sales'), making them useless for the magazine's use. Such restrictions often appear on handouts- pictures delivered by certain organizations to Reuters (from certain national agencies for example), and cannot be sold by Reuters to clients.

<sup>502</sup> Dennis Owen, EIC, Magazine Desk 2010.

How is a package created? Once the theme of a package is chosen (the hardest part of the process), and as soon as the pictures are selected from the archive, the editor starts creating a new package by naming it, adding or removing pictures or managing their order of appearance- all done through the archive's website. A single picture is then selected as the package's thumbnail (by clicking on it the client enters the package), and an option of viewing the pictures in the package as a slide show can be added as well. Nonetheless, the images that appear in a package are, in fact, not the images themselves but rather an HTML link to a server, and so is the package as a whole and its slide show option, since these are sent to Reuters sales representatives first once the packaging process is complete.<sup>503</sup> When the link is received at the client's end, it can be viewed as single pictures or even have the URL of the slideshow embedded onto a website and the pictures presented as a gallery.

Each package is linked to a category and both are linked to a 'Super topic' - the highest category, which carries a relatively simple name such as 'Sport'.<sup>504</sup> There is some room for editors to name a package in a witty way, such as the 'Guess Who?' category in which pictures of sporting stars appear in obscure pictures and attract the viewer to try and guess who they are- a picture of a pair of yellow shoes with the title 'RAFA' printed on them, suggesting that these are the shoes of the Spanish tennis player, Rafael Nadal known as 'Rafa', for instance.

The tree of categories where every package finally gets linked to is highly structured. Under the super categories (like 'Sport' or 'Conflict') seen as 'Grandparents', an additional category- the 'Parent'- is created (for example an 'Iraq Conflict' category under 'Conflict'). Specific packages under 'Parents' are the 'Children' (for example,

---

<sup>503</sup> Since some mail boxes do not seem to appreciate long URL's, a smaller server is located here in which the link to a picture, a package or a slideshow can be shortened.

<sup>504</sup> Although the names of the super categories remain the same for a number of years, the visual representatives are changed almost on a daily basis.

'Bombing in Bagdad'), while certain packages can also be linked to other 'Parents' as well (like 'Bombing in Bagdad' linked both to 'Iraq Conflict' and 'News from Iraq' categories).

One of the most interesting categories within the group of super categories is clearly 'Creative use' in which illustrated pictures are slowly packaged (mostly in Paris), take a substantial time to group and are often aimed at advertising companies. Much like stock images, these pictures appear under wide categories such as 'Summer', 'Animals', 'Let it snow', or, for example, 'Overweight'. The figures that appear in these images are not individually recognizable in order to make the images versatile, flexible and ready for reuse -

"Illustrated pictures can be used in more than the obvious level. They are usually very powerfully graphic images. They may not be easy to categorize and they also have multiple uses. This is obviously our first swing at stock photography".<sup>505</sup>

Like stock images, Reuters' pictures are categorised in the archive under a taxonomic order mainly based on 'subject' and 'concept', since they are eventually oriented towards the client who usually looks for particular images of the same subject or about a specific theme.<sup>506</sup> And since concepts are far more difficult to categorise (the same picture can be made to signify a variety of themes and requires, conceptually speaking, a particular context) they are eventually categorised in the

---

<sup>505</sup> Dennis Owen, EIC, Magazine Desk 2010. A picture of an overweight woman sitting on a chair and shot from her back is used as the thumbnail of the package 'Overweight' and considered to be the most sold picture on the archive.

<sup>506</sup> Sekula defines the taxonomic order as one which "...might be based on sponsorship, authorship, genre, technique, iconography, subject matter, and so on, depending on the range of the archive" (Sekula, A. (2003) Reading an archive: Photography between labour and capital. In: Wells, L. (ed) The photography reader. London: Routledge. P. 443-452, P. 446. See also Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg; Heron, M. (1996) How to shoot stock photos that sell. New York: Allworth).

Reuters archive according to their subject.<sup>507</sup> Yet subjects are deceptive on their own right, as pointed by Frosh, since these might suggest that Reuters simply bases its archival system on 'naturally' existing categories and divisions, and particular denoted objects in the real world.<sup>508</sup>

Placing pictures in a particular category- 'Bombing in Bagdad', for example- will therefore not only classify the visual content of those pictures under that particular label according to a familiar category from the viewer's social experience (which can, in itself, stand as what Azoulay calls an 'album of planted pictures'), but rather perform, in Frosh's words, two 'simultaneous semantic exchanges': connecting the pictures under that category with a variety of connotations under the label 'Bombing in Bagdad' (which match up with the visual content of the images), and naturalizing the category- suggesting that those pictures under 'Bombing in Bagdad' are in fact what bombing in Bagdad really looks like.<sup>509</sup>

These inevitable semantic exchanges and the unavoidable deceptiveness of 'subjects' allow the editors to play with categories: they can easily create a hierarchal tree of categories with generic subjects as 'Super-topics' such as 'Sport' or 'Conflict' and sub-categories such as 'Bombing in Bagdad', even though, conceptually speaking, these are by no means on higher or lower levels of importance in the real world. They can treat them as 'grandparents', 'parents' or 'children', as if they are somehow related by blood simply on the basis of what appears to be their visual equivalence, and thus

---

<sup>507</sup> Thus, demonstrates Frosh, "the photograph of a man proposing marriage to a woman on bended knee can be made to signify 'romance', 'commitment', 'formality' or even 'courage', depending on the context". (See Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg, P. 100-101).

<sup>508</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg.

<sup>509</sup> Azoulay refers to planted images as those which cannot be escaped and play an important role as part of the construction of our social experiences, for they are "...planted in the body, the consciousness, the memory, and their adoption is instantaneous, ruling out any opportunity of negotiations as regards what they show or their genealogy, their ownership or belonging." (Azoulay, A. (2008) The civil contract of photography. New York: Zone books. P. 13; Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 101).

maintain the entire archival classification system within a greater archive- that of social order and the organization practices of social experience (in this case the 'family'). And now the same pictures can be crossed and thus 'belong' to different categories simultaneously as well (under 'Conflict in Iraq' and 'Bombing in Bagdad').

When these pictures are catalogued by the most powerful international news agency, they have other effects. For those categories and their pictures become even more valuable as 'perfect' representatives of reality given their newsworthiness (as they were also selected for the archive when other Reuters pictures were not), and enjoy the high status of Reuters branding as well (as 'good quality'). In that sense, abstract categories such as 'Guess who?' can be seen not only as a clever way of attracting the attention of clients, already thought of early in the process of packaging, but that which dictates that all other 'concrete' categories are not at all a matter of guessing but a perfect representation of things as they are.

When these are grouped under the same archival roof together with images which appear to be similar to stock, attract advertising companies and are programmed for multiple uses under 'Creative use', a dialectic process is in play: on the one hand, their representational value immediately becomes multiplied now that they are placed in the catalogue as opposed to an 'un-realistic' category of pictures containing images that are similar to stock. Yet once archived, those very same boundaries that load news images with their higher realistic value and distinguish them from illustrated pictures (grouped under the 'creative use' category) simultaneously collapse, as they are similarly categorised and thus equally valued.

These force both photography genres to mesh, turning news pictures into extraordinary specimens which are original, one of a kind, and yet versatile, always accessible for different purposes by a variety of users which therefore echo for

eternity. Then, much like the classification systems that put them in order once they are archived by the editors on the desk, they become fixed (as pictures, as news) and yet flexible, 'similar, but not the same', to enable "...sufficient sensitivity within generalizations to allow for practical application and repeated production of the new".<sup>510</sup>

Clients can be large organizations or individual people. Anyone can view the thumbnails in the archive's home page, and opening an account is free but restricted to business users. However, a US citizen might identify a picture of his soldier son from a package in Iraq and ask Reuters for the picture, in which case his request would probably be fulfilled (if sent directly to the magazine desk). Clients, however, are never simply supplied with the original file of pictures, for using pictures from the Reuters' archive has a price which is calculated based on the use of an image, its location of use and circulation-

"You're always paying for a single picture. It depends on what is it that you are using it for, what kind of publication, what's the circulation, how many times it is going to run...you are paying per use, only for one publication".<sup>511</sup>

Images on the archive are not valued by their visual content, but for their business potential. When payment is in question, their indexical singularity is overcome by their chances of high circulation, having their originality and aura governed now by the simple rules of exchange.

The editors on the desk receive no reports about the commercial success or failure of their packages. They have no information about the prices of pictures,

---

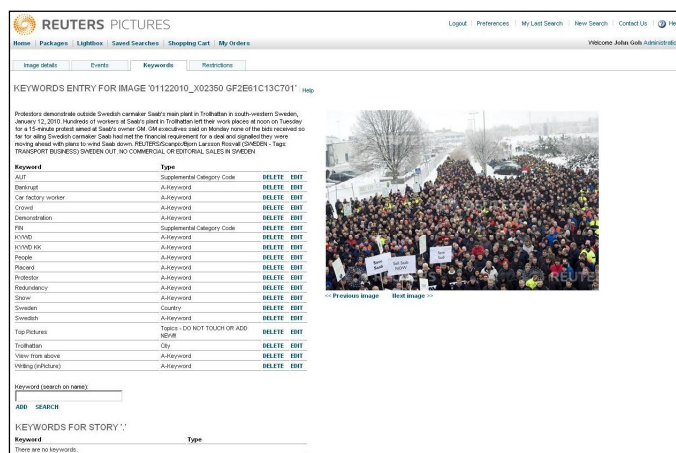
<sup>510</sup> Leong, S. T. (2009) A picture you already know. In: Klein, A. (ed) Words without pictures. Los Angeles: Lacma. P. 250-262. P. 251. See Frosh's observation on classification systems in the stock archive in Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 105.

<sup>511</sup> Dennis Owen, EIC, Magazine Desk, 2010.



The speed of the work on the magazine desk makes it similar to the work on the global one, and both are committed to deadlines around the world, since "...somewhere around the world picture editors are making a decision on what's going to be next".<sup>512</sup> Meanwhile, there are Reuters picture editors who try to affect those decisions by thinking on words that clients might use in their on-line search for images in the archive as well.

**Keyword Team-** How does the keyword process work? By looking at a picture of protestors from Sweden, for instance, the keyword editor would first try to understand what it is that he actually sees in the picture. With the help of the caption, seeing that these are protestors demonstrating against the potential bankruptcy of the Sweden ‘Saab’ car company, he would then try to think of words to describe the event which do not appear



*Keywords entry: Protestors in Sweden, Singapore 2010*

<sup>512</sup> Dennis Owen, EIC, Magazine Desk, 2010.

in the caption- the word 'Placard', for instance, which some of the protestors appear to be holding.

Sometimes he would think of words that describe the picture by thinking whether he himself would be able to find the picture if he searched the archive using a specific word- 'Redundancy', for example- but would try to avoid using details that are 'too specific'. Then words like 'Swedish' (the word 'Sweden' is already attached to the picture's metadata) or 'People', and 'View from above' are added as well. Some keywords- 'Car factory worker', for example- would be re-checked only to see whether these are part of the keyword tree at all, and if so the editor would pick its lowest possible 'Child' (always aiming at the lowest level of the keyword tree) and add these as well. As a final step, the editor would add the word 'KYWD' as the administration keyword and his own initials as the picture's keyworder, and move on to the next picture.

The keyword process itself is relatively simple but requires a great deal of experience. It will take around six months of training until a new keyword editor is qualified enough to select pictures from the file and create keywords on his own. Thus, while working on a picture, the keyword editor first tags it as 'Top pix' or 'Selection' (if selected from the file). Then, by looking at the picture, 'studying' it visually and reading its caption the keyword process begins. Quite similar to the packaging system used in the magazine desk, the keyword tree is also based on 'Grandparents', 'Parents' and 'Children', when the 'golden rule' here is to create the 'Children' category as low as one can; to make a single search based simply on key words by clients as accurate as possible. Key words are clearly based on captions, although certain words that do not appear in the caption are used as keywords as well-

"I teach the new keyworders to tell a story by the keywords...a slightly different story from the captions".<sup>513</sup>

There is no specific limit for the number of keywords. Editors use a large number of words to keyword if it is necessary, although the old system was overloaded more than once. Since the pictures' metadata digital form already carries some information, the old system was easily overloaded whenever a large number of keywords were added to a single picture. This has not occurred since the new system was introduced.

The desk is operated in a small separate and slightly hidden circle of three open cubicles located nearby the magazine desk. On the keyword desk a team of five (there used to be seven before the financial crisis) works in two shifts from 8:00-16:00 and from 16:00-24:00, and three often work here during the morning shift considered the busiest. Unlike the work on the global desk, keyword stations are not required to be staffed during the night and speed is far less important here compared to quality and accuracy ("...no ups and downs here, it's always the same".<sup>514</sup>) Even though the work here is very much related to the magazine desk, the keyword team is a separate unit reporting directly to the magazine personnel in Paris. It is mostly governed by the hands of Hamish Crooks, a former 'Magnum' manager who established the team in 2006 when it became clear the search engine for pictures in the archive should be more accessible for clients apart from the option of tracing pictures by their packages, and he was the one who created the keyword tree as well.

Hamish is positioned in London but receives full report, and he is informed on the daily work of the team at least twice a month via video conferences, when he constantly offers ways to improve the service- informing the team of popular

---

<sup>513</sup> John Goh, sub editor, Keyword team 2010.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

keywords used often by clients in their search for pictures from certain events, for instance, and thus encouraging the editors on the desk to make use of such words throughout the keywording process. Unlike Comstock's criticism against the use of keywords in its archive, the keyword force here proved itself highly valuable to the success of the pictures operation.<sup>515</sup> And even though it requires a great deal of resources to cover the costs of editors operating daily on the desk, as well as their long training, sales have gone up ever since the team is operating.

During a shift, an editor volunteers to divide the work between the editors within three main categories: keywording packages coming from the magazine desk, keywording 'Top pix' selected by Paris and of a sample selected from the daily flow of pictures running through the global desk on a daily basis; 'leftovers' from the day before are dealt with as well. Working on packages is considered to be a small part of the daily routine. Going through their mails, editors often receive links to packages made by the magazine desk and work on their keywords (although only for the packages, not for the pictures within them). They also help correcting captions if the magazine desk is under pressing circumstances. In the past, keyword editors used to help sales representatives on the desk while searching for pictures for specific clients since some were time sensitive, and they were thus less involved with keywording. However, ever since the financial crisis, sales are no longer operating from the global desk, and editors from the keyword team have no direct communication with clients.

Dealing with 'Top pix' is one of the main daily tasks on the desk. Every day a selection of 50-70 pictures is made by the editors on the desk in Paris while most of these pictures are categorized under 'The best of the 24 hours' or 'The best of the

---

<sup>515</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 180.

month'.<sup>516</sup> Some 'Top pix' do not require keywords at all since these pictures often carry a very specific news value from a particular day and will probably not be used by clients in the future. Pictures selected daily from the file by the experienced editor are often different from those selected by Paris as 'Top pix'. Thus, the keyword editor will usually go for pictures which might be reused by clients in six months time and are not 'too' obvious, where as 'Top pix' are often selected by the editors in Paris mainly by assessing their 'good' visual composition-

"...We like to pick society pictures...daily life...pictures that can be used over and over again...pictures with a long shelf life".<sup>517</sup>

Keywording a sample of pictures selected from the daily file is an important task. Each day the team's leader goes over the pictures received by the global desk in the last 24 hours, from which he then selects between 50-120 pictures and stores them in a 'Keywording images' folder available only to view by the editors on the magazine desk or the editors from the keyword team. All and all, whenever the daily work flow is consisted of keywording alone, a single editor 'hits' approximately 60 pictures a day (an experienced editor in the team has probably keyworded around 50,000 pictures in a period of approximately 4 years).

Keywords invite an important discussion concerning the complex relationship between the word and the image. Within the commercial apparatuses of pictures production, keywords are used to make the search for pictures easier for clients- to 'explain' and 'describe' in the most 'perfect' manner, to get a searcher looking for a picture to the 'right' image as fast as possible (and increase the chances of a Reuters picture getting picked from a vast arsenal of pictures and make profit). The

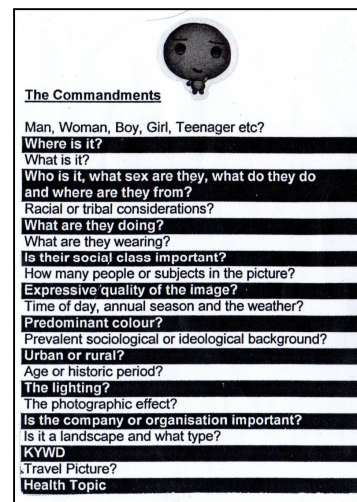
---

<sup>516</sup> When personnel have dropped from seven to six (and now five) editors, a request was sent to Paris to work only on 'The best of the 24 hours' in the Top pix category. The request was denied since clients are notified that both 'The best in 24 hours' and 'The best of the month' are keyworded.

<sup>517</sup> John Goh, sub editor, keyword team 2010.

relationship between the image and the text has been part of theoretical discussions about the emergence of electronic and digital media.<sup>518</sup> One debate- erupting from what Mitchell observed as the 'anxiety' of speech against the visual- allowed eventually for a pictorial turn to be declared and later for the complex examination of the visual culture.<sup>519</sup>

What is this image-text problematic? Mitchell suggests mainly that images cannot 'rely' entirely on text and that their understanding should come from within representation itself, "...to be found in the vernaculars of representational practices".<sup>520</sup> There appears to be something that exceeds the text in the image, an 'obtuse meaning' that is 'outside language', one that is "...'over the shoulder' or 'on the back' of articulated language...what, in the image, is purely image".<sup>521</sup> This offers a challenge to semiotics' supremacy and its 'superdisciplinary' which appeared to have shattered the boundaries of the linguistic turn and thus found



*The keywords commandments: from image to text (Singapore, 2010)*

applicable for the study of images or non-verbal phenomena in general.<sup>522</sup> Yet, at the same time, it also allowed for a reconsideration of the term ekphrasis- the verbal

<sup>518</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg.

<sup>519</sup> Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994) Picture theory. Chicago: University of Chicago press; Mitchell, W. J. T. (2002) Showing seeing: A critique of visual culture. In: Journal of visual culture, Vol 1(2): 165-181.

<sup>520</sup> Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994) Picture theory. Chicago: University of Chicago press. P. 14-15 (footnote 10). Even though the relationship between images and texts can never be assessed from an external point of view; that within the academic research it is always described in words and that- in their commercial form- they are always juxtaposed with them and are thus necessary for their interpretation (Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg).

<sup>521</sup> Barthes, R. (1977) The third meaning: Research notes on some Eisenstein stills. In: Heath, S.(ed) Image-Music-Text. New York: Hill and Yang. P. 52-68. P. 61).

<sup>522</sup> See Mitchell's criticism on Bryson and Bal's 'superdisciplinary' of semiotics and Frosh (Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994) Picture theory. Chicago: University of Chicago press. P. 14-15 (footnote 10); Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P.21, footnote 27.

representation of visual representation- striking right at the heart of keywords and their making in the light of the image-text dialectics.<sup>523</sup>

In his 'Ekphrastic and the other' Mitchell observes three moments in the realisation of ekphrasis: the first is an *ekphrasis impossibility*, suggesting that words can never represent an object the way an image can. The second is the *ekphrastic hope* where a certain 'sense' in language that can make us 'see' is found in imagination and metaphor. The third is the *ekphrastic fear* when the difference between the verbal and the visual might collapse and the visual is then realised 'literally and actually'.<sup>524</sup> In the light of all three moments, it appears that both the ekphrastic impossibility and hope are performed at different levels along the process of keywords, having the gap between image and text constantly fought against by the editors' daily practices and routines.<sup>525</sup>

With Mitchell's ekphrastic idea in mind, keywords are there to 'describe' images and thus make the client 'see them through'. They are not just words but 'key' ones; without them the client will not be able (unless he is blessed with the force of chance) to enter the fantastic ('right') field of the visual. That is why the 'golden rule' orders the keyword editor to look for words which appear at the lowest levels of the tree of categories, and at the same time avoid an 'exact' representation of the image, as if one is indeed possible.

---

<sup>523</sup> Heffernan, J. A. W. (1993) Museum of words: The poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

<sup>524</sup> Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994) Picture theory. Chicago: University of Chicago press. P.152-154.

<sup>525</sup> Nonetheless, and as Frosh was right to observe, this is certainly a good place to mention that the image-text dialectic addressed here is taken not entirely on its own but as 'subspecies of the binary system, while each medium- visual and verbal- purportedly loses its own material specificity in the ether of universal numerical exchange', when both images and words are converted by a digital code into patterns of numbers. (Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London: Berg. P. 181). Both moments of ekphrasis also spring to mind Evan's idea of captions which might interfere or contribute to the interpretation of the visual elements of the news picture (Evans, H. (1997) Pictures on a page: Photo-journalism, graphics and picture editing. London: Pimlico).

Yet, observes Mitchell, no special textual features can be assigned to ekphrasis that distinguish between paintings, sculptures, images and other objects.<sup>526</sup> There are no high or low words in terms of their representational value, to put it simply, even when they are- like keywords- used for description, for "The differences which separate description and narration are differences of content, which, strictly speaking, have no semiological existence".<sup>527</sup> Then, the first phase of ekphrasis is put into play, when the head of the team describes how he asks his editors to 'tell a story' with keywords- narration instead of description- when the latter seems impossible and therefore neglected. And then 'popular' words which appear to pop up when the searching data is analysed by the head of the department (Hamish) are preferred, as they facilitate searching with little consideration to their descriptive values.

Finally, the keywords process demonstrates a unique aspect of the ekphrastic encounter. Keywords are used not only to 'explain' images but also to help sell them to clients. In that sense, their processes of production involve a unique relationship between the speaker and the audience of the ekphrasis- with the editor (the poet) standing in between the image and the client (the listening subject) who will be made to 'see' the object (the image) through the medium of the editor's voice (words).<sup>528</sup> Then, throughout the keyword process, the ekphrasis is placed between what Mitchell calls two "othernesses" and two forms of (apparently) impossible translation and exchange: at first the image is converted by the editor into a verbal representation in the form of keywords. Then- if keywords have been successfully selected (success in the light of the ekphrastic hope) - the reader (editor at the client's end) will look for an image using those keywords and reconvert the verbal representation back into an image.

---

<sup>526</sup> Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994) Picture theory. Chicago: University of Chicago press. P. 159.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid. Gennette cited, P. 159.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid.



"The "working through" of Ekphrasis and the other, then, is more like a triangular relationship than a binary one; its social structure cannot be grasped fully as a phenomenological encounter of subject and object, but must be pictured as a *ménage a trios* in which the relations of self and other, text and image, are triply inscribed. If ekphrasis typically expresses a desire for a visual object (whether to possess or praise), it is also typically an offering of this expression as a gift to the reader".<sup>529</sup> Therefore, since selling pictures is what matters the most here, popular keywords and words that are not 'too specific' are usually preferred, since these are more likely to attract clients in their search; they increase the opportunity for pictures to get picked more than once by different clients. The keyword editor looks for words at the lower levels of the tree of categories to help the client identify the specific image for his needs, and usually creates keywords for pictures that are most likely to be reused in six months time. For these encapsulate more profit in terms of their re-usage potential and thus deserve extra work.

Advertising clients are therefore those who are most often in the minds of editors here during the keyword process (although newspaper editors who like to write commentaries and illustrate their stories are another considered audience). Until recently, editors could also print a report in which data with figures of specific words and their numbers- as these were used for searching the archive by clients- were available and analyzed occasionally. Sometimes there is an unexpected cross, and some of the 'Top pix' selected by Paris are also selected by the keyword editor (around 20%). But whenever a keyword editor selects a picture already dealt with, he will simply move on to the next one, and the next one, and the next, for there are

---

<sup>529</sup> Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994) *Picture theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago press. P. 164. Italics in origin.

many images to enhance, so that they get selected by clients. Sometimes words make searching easier, at others it is graphic design.

**Graphics-** The main bulk of work done by the graphic journalist on the global graphics desk is on breaking news or upcoming big events- the Olympics, for example, having a designer dispatched to the scene itself. When a graphic journalist starts his shift, he gets updated with the recent news stories going over the Reuters' Kobra (Reuters 3000x of Text) or the 'Coyote'- both showing the latest stories ('Coyote' can go back for 24 hours and the 'Kobra' for a whole year) - and watches the news on a small TV set placed on his desk (CNN, for instance).

On a regular day, graphic journalists prefer to focus on stories that are related to a preselected field of interest ("...it is better that people would work on graphics they want to work on...which is within their interest") under 'Sport', 'Technology' and the less preferred 'Environment' (all areas are preselected in order to make sure the majority of news events are covered).<sup>530</sup> Looking for a story that holds a potential for being improved by graphic design, a journalist will then pitch the idea to the graphics editor. However, good ideas do not always end up as graphic designs- graphic journalists usually do not know whether they will find good materials as references for their designs or not- and there are times when they will start working on a design, decide to drop it and move on to something else.

The graphics department itself is relatively small and works on an entirely different rhythm with a completely different workflow from the rest of the global pictures desk. Usually there is no daily traffic between graphic designers (or 'graphic journalists' as they are called here) and the global pictures desk. Two shifts of 9:00-17:00 and 17:00-1:00 are divided between seven graphic journalists, with a graphics

---

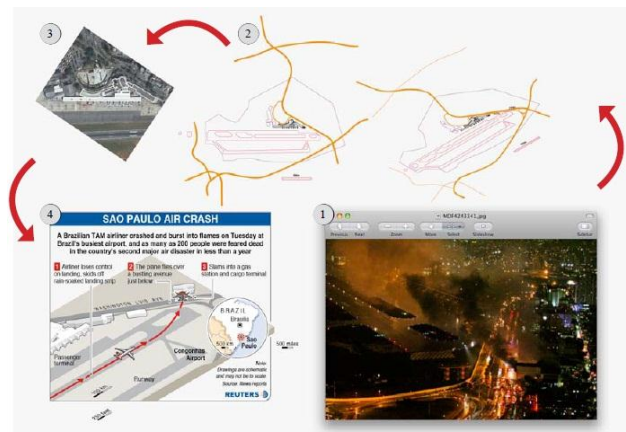
<sup>530</sup> Hwei Wen Foo, Graphic Journalist, Global Graphics Desk 2010.

editor (one is in Toronto), and five additional editors from financial graphics (who also do graphic designs based on breaking news at times)- two of whom are in Singapore, one in London, one in New York and two part timers in Chicago and Washington.

Pictures used as part of the designs appear either within the designs themselves or just as a reference for the drawing of others. In most cases graphic journalists do not use Reuters pictures at all, but pictures taken from other sources- a picture of a space shuttle from a NASA website, for instance. And, in fact, pictures are not used for half of all designs at all (they usually end up as maps or charts. Although in specific events- during elections, for example- the designers might use the actual pictures of the different candidates).

However, during breaking news events, the graphic journalist finds pictures extremely useful. For example, after a plane crashed in an airport near San Paulo in Brazil a few years ago, and while watching the reports on the crash over the news, a graphic journalist had already

received a picture of the airport only a few minutes after the crash from the global pictures desk itself. Shot from a high angle, she found the picture useful for a graphic design based on a pin point of the



*From a picture to a graphic design, Singapore 2010*

exact point of the crash, and as a reference for a 3D drawing of the building in which the plane had crashed into. As the picture was taken from the other side of the building, it was hard to locate the exact angle of the crash, but it was still a relatively

good reference for the location of the runway in regards to the building ("...this is what happens with breaking news. You cannot know for sure".<sup>531</sup>)

Whenever a story breaks that inspires the graphic designers, they get pictures from the global pictures desk directly from the desk itself by mail or simply by downloading from the Media browser. Suitable pictures for graphic journalists depend on the particular graphic design planned for illustrating a specific event. For a head shot, for instance, a graphic journalist looks for a clean picture with no one standing in the background (although 'clean' pictures with no reflections or someone standing in the back are very hard to find, and designers end up drawing new pictures themselves, taking a great deal of time and effort); a design based on a picture has to be a highly detailed one.<sup>532</sup>

Graphic journalists use a whole range of sources when conducting research for a single design (like 'Google maps' or 'Google earth'). They use information from websites such as the 'Financial Times' or 'Google News'. A simple graphic design may take an hour (if it is a spot map of the location where a certain fire or accident took place, for instance), or it may take days or weeks to complete complicated ones—covering the Olympics, for instance (in the papers it might even take months). In addition, graphic journalists usually have to work on designs based on breaking news, and these clearly have first priority.<sup>533</sup> Graphic illustrations are usually done here in 'Adobe Illustrator', Photoshop (although mainly for using basic tools such as crop and

---

<sup>531</sup> Hwei Wen Foo, Graphic Journalist, Global Graphics Desk 2010.

<sup>532</sup> Up until recently, designers here had a size limit of up to 2 MB per design, making it extremely hard to use actual pictures for a certain design. The limit has grown now to 5MB, making it slightly easier.

<sup>533</sup> I was told that in the near future the sifts are going to be slightly changed, and that one graphic journalist will probably have to come a bit earlier and read in the biggest stories of the day so that all other journalists in the department focus only on their graphic designs and not have to spend time looking for stories.

silhouette) and Excel for the collection of data ("not word or PowerPoint, these are not very friendly programs...").<sup>534</sup>

Once a design is finished, it is stored on the designers' computers and sent to the global pictures desk's MED in five separate copies: a small JPEG thumbnail of the design and a colour and B&W EPS files (Encapsulated Post Script which can be edited and changed by the clients) to appear on the 'Graphics browser' on the web and are accessible to clients (although the browser itself does not seem very friendly for clients). In addition, two more JPEG's (colour and B&W) are sent for the 'Picture browser' in the same way pictures are presented. Once transmitted, and after being uploaded to the pictures MED via the FTP, the design appears on both pictures and graphics browsers and is ready to get selected by clients. The work on the Global graphics desk is slightly different from the one in a local news outlet. Although close in range, global pictures and graphics desks hardly seem to be working together, and some of the designers find it slightly disturbing-

"...I am just surprised that we do not work closely together. In the newspaper there would have been far more collaboration between graphics and pictures...especially in the US for example, when there was a breaking news then the photographers were usually sent out with the reporters and then come back to the newsroom and say that this story needs graphics...reporters would come back with photographs and say 'hey we have pictures that can be referenced for your drawing'. It's very direct".<sup>535</sup>

Comparing an artist and a cameraman, Walter Benjamin said, "The painter maintains in his work a certain distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web. There is a tremendous difference between the pictures they obtain. That of

---

<sup>534</sup> Hwei Wen Foo, Graphic Journalist, Global Graphics Desk 2010.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

the painter is a total one, that of the cameraman consists of multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law. Thus, for contemporary man the representation of reality by the film is incomparably more significant than that of the painter, since it offers, precisely because of the thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment, an aspect of reality which is free of all equipment. And that is what one is entitled to ask from a work of art".<sup>536</sup>

Like painters, graphic designers can easily be seen as Benjamin's 'magicians' who keep a certain distance from reality.<sup>537</sup> Their designs are total and exist in an entirely different terrain from that of the reality they are to represent. The creative liberty permitted by the field of imagination exceeds the strict boundaries of the real world; their artistic designs an (apparently) constant challenge to fact and newsworthiness. At the same time, the same reality nourishes the work of both painters and cameraman, allowing Hogarth to treat artists as possible reporters when, in fact, "...the very act of drawing forced artists to see things and make decisions and judgements about what they saw."<sup>538</sup> There is a paradox: like artists, graphic designers maintain a distance from reality, but as reporters they are subordinated to its strict rules. They are permitted creative liberty, and yet confined to the highly organised and demanding routines of newsmaking. And whenever their designs are used for the sake of representing real occurrences (as needed in the newsroom), they are asked to 'see' when their eyes are shut.

When graphics are absorbed into the daily routine of the news pictures' desk, the paradox is no longer a problem but rather a sign of productivity. Graphic designs become an extraordinary tool not for challenging the testimonial status of news pictures

---

<sup>536</sup> Benjamin, W. (1992) *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. In: *Illuminations*. London: Fontana. P. 211-244. P. 227.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

<sup>538</sup> Hogarth, P. (1986) *The artist as reporter*. London: Gordon Fraser. P. 7.

and news making as a whole, but rather as the means to get 'closer' to the scenes of events and thus increase their representational value.<sup>539</sup> Such fluidity allows journalists to realise that words are only one way of telling a news story, and that graphics can eventually "...let us see the unseeable" (although, if it is unseeable, how can it be seen?).<sup>540</sup>

Designs are divided into 'illustrations' (being single drawings) or 'graphics' ('whenever sign systems or words or symbols are made an integral part of the drawing or photograph'.<sup>541</sup>) Those designs come in the form of 'facts' and thus concerned with 'information', or 'flavour' and essentially decorative. The graphic artist absorbs the spirit of journalism, and the photograph can be seen to 'tell more' with the help of a graphic design.<sup>542</sup> Designs can therefore tell stories on their own right or simply help verify others (as Evans' diagrams should), and emphasise analysis and accuracy and not simply excitement and colour.<sup>543</sup>

On the global graphics desk, the work is the product not of graphic designers but of 'graphics journalists'. As journalists they are constantly updated by breaking news stories. They are dispatched to the scenes of stories during big events- to see for themselves, they rely on pictures as visual references and think the work should be far more collaborative between the departments. Yet as graphic designers they will work on preselected themes, and unlike news reports some of their designs take days and days to complete. Half of all the designs will not at all be based on pictures and take the form of maps or charts, and some diagrams- the plane crash in San Paulo, for instance- turn up

---

<sup>539</sup> This accords with the idea of news as sometimes based on non-real occurrences (see, for instance, Seaton's discussion on 'Pseudo-events' in Curran, J & Seaton, J. (2003) Power without Responsibility. London: Routledge (6<sup>th</sup> edition). P. 336-337).

<sup>540</sup> Evans, H. (1997) Pictures on a page: Photo-journalism, graphics and picture editing. London: Pimlico. P. 290.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid. P. 289.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid. P. 291.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid. P. 318.

to be 'not exactly' similar to the ways the events had occurred (since this is the problem with breaking news and one can never be 'sure').

When the diagrams are eventually packaged together with pictures, they are an 'extension' to the visual story (its representational status having more value as it is juxtaposed with 'paintings' in the form of illustrations within a package) and illuminate a new and more detailed story (as a combined package of images and diagrams) - one which might attract new clients who are searching for diagrams, and one which might therefore become easier to sell. The working practices of graphics are an additional example of the complex bidirectional connections taking place in the newsroom at different levels of operations- that between creativity and commercialization, between text and image (both as separate systems of representation and as a combined image-text system of signification), between stories and facts and between reality and imagination. Yet the machine maintained by the editors on both the global and graphic desks would not operate properly if it not for the labour invested by those whose work is often hidden in the shadows.

**Administration-** Right next to Asia's chief photographer sits the global pictures desk's administrator, and although her title suggests she is not at the front line with the 'warriors', her daily job is extremely relevant to the daily routine of the desk.

She works from 9:00 to 17:00 and has been working here ever since the desk started properly in 2005. She deals with mails and invoices. She receives the invoices of satellite phones used within the Asia region. Since every country has a different number of photographers, each has a different number of satellite phones in use and the administrator judges whether monthly bills from any country are too high. A regular monthly bill from, say, China, in which there are two photographers was usually £100, and if more she notifies the chief photographers.



The administrator also contacts 'Canon' about problems with cameras, lenses that need cleaning and arranges the payments when warranty is over. She holds the information of sick leave and holidays for all the personnel on the desk, and takes care of new employees with bank slips or a new e-mail account and more. She makes reservations for flight tickets and hotels for photographers flying in and out ("...sometimes they ask for accommodation in the last minute...sometimes they ask for cheap rates, but we try to do our best".<sup>544</sup>) She arranges visa applications for entry to Singapore and deals with governmental authorities. She also receives the daily 'Impact' request sent from the international desk and reviews newspapers coverage in the 'Financial Times', the 'Straits Times' and the 'International Herald Tribune'. Based on the 'biggest stories' selected by the international desk she then goes over the pictures published, compiles the statistics (how many where Reuters', how many AP's and how many AFP's) and sends the results back to the international desk.<sup>545</sup> She books meeting rooms, receives the post, deals with travel costs and gets tickets for the big events- the Olympic Games or the World Cup football tournament.

When photographers and editors fight for success at the front, someone has to make sure everything is working properly at the rear. A mishandled visa application, lack of flight tickets, accommodation, damaged equipment and a holiday schedule that is not organised would all hold up the work on the desk. Successful news is the result of team work- that of reporters, photographers, editors and administrators alike- rather than the outcome of a 'one man band', and the output of functional considerations dictated by the news organization's need for routine, its structure and

---

<sup>544</sup> Saudah Suyat, Administrator, Global Pictures Desk 2010.

<sup>545</sup> The impact process is discussed in depth in section 5.3.

working pressures.<sup>546</sup> Once these are sorted and the machine is working properly, its outputs are good to go and ready for selling.

**Sales-** Around 20 staff sales representatives-‘pictures specialists’- sell Reuters pictures within the larger number of sales personnel working for Reuters media (they are called ‘accounting managers’). They spread around the world: 10 in North America, 2 in Asia and 8 in Europe.<sup>547</sup> Most of the Reuters pictures specialists had previous sales experience working for picture or news agencies, and even though the job requires an interest in pictures and photography, it is rare to find an ex-photographer or editor working in sales. In fact, being a photographer here might interfere with the daily work since a photographer is “...normally not a very good sales person...because you have to have a different perspective, a different role.”<sup>548</sup>

Sales are considered a separate division within Reuters organizational structure alongside the editorial division and marketing (although, to some extent, described as the most important one,”...since we are making the money”<sup>549</sup>). Even though the two divisions work closely together, the separation of editorial from sales is described as essential for the daily process and can easily be seen as remains from an ongoing struggle between Reuters' business and news divisions along Reuters' years of operation-

“...In order to make sure that we from the sales do not tell the editors what to report or what to do, they are totally independent. Otherwise,

---

<sup>546</sup> Tuchman, G. (1973), "Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected", In: American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 79(1), P.110-131.

<sup>547</sup> Accounting managers are Reuters sales representatives dealing with the sales of different Reuters media products (and occasionally sell pictures as well), while pictures specialists only deal with pictures. Unlike the accounting managers, they have to react far more quickly to the daily news events of the world. Under their responsibility picture specialists often cover a number of countries in a number of regions.

<sup>548</sup> Andreas Ganz, Head of Reuters picture sales Europe, Middle East and Africa, 2010.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid.

we would tell them that we do not care about news and that we would only do Madonna now...”<sup>550</sup>

The training of a new sales person is simple. From the minute they join the sales team, they are trained by experienced sales people and acquainted with representatives from the editorial division. The connection with editorial is crucial for the training of a new sales person, and he will join hands with a representative from editorial during his first visits to clients. It is the Reuters editorial perspective that will be embedded within his daily routine along his career in sales later on so he will become fully 'Reuterised'.

The idea that news is a business, a commodity, is not new, and much has been said about the economics of news: about the role of news in promoting the interests of the corporate owners to fit the demands of the market; or of how newspapers play an important role as facilitators of commerce and encourage consumption, taking news as simply emerging "... not from individuals seeking to improve the functioning of democracy but from readers seeking diversion, reporters forging careers, and owners searching for profits".<sup>551</sup> Yet here we encounter a different perspective within the news industry- that of those whose sole purpose is to sell news.

Sales representatives are considered as one of the most important groups in the production process of Reuters' news pictures (since they are 'making the money'). They work as part of a separate division alongside editorial and marketing, and take it seriously that their colleagues need complete independence (the editors will not be

---

<sup>550</sup> Andreas Ganz, Head of Reuters picture sales Europe, Middle East and Africa, 2010.

<sup>551</sup> Hamilton, J. T. (2004) All the news that's fit to sell: how the market transforms information into news. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. P. 6. Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model certainly springs to mind here, but so do a few others (see Herman, E. S. and Chomsky, N. (1988) Manufacturing consent. New York: Pantheon; Picard, R. G. (2004) The economics of the news paper industry. In: Alexander, A. , Owers, J. , Carveth, R. , Hollifield, A. C. and Greco, A. N. (eds.) Media economics: Theory and practice (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum. P. 109-126; Mcmanus, J. H. (1994) Market driven journalism: Let the citizen beware. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.

told 'what to report or what to do...' otherwise 'they will only do Madonna'. On the other hand, there is also no pressure on sales from editors in the news division to pursue the making of 'strictly news'), even though, at the end of the day, Reuters is a business, and selling is the most important thing it does. Thus, the classic conceptualization of news making is strongly felt even when it comes to sales representatives- when the relationship with editorial is seen as crucial for training new sales representatives and the Reuters news spirit important for inspiring the work of sales. In that sense, and even though sales is eventually about selling, it is not a threat to news- even when a 'good' picture selected by a photographer is not necessarily a great one for sales- but rather as a necessity in order to allow a more liberated, non-constrained making of news (although how is it that selling news is separated from its making?), and that which its values should be absorbed along the daily routines of sales.<sup>552</sup>

Training takes between 3-6 months- depending on the new comers' selling skills- during which they study their clients and their regions. They go over magazines, websites and news papers on a daily basis, talk to clients and try to grasp their daily particular needs. The learning process is based on practice and it is important that sales representatives feel the cold waters of the pictures market as soon as possible- to start selling in order to realize what it is that sells. After six months, the training process is usually taken into a higher level in which sales representatives are familiarised with the organization and its structure, the production process and the Reuters system. And after a year they acquire specific details- the background of certain photographers or chief editors and their histories within the organization, for instance- making them able to communicate with clients more professionally.

---

<sup>552</sup> In that sense, sales representatives consider news the way 'newsmen' do- as a pure unbiased pursuit for facts in the search of some universal truth (Schudson, M. (1989) The sociology of news production. In: *Media, Culture & Society*, 11: P. 263-282).

Reuters aims at an international market, but some local markets are stronger than others, some less accessible, and these factors affect the organizational structure of sales. In countries with a strong demand for Reuters pictures (like Germany or France), the company has its own sales representatives working from Reuters' bureaus. In countries where markets are relatively weak (like Sweden), pictures are usually sold by 'agents'. There are approximately 30 agents worldwide in local markets like Sweden, South Africa, Spain, Italy or the US. Some of the agents may be big pictures agencies- 'Corbis', for instance- who operate their own line of pictures apart from trading with Reuters pictures, some are smaller local agencies and all sell Reuters pictures under their own sales schemes. While some agents trade Reuters pictures directly to clients within a local market, others trade with additional and smaller local agencies- local picture agency partners- who specialise in fields such as sports or fashion. In the Nordic countries, Reuters works with 'Scan Pix' who sells Reuters pictures in Denmark, Sweden and Norway and represents Reuters both in news papers and the magazine market. In the local markets in the US, UK and Germany, Reuters trades with 'Corbis' and sells directly to the market as well, and 'Corbis' also has its trading agreements with other agencies (EPA, for example).

While agents usually integrate Reuters pictures into their own selling apparatuses (into their archives), these pictures are then pushed by the agents' sales representatives to the local markets, and thus allow Reuters to enjoy a far greater range of sales representatives selling its pictures worldwide. In some countries there are regional offices (in Paris, Dubai or Moscow) in which Reuters 'picture sales specialists' sell to clients and support the local sales representatives as well. The hierarchical structure of the sales division is organized in four main sub divisions: the local, the regional, the 'super regional' and the global. Reports from sales

representatives in Hungary, for example, go through the Eastern Europe branch as the regional level, then to Europe as the ‘super regional’ (combined with Middle East and Africa as one ‘super region’ , alongside Asia and the Americas) and then to the global (which, in fact, is located either in London or New York).<sup>553</sup>

Every day a sales person should know the pictures’ ‘File’, understand who his clients are and their needs, try to make offers, help out with specific requests (pictures requested in a higher resolution, for instance) and simply ‘push’ pictures to clients. However, and although simple as it may seem, the process of reading through the file by sales requires a delicate process of selection, since the selection of pictures should fit the needs of specific clients (web sites or magazines, for example), from particular fields (sports or fashion, for instance) and certain areas worldwide (while the Singapore desk works globally, I was told that sales have to think locally).

Occasionally a sales person might consider a picture just not ‘good’ enough, although they are always encouraged to let the clients be the judges-

“...There are very high standards in Reuters, and very often it happens that where we believe it is a very bad quality, many clients use the images because there are different interpretations of the word ‘quality’, especially when it comes to photography, so I always leave the decision to clients”.<sup>554</sup>

Of course, different clients come in different shapes with different standards, and so special regional considerations are taken in Reuters as well. In France, for example, there is a very specific pictures market based on what is described here as ‘high knowledge’ in pictures, where pictures are carefully selected in order to keep a high standard. Pictures that will not be used in France, for that matter, can be easily sold in

---

<sup>553</sup> The New York branch was added right after the merge with Thomson in 2007.

<sup>554</sup> Andreas Ganz, Head of Reuters picture sales Europe, Middle East and Africa, 2010.

other markets around the world. Some pictures, therefore, are not pushed into the French market as they will probably not be used by French clients.

Sales representatives also need to find different solutions in order to help making Reuters pictures internationally appealing and at the same time tailored for the specific needs of particular clients operating in different local markets. These solutions applied in sales come in the form of various glocal mechanisms operated both in structure and in process: Reuters' sales representatives in strong markets or external agents in weak ones; the international market divided to local, regional, super regional and global divisions; selecting pictures based on local demands, particular clients and specific fields of interest or clients making the final decision based on their own 'quality' scale of pictures.<sup>555</sup>

Communications with clients is done via mail, phones, chat and sometimes in person, and it is usually made by pictures editors at the clients' end (or those who first made contact with the Reuters pictures service in case the client is not a 'media professional' one- a charity organization, for instance). A client interested in a certain picture receives a link (called a 'light box') to the specific page in the Reuters pictures archive website, where pictures can be downloaded directly. Clients receiving the 'light box' are usually subscribed to the Reuters pictures service, although in some cases- in the French or the German markets, for instance- access is given to clients and payment is done after receiving the high resolution picture file.<sup>556</sup> In rare cases, and often as part of an ongoing tradition of certain clients in Spain, pictures are

---

<sup>555</sup> See Robertson, R. (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) *Global modernities*. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44.

<sup>556</sup> Some clients in France and Germany do pay before receiving the pictures, depending on the nature of the business relationship between the different clients and Reuters.

printed by a Reuters' partner and only then delivered to clients, but most of the pictures are sent digitally by satellite or through the web.<sup>557</sup>

All of Reuters pictures can be accessed via the internet and sales people can review them all the time from Reuters offices, or by using laptop computers, and all pictures are sent to clients in a JPEG format. Reuters' pictures service deals with approximately 25,000-30,000 clients worldwide but the numbers are constantly changing, as clients vary from news papers and websites buying hundreds of pictures weekly to, say, a charity organization in Slovenia purchasing a single picture per year.

The Reuters pictures archive is free to access although not accessible to all people. Only professional media organizations or companies serving the media market are registered and granted access, while the registration of new members is strictly monitored for reasons of legal rights.<sup>558</sup> A Reuters picture of Madonna, for example, cannot be purchased by just any one since a company printing Madonna's posters might have a rights agreement with Madonna (as does Madonna herself). A Reuters picture of, say, dolphins can be potentially purchased by private people without special legal restrictions (that is, of course, if they are business users), although it will probably not, simply because it is not worth it-

“...we do not do that...it is not efficient...you are never going to pay so much money that it is attractive for us....you would pay a maximum of £25 but that is too small for us”.<sup>559</sup>

Nonetheless, the company keeps receiving hundreds of requests for free access from private people, most of which are denied on the spot.<sup>560</sup>

---

<sup>557</sup> Since printing pictures is extremely expensive these days, this will probably not last for long. Up until several years ago, printed pictures were also requested by several clients in Italy and France as well, although they have all switched to digital ever since. Because of special requests made by clients Reuters still prints certain pictures as a matter of courtesy, but not on a regular basis.

<sup>558</sup> Some individuals might receive access, although this might only happen in very rare occasions under specific circumstances.

<sup>559</sup> Andreas Ganz, Head of Reuters picture sales Europe, Middle East and Africa, 2010.



Clients pay an annual subscription, although in the field the payment system is often ‘pay as you go’. With a vast number of pictures agencies in the market, clients prefer not to commit annually to just one or two but rather receive pictures from a variety of sources on a daily basis and then make a choice. On the other hand, the ‘pay as you go’ system is relatively more expensive and allows little control when it comes to managing the annual expenses, and thus less favourable in times of financial uncertainty. Either way, payment is based on the use of a single picture and mostly on its circulation and form of publication. ‘Time’ magazine, for example, pays for the rights to publish a picture in the magazine and has to pay an additional fee for extended rights in order to publish the same picture on, say, the magazine’s website. If, however, an advertising agency wants to use a picture for a campaign, the payment is then calculated based on the number of countries it will run in, the number of papers it will be circulated in and the picture’s size, and then priced accordingly.

The current price of Reuters pictures is confidential. Then again, since Reuters is working internationally, and since the business of selling pictures to an international market is highly complex, it is hard to judge how much a single Reuters picture actually costs, and prices may vary significantly: a news paper with a circulation of 100,000 copies in, say, Romania might be charged around €2000 and is charged differently than the ‘Times’ in London. In Nigeria the cost will be considerably smaller, in Japan the cost can rise up to ten or fifteen times more. There is also the issue of currencies.

Sales agents ‘close’ the contracts with clients while payment is monitored via the company’s book keepers. Clients subscribed on a yearly basis receive a monthly invoice as if it were a cell phone company’s such as ‘Voda Phone’. Clients paying per

---

<sup>560</sup> Recently it appears that many of the requests are received by Reuters from people who live in Iran.

picture receive an automated invoice via the archive once a picture was used. Sales keep records as well. However, its focus is not on which agency's pictures were published and where but rather on their revenues: how many were sold, which ones were sold well or simply information on a specific picture sold to several magazines.

## **5.2 Final stop (II): The client's end, the case of "The Guardian"**

"We're on!" says Roger, head of photography, to his deputy Greg as they walk into an icy board room surrounded with glass walls and take a seat amongst the Guardian's heads of departments. Greg immediately starts working on the flat screen so it would not crash on 'money time'. A few minutes later, the editors start pitching their stories for tomorrow's paper one by one as they all take a peek at the "Guardian's news list-Monday for Tuesday 13" and look at tomorrow's 'flat plan'.

A few possible stories appear under breaking news- 'The government publishes radical NHS reform plan', or 'Police hurt in N Ireland clashes as marching season ends', for instance- and the list is covered with possible angles on how these might be addressed in tomorrow's paper. Under the NHS story, for example, it says 'Key points, scrutiny on patient death rates, case study from US experience , FAQ - what does it mean for doctors', and under 'Crunch day at Synod for women bishops deal' it says 'FAQ? Case study?'. On the 10:00 AM meeting the news list is covered with question marks. Signs are showing that this is going to be a busy day, but it is still early.

Roger seems highly focused and also relaxed. He has been around, and when it is time for Pictures to pull their rabbits he is quiet, letting the pictures do the talking. Besides, at this time of day he already knows this hardly makes any difference. With

the live pictures' bin updated by the minute, most of the pictures that are pitched now would soon be forgotten and not make it to the paper; perhaps 2-3 out of around 15, a double spread if they are really lucky.<sup>561</sup> The next day it appears their hunch was right, as the double spread is taken by a picture of 6 years old boys and girls racing horses in the Naadam festival in Mongolia shot by the Guardian's Dan Chung and pitched the day before. Sometimes great pictures are identified early in the morning, but sometimes they are not.

By 15:45, just when things get serious, the Mongolian picture is ancient history, and Fiona, the paper's picture editor for the day, is looking for something "fantabulous" for tomorrow. Unlike Roger she seems nervous, and for the 16:00 meeting, when the editor gives his queue, she rushes in thinking out loud "I'm not ready...". Roger watches from the side and seems to know exactly what she is going through. Unlike the case in most jobs, he explains, it is the weak days here when nothing happens that are feared the most.

A new building welcomes the Guardian and the Observer. Both papers have been around for some time (the Observer since 1791, the Guardian, 1821). Although stemming from slightly different perspectives in their early years (promoting a liberal interest in Manchester and maintaining a radical editorial tradition ever since for the Guardian. The Observer was originally started as a way of making a fortune for its founder), the two slowly became the representatives of Britain's liberal voice. They face similar financial concerns. With the Guardian struggling against the 'Daily Telegraph' and the 'Times', and especially after the launch of the young and innovative 'Independent' in 1986, the British quality press market has been through rocky grounds over the last few decades, and during the 1990's the four (including the

---

<sup>561</sup> 'Bin' is the term used to describe a storage area on random-access memory devices, such as a hard disk or a flash drive, made for computerized files on a computer.

'Observer') battled to survive a price war launched by an aggressive 'News International'. The 'Guardian' has managed to maintain a relatively steady income from elsewhere, although hit by the successful 'Independent' as well, and increased its circulation with apparently strong marketing. With the 'Observer' pressured by the 'Independent'- especially by its 'Independent on Sunday' paper- and with the lack of resources to compete, a potential merger was already in the air only to get picked by the Guardian in 1993; the benefits of having a Sunday paper of its own were probably realised by its managers. Nonetheless, the merger was said not to have affected the Observer's editorial independence, and its liberal tradition was unharmed.<sup>562</sup>

Apart from the common ownership the two papers were entirely independent in terms of operation and placed in two separate buildings until three years ago, when pressure on revenues and the move to a new building led to a stronger integration of the papers and the website. In other departments the process of integration was hard, but the new structure of picture management was decided quickly, partly because of a strong personal relationship between the two heads -

“ Me and Greg Withmore sat down and decided that I will be the head of photography and he will be my deputy... that's because I've been here longer and seemed more senior to him, I suppose... other departments like Sports or City had to sort out who's going to be the top dog because there's a web editor, a news paper editor, a Guardian editor and an Observer editor for all those sections... in our case we just went down to the pub and decided that's what we'll do...”<sup>563</sup>

The Observer is supposed to feed into the Guardian's website, although it is said to have very little separate on-line identity left. Both papers are completely separated in terms of production, but this does not reflect the situation in terms of

---

<sup>562</sup> See the Guardian's website <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/information/0,,711853,00.html>>.

<sup>563</sup> Roger Tooth, Head of photography, The Guardian, July 2010.

news stories on a daily basis. If, for instance, a foreign story gets commissioned on a Monday, it might end up on the 'Guardian' on Saturday or on the 'Observer' on a Sunday, so there is constant sharing of pictures and stories between the two. The Observer's pictures operation, for that matter, runs a completely independent process as well, although both branches use the same pictures' live resources and share their own shot pictures daily. And even though the new building was meant to bring everyone closer, the Observer's pictures operation is located at the end of a long corridor away from the Guardian's and was said to have been more reasonable if all Pictures sat together on a daily basis. On the other hand, the current managing director positioned at the top is ex Observer, and she was described as bringing some 'Observer baggage' with her. Merging clearly takes time.

The pictures operation is run by the head of photography and his deputies (one from the 'Guardian' and one from the 'Observer'). Then, on the Guardian's side, the daily work is divided between senior picture editors (one for the paper known as g1 and one for the website), several picture editors (working for the paper, for the website, for features, for sections g2 and g3, Arts, Sports, the Guide and the weekend Magazine), several assistant picture editors and several picture researchers. Apart from the editors there are five staff photographers working for the department daily (four located in London and one in the midlands), and around 20 free lance contract photographers working both for the 'Guardian' and the 'Observer'.

Most of the editors' daily routine is based on live pictures coming in and browsed in a bin. These get updated continuously and add up to around 15,000-20,000 pictures on a regular day- from agencies' pictures to pictures received from free lance photographers and staff. Although received from several agencies, all the pictures appear in the bin as one big group, and it appears there is no concrete information on

exactly how many pictures are received from each agency, simply because that is irrelevant for the daily routine-

“We don’t have any idea (well, some probably have an idea) how many [pictures] we receive from each...what’s slightly worrying is that when one of the agencies goes down we don’t realise because so much other stuff is filling in...”<sup>564</sup>

Overall around 70% of the pictures published by the Guardian on a daily basis are received from the agencies, and around 30% are received from commissioned free lance photographers (with a small percentage of pictures from the paper’s staff photographers). The paper has different contracts with each agency, although there is also a certain amount of mutual collaboration involved 'under the table'. When the department had major cuts in its budget, for instance, it was decided not to renew the subscription with EPA. Eventually, EPA agreed to postpone the payment for six months if only to keep the ‘Guardian’ 'on board' and their pictures in the paper.

The paper’s circulation is around 300,000 on a regular day (“and keeps dropping...”), and around 500,000 on a Saturday. In 2010 it went below this, partly because management decided to stop giving away papers (these are called ‘bulk sales’ - free papers given to different flight companies, for instance). Some papers add those 'give aways' to their circulation (the Telegraph adds around 60,000 of these for its daily circulation numbers). The department’s financial condition was said not to have been deeply affected by the recent credit crunch (apparently the budget was even slightly increased). However, the department does not commission pictures as much as it used to, simply because these are not needed- not with the stuff coming in from the agencies. In addition, the paper is now edited in a very short period of time during

---

<sup>564</sup> Roger Tooth, Head of photography, The Guardian, July 2010.

the afternoon, and, as far as editing a paper is concerned, there is really no sense of loyalty to commissioned photographers -

“...We haven’t got much time to react to different things. There’s also the issue of loyalty. If we commission something, the guys downstairs don’t give a dam where it comes from. They don’t give a dam if it’s one of ours or not. If they like something and it’s from Reuters they’ll use it. There’s no loyalty to any commissioning at all”.<sup>565</sup>

There is an ongoing debate within the department about how necessary commissioned assignments are. For if individual photographers contribute little to the daily volume of pictures, and agencies’ pictures are usually preferred (and leave the photographers with an apology the next morning), the idea of commissioned pictures seems pointless, although they are still used on a daily basis in Features. Some of these contract photographers will probably be laid off. On the other hand, and if the budget permits, they might be used for other things in the future- video and multimedia, for instance- now that the paper is heading on-line and a whole range of new possibilities are heading its way -

“The paper is just a paper; we already know how to do that for the past 200 years...the website is about different things. We need video, we need to author our own video, we would like to see more slide shows, and there will be much more space to fill... the website is just infinitely big”.<sup>566</sup>

Most of the Guardian's pictures used on a daily basis are therefore agencies' (around 70%) and expected to increase. This suggests the important role agencies have on the worldwide circulation of pictures, and demonstrates an unchallengeable dominance of agencies over the pictures market. Nonetheless, clients are still playing

---

<sup>565</sup> Roger Tooth, Head of photography, The Guardian, July 2010.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid.

an important role in the entire production system and will continue to influence the process as well: the Guardian subscribes to the services of a number of agencies and thus retains control over the ability to choose the 'best' pictures available regardless of whether these are Reuters' or, say, AP's, and such was the case with EPA. Here again is a circular process with bidirectional relationships of cause and effect between clients and agencies.<sup>567</sup>

Pictures are chosen because they are 'good', but also because there are layout requirements. The paper's pages, for instance, are designed to have several ads along the page rather than a full page dedicated to a single advertisement. In addition, the department is also forced to have its pictures in certain designs and shapes so these will fit perfectly with the paper's design- its 'flat plan'. Thus, the front page's picture, for example, will quite often have an upright shape, and in many cases will have a figure on it as well. These are preferred, since they allow for a lead story on the sides, which appears to be taken as 'quite strong' in design terms. It also catches the eye when the paper is folded in two as it is sold in the stores, and a person on the front is also found to make it easier for people to engage with. In pictures, however, upright shaped images are found less interesting ("we get a bit bored with this shape..."<sup>568</sup>)

Overall the design of the paper (g1) is made of blocks- a particular structure of slots where the pictures are plugged into on a daily basis- as long as they fit the section's theme, and apply for the specific requirements of design (if there is an upright picture on a certain page, for instance, the one on the next page will have to be in a different shape). The news pictures that are selected are often the result of functional considerations dictated by the organization's need for routine and its

---

<sup>567</sup> See Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg.

<sup>568</sup> Roger Tooth, Head of photography, The Guardian, July 2010.



impact.<sup>569</sup> Sometimes it is about the strict rules of design in order to encourage commerce (attract advertisers, catch the reader's eye) for the sake of profit.<sup>570</sup>

Not long ago, the idea behind the arrangement of pictures in the paper was that the reader would go 'up and down' the volume scale. Whenever there was a big story, it was also emphasized by the size of the picture on the page and stood as a contrast to smaller stories with small sized pictures on others. For example, there used to be a 'bigish' displayed general news feature picture in page 3, then the first 'National' page (4) would have a picture with a 'fairly big' display, then a few 'quiet' ones and a 'big' one in 'National' 9. But now that there is a 'new editor in town', the rules have changed and so has the paper's design structure. Unlike the previous design (which seemed better to pictures personnel), the new editor prefers big displayed pictures on every page-

"We've come back to quite an old fashioned model when it's bang, bang, bang. It was much more intelligently done before, really, it was quite a subtle concept which the new guy doesn't seem to get... what you need to remember is that news papers are run by dictators. There's a big dictator who's the editor, there's a slightly smaller dictator who's the deputy editor who runs the paper and what they say just goes."<sup>571</sup>

The organizational structure has major effects on the daily routine of pictures. One of the things that disturb the pictures editors is the absence of an art director. The part had been cut so there is no one from above who looks at things in a creative way, and in addition the head of photography does not have enough political power

---

<sup>569</sup> Tuchman, G. (1973), "Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected", In: American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 79(1), P. 110-131.

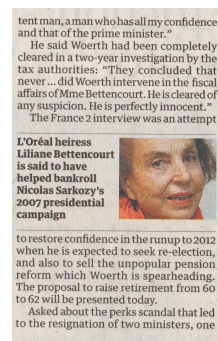
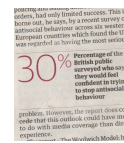
<sup>570</sup> Picard, R. G. (2004) The economics of the news paper industry. In: Alexander, A. , Owers, J. , Carveth, R. , Hollifield, A. C. and Greco, A. N. (eds.) Media economics: Theory and practice (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum. P. 109- 126.

<sup>571</sup> Roger Tooth, Head of photography, The Guardian, July 2010.

upstairs. Once again the struggle over status and control in the name of taste within the organization and differences between different occupational communities come into play: the Guardian's head of photography longs for how things were 'intelligently' done not long ago instead of the 'bang bang bang' model. Now it is the 'dictators' (the editor and his deputy, representing the higher levels of management) versus the commoners (he is only the head of photography) who has lost power since the 'middle man' (the art director) is gone.<sup>572</sup>

The smaller pictures on the paper are called 'Mods' and the really tiny 'Gizmos'. Sometimes Gizmos appear as pictures, but in many cases they end up as graphic figures- '30%', for instance- alongside a story. Quite often the decision on whether to put a graphic figure instead of a picture as a Gizmo is a financial one, for pictures cost money to publish and graphics are free. A live news picture received by the paper from a non-subscription source- South West News placed in Bristol- costs a minimum of £150 to use. Cost is taken carefully into account when deciding which pictures to use. The idea is to save money whenever possible in order to have the option to pay more for important stories and commission necessary assignments in the future.

The decision over what pictures will be put in tomorrow's paper is based on a number of factors: a hard news event obviously needs a picture, and the best ones are those that have the rare combination of 'news' value and aesthetics. Aesthetically, a 'good' Guardian picture is a picture which is more graphic and clean with no text in



*Gizmos. Pictures cost money, graphic figures are free.*

<sup>572</sup> Gregory, K. (1983) Native-view paradigms: multiple cultures and culture conflicts in organizations. In: *Administrative science quarterly*, Vol. 28(3). P. 359-376; see also Bourdieu's discussion on classes and classification in Bourdieu, P. (1986) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste*. London: Routledge.

it- “square on”- for example, the picture showing just the hand holding the famous red budget briefcase when the new national yearly budget was announced (“we did that 15 years ago...”.<sup>573</sup>) Another example was when the story of the Church of England moving closer to ordaining women bishops broke, and the picture chosen for the front page was a full shot upright one of Archbishop Rowan Williams while he was walking. However, an additional picture showing only the Archbishop’s sandals was said by the head of photography to have been a better ‘Guardian’ one- “clever”, making the reader intrigued, amused (“there’s something really odd about seeing an Archbishop wearing leather sandals...”.<sup>574</sup>)

It appears these features were the outcome of the ‘old days’, when reproduction was not that good and the old design had harsher rules. Graphic pictures were then often preferred in order to cope with the strict rules of design. Nonetheless, often there are disputes on what pictures to choose for tomorrow’s paper. As is the case on the global pictures desk throughout the selection of ‘Top pix’, the Guardian’s pictures style too comes in different shapes, sizes and colours and it is up to the editors’ taste to make the right choice (which is quite often struggled for) throughout the selection process (“it used to be more simple, we used to be just three [picture editors], now we’re like forty...”.<sup>575</sup>)

On the website, however, it is different since the pictures are constantly changing, and picture editors put in whatever they like. Unlike in the paper, it is purely the choice of the web picture editor with no other interference. Pictures editors for the website have more room for creating different picture galleries, while the single pictures attached to the text stories on the web are actually chosen and pinned by sub editors who deal with caption corrections (make sure it is the Guardian’s style,

---

<sup>573</sup> Roger Tooth, Head of photography, The Guardian, July 2010.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

put a link sentence to a story) and text and are not a part of the pictures department at all. This is because the website grew up without pictures people on it, but also because it is much faster since the process does not have to go through the pictures department first.<sup>576</sup> However, when the subs are busy, picture editors do choose the pictures for the web themselves, and a good Guardian caption created by the web picture editor was said to be able to-

“...add something extra to the story, not just repeat what is on the headline or repeat some text, and there is the strong linking part between the visual picture and the text as well”.<sup>577</sup>

On the paper the busiest time during the day is closer to the deadline (around 20:30), on the web it is the other way around. The main volume is during morning time and the work then peaks again after lunch time. In addition, and while the pictures eventually chosen for the paper are there to stay, the pictures on the website are constantly replaced because of the possibilities on the web, and so the same news article on the website will probably be accompanied by different pictures during the day when the live bin gets updated and better pictures turn up. During a regular shift the web picture editor responds to e-mails and requests for specific galleries. At around 9:15 there is a news meeting with all the different editors working on the web (‘site editors’)- making sure there are no clashes- and requests come up during the meeting as well (ideas for picture galleries which might be suitable for a certain section on the web, for instance). While single article pictures are pinned by the sub editors (“we only get involved if they are stuck... try to keep an eye”), the main job for

---

<sup>576</sup> The Guardian’s paper and website were only integrated a year and a half ago. Before that the web had no room for picture editors in its budget. As a result of the integration, many Observer’s and Guardian’s photographers had their contracts changed so that their materials would be available for the website as well.

<sup>577</sup> Jonathan Casson, Head of production, The Guardian, July 2010.

the web pictures editors is to create picture galleries and make audio slide shows, although the audio is usually added by the audio department.<sup>578</sup>

Galleries are usually based on live news pictures coming in, but some are part of an ongoing project- Margaret Thatcher's pictures gallery which needs finessing, for instance ("we thought she was going to die and created a gallery..."<sup>579</sup>) On a regular day a picture editor creates 3-4 galleries and up to around 6 galleries on a busy one, with an average of 15 pictures to work on each. Live news galleries are based on the news stories of the day and are chosen during the morning meeting. Some news stories are left without a picture gallery attached because they are not that 'visual', because there are no pictures to work with or web picture editors found them boring. Picture editors are also picture consumers, and while some pictures are found 'visually captivating' and make the Reuters' editor go 'wow!' (like the editor selecting 'Top pix' for Reuters on the global pictures desk), others are spiked simply because they are 'boring' to a Guardian's eye.<sup>580</sup>

Pictures for the galleries are picked from the live pictures arsenal flowing in daily. Using a gallery building tool (an internal addition for the software), the pictures are dragged, captioned and added to a gallery with a 'stand first' as well (a kind of a headline for each picture). Then they are sent to the sub editors (around 300 from both papers, including web and paper) whose job is to make sure there is nothing wrong with the text in the captions and keep it consistent with the Guardian's way- written in a different spelling style for instance, or dated differently by the agencies ("we will

---

<sup>578</sup> Lisa Foremane, Senior picture editor on the website. The Guardian, July 2010.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid.

<sup>580</sup> See Frosh's observation on the relationship between production and consumption. However, the audience of consumers is demonstrated here as not simply receiving pictures in the form of some 'sealed envelope' separated from the 'privileged' editors as producers, but rather participating in the production process itself, having different consuming practices of editors put into work (Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg. P. 12).

never use the number 1, we'll write one...Kolkata is Calcutta...".<sup>581</sup>) If a picture is 'flat', needs cropping or colour adjustments, it can be done straight from the software.

Finally, and in case a picture from a gallery is picked later to become a standalone picture attached to an article, it may go through a set of crops within the limits of a predefined set of sizes. As in the paper, agency pictures are preferred for the daily use, but due to a strict on-line budget limit- and apart from rare occasions- the web's picture editors are limited to use pictures from specific agencies which are Reuters, AP, AFP, EPA, PA, Getty, Corbis, Rex and Alamy. Pictures are chosen for the web usually when they stand out- "catch the eye"- and their selection is usually based on the limits of display on the web-

"On-line particularly you need stuff that is not too messy, because none of the images are that big... in a gallery it is not in a huge size".<sup>582</sup>

As in the paper, where pictures need to fit the strict rules of design, here it is about the demands of the web platform, when pictures need not be messy ones since they are smaller in size.

Some editors work on specific sections both in the paper and on the web. A features pictures editor, for instance, is responsible for the feature section (g2) and its main story with pictures, and every weekly feature section of the paper such as 'Women', 'Food', 'Health' or 'Games'. All of these pictures are chosen from a wide range of sources- whether an agency picture or a commissioned one ("from a cell phone, to a publisher, to a PR company or an agency".<sup>583</sup>) Although the editor mainly works for the paper, she tries to make sure every picture can be used by the website as

---

<sup>581</sup> Most of the editors' queries are answered on the Guardian writing style guide available on the website (<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide>>).

<sup>582</sup> Lisa Foremane, Senior picture editor on the website. The Guardian, July 2010.

<sup>583</sup> Sarah Gilbert, Features picture editor, The Guardian, July 2010.

well. Sometimes she works on live news ones and tries to choose different pictures from the ones used by the g1 section.

During the day she receives e-mails and requests from departments- a story someone saw on-line, for instance, and asks the editor whether it is possible to get a hold of its pictures. Then the editor contacts the photographer and explains that she would like to use his pictures both for the paper and for the website. She also deals with payment, and although the paper has strict rates, individual photographers might not be satisfied and she may negotiate over a fee if necessary (“they’ll give us a price, I’ll laugh and say no...”<sup>584</sup>) Pictures are usually paid for by size, and so every picture up to 5 inches might cost around £150 and its price may rise depending on the size of the reproduction. A commissioned assignment made by a freelance photographer, for instance, might cost around £180, and a picture received by an agency of which the paper is not subscribed for its services might cost around £68 per picture. The price may rise up to £600 per picture if it is a studio shoot of an ‘A list’ celebrity who does not want to be shot (“...then you end up calling him, buying him...”<sup>585</sup>) and even more.<sup>585</sup> But usually photographers will not be able to sell their pictures for huge amounts -

“People don’t come to the Guardian expecting huge fees. We’re not that kind of an organization. If they would like to get really enormous fees they will have to look for someone with greater resources”<sup>586</sup>

Apart from daily requests, the features editor also works on future projects- special issues, for instance, for which she might have around two weeks to think of the most suitable pictures. Working on a special issue is said to be like creating a story board in the editor’s head. The pictures in a special issue on teenagers, for instance, cannot look similar, and so the editor has to think on how to address their structure

---

<sup>584</sup> Sarah Gilbert, Features picture editor, The Guardian, July 2010.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

and plan in advance. At around noon, a quick production meeting usually takes place in which the editor of the section, the sub editors and the picture editors go over the pictures going in that day. On a regular day, these might be several stories of which the feature editor and the section's have to decide which pictures to use- a cover story on the Gates foundation, South Africa and the World Cup and what its legacy would be, or a regular arts section, for instance. For a feature story on a regular day, the feature editor might present a selection of around 40-60 pictures to the designer and the editor, but for a major news one she might end up with a selection of around 200.

Communication between the departments is done electronically. After receiving the story, the editor peeks at the 'visual design plan' in order to understand the design requirements for a page or a section (although these might also change during the day). She then decides what pictures might be perfect to go with them, creates a selection of folders accessible to the editors, the sub editors and the designer who works on the page and drops her choice of pictures' selection in the particular folders based on the particular demands of the editors; they will choose from her selection.

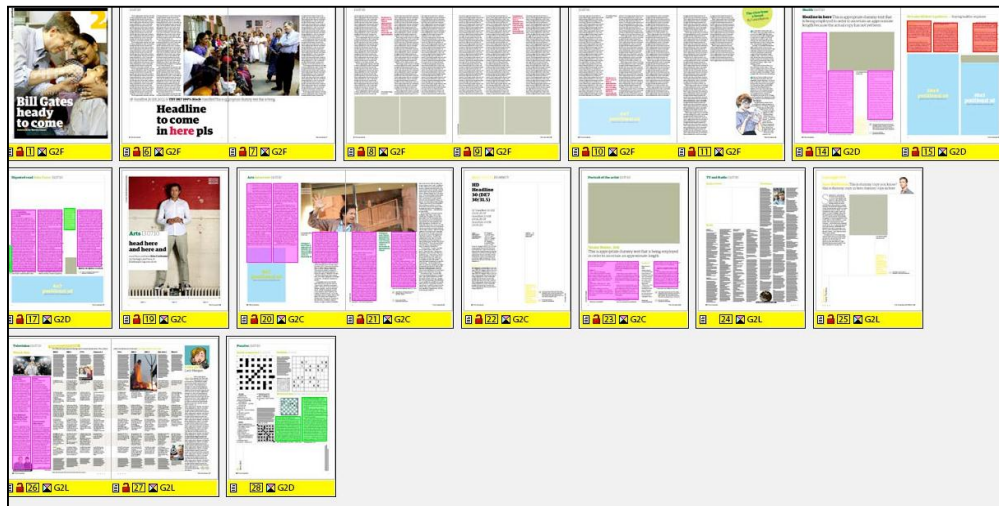
Sometimes the editors might not like the pictures they are offered, and then the feature editor will either look for new pictures or negotiate if she thinks these are the best ones available. Regardless of the story, the feature editor looks for 'good' pictures- simple, clean and elegant ones,

"I have a best picture policy...it has to be relevant, and it has to be a good picture. My job is simpler, perhaps, when we commission stuff, because we have a kind of a strong corporate identity with regards to pictures and it's easy to explain to people what our style is and what



we're expecting from them. But at the end of the day it comes down to what's going to look good on a page or on-line...."<sup>587</sup>

In Features the numbers between commissioned pictures and agencies' that are eventually chosen are equal, leaning slightly in favour of the latter (mainly because the commissioned ones are used in bigger sizes). And apart from creating galleries for the editors and the designers working on the different sections to choose from, the feature pictures editor also takes care of little things ("housekeeping") later during the day- making sure the credits are correct, that cropping was done properly and more.



*Visual design plan for G2, The Guardian, London, 2010*

The desk also uses archived pictures, particularly in the Arts section. Most of the work in Arts is based on illustrations, on-going projects and events known in advance. Even though the arts picture editor and her team in both papers might use pictures that just came in - searching for a relevant picture to go with a book review on, say, the war in Iraq or Afghanistan- most of the materials can be easily traced in the archives. During her daily work the Guardian's arts pictures editor organizes photo shoots, deals with pictures related to the critics sections and reviews of both the

<sup>587</sup> Sarah Gilbert, Features picture editor, The Guardian, July 2010.

Guardian and the Observer (about 3-4 per day) and has a number of ongoing projects to work on in advance. She also handles the books sections of the Guardian and the Observer and commissions portraits of actors, artists and often musicians. Every day several hundred pictures are browsed, and while most of the pictures published are commissioned (when only some are archive images or photos sourced from photo libraries and PR companies- from films or plays, for instance), around 8-12 pictures make it to the g2 arts pages per day and around 12 to the reviews page per week (or 2 per day at the back of the main section of the paper).

Different assignments call for different pictures. With books it is about choosing the right illustration, depending on the subject of the book. A history book might be accompanied by a historical or a commissioned picture, and at other times a more abstract picture might do the trick. To organize photo shoots, the editor deals with PR companies and theatres or museums over issues such as access, or even copy right (if it is a shoot of a Picasso painting, for example). Commissioning a photo shoot for the arts is usually not that difficult to execute in terms of pre-production, for unlike hard news events, most of the information is known in advance- a new gallery opening, a play or a concert, for instance- and some are usually done by specific contract photographers who happen to have very strong connections in the business (with theatres, for instance).

In many cases, the photographers are often invited before the event begins and have enough time to prepare for their shoot- 'photo calls'. However, more and more these days, some institutions are less fond of 'photo calls'- they prefer to have their own photographers do the shoot, gaining more control over the final outcome despite the papers' view ("we usually like to have our own mark..."<sup>588</sup>) Struggling over who

---

<sup>588</sup> Helen Healy, Assistant picture editor, The Guardian, July 2010.

controls the production process takes place between departments and personnel inside the news organization, but also between the news organization and public institutions, each fighting to have its 'mark'.

When the daily live bin is constantly updated and editors have no way of knowing whether the best pictures are yet to come, the editors rely on stored pictures and can easily circle an entire theme browsing through a number of archives. Unlike the live bin, where all the daily pictures are received, here the editor can make a search using keywords and thus locate a particular picture within seconds- slicing a search while defining specific regions such as Europe, for instance, or pictures only from particular countries around the world. Whenever she needs to broaden her search in order to look for a particular picture, the editor searches in a number of archives the paper is subscribed for apart from the Guardian's, and these are often the archives of Reuters, AP, Getty, Corbis and Rex.

In many cases, the daily search is based on the archives' 'weekly favourites'. Whenever the editor looks for sports pictures and is interested in Tennis ones, for instance, she prefers to look at Reuters' favourite pictures for each week ("you can't just put the word 'Tennis' in...".<sup>589</sup>) The choice from a great variety of pictures selected from a number of major archives is useful, for they all seem to complete each other and supply a broader arsenal of pictures to choose from on a variety of subjects and themes. The Guardian, for instance, does not find Reuters very useful when pictures from the UK are needed apart from London, and these might be tracked in other archives' and vice versa. But some archives- Reuters', for instance- are also taken as having similar aesthetic standards to the Guardian's and thus become useful for the arts pictures editor -

---

<sup>589</sup> Helen Healy, Assistant picture editor, The Guardian, July 2010.

"With the Guardian we don't just want a straight forward photograph...say, for instance, of a certain politician. We would like an angle on it... when Tony Blair was the prime minister, for instance. I mean he was the prime minister for ten years, so you had to think of a kind of a new and fresh way...the use of hand, a certain relation with space, or you just shot him from behind because he is such a familiar figure that we didn't really need to see his face and I think they understood those sensibilities...they have got a similar aesthetics to the Guardian".<sup>590</sup>

Editors at the client's end are shown to have control over the selection process. When global mechanisms are applied at Reuters' side in order to make their pictorial products internationally appealing and yet tailored for the needs of particular clients, some of these are effective (when the editor refines her search using Reuters' favourite pictures of the week, or when she finds Reuters' pictures 'aesthetically similar' to the Guardian's).

The inside of the Guardian building and the meeting rooms, where editorial meetings take place, are dominated with glass and can be observed from the outside. Transparency is highly valued, and that is why most of the people working on the paper- whether from the pictures department or not- can access the live pictures bin and the Guardian's pictures archive. Nonetheless, in order to archive new pictures one needs privileges and access applications applied to one's username, and information on who exactly has such privileged authority remains obscure.

The computerised archive was established here in 1998 and has been built up ever since. It now contains a whole range of pictures stored in it- whether taken by the papers' own photographers, contract freelance ones or just agencies' pictures received on the live bin and then 'secretly' archived ("we've got lots of Reuters pictures that

---

<sup>590</sup> Helen Healy, Assistant picture editor, The Guardian, July 2010.

we shouldn't have because it's against our contract...".<sup>591</sup>) Storing those 'secret' pictures in the archive is obviously not favoured by the agencies, for this means the paper can use them in the future without having to pay an extra fee. Yet this kind of archiving system is useful, for choosing a picture from the paper's archive and having it published is often much quicker than having to search and download one from an agency website and then having to deal with payment procedures for its use. It is also useful for legal reasons, for storing the pictures here helps fight potential lawsuits in the future, and keeping all the pictures published by the paper is thus important. In the past there used to be people whose job was to maintain the archive and add keywords, but such a position no longer exists, probably due to cost, but also because the position was found meaningless here.

All and all, there is no system for archiving pictures; they are stored on the basis of personal taste, their categorizing is based on their captions alone and all are placed in one big bin. Searching pictures from "9/11", for instance, and although certain events can be traced with keywords, a picture editor will probably plug in "September 11 ", or just "New York". However, there is actually a good reason for such an 'amateuristic' archiving system of pictures here- it is more efficient:

"...you need a really really general look; because there could be things which are excluded whenever you restrict your search with a specific keyword, and you don't want to exclude anything...you may get new ideas from those pictures you see".<sup>592</sup>

Thus, it may take a few more seconds to browse through 500 pictures instead of just a couple, but eventually this can turn out worthwhile after all.<sup>593</sup> At the same

---

<sup>591</sup> Roger Tooth, Head of photography, The Guardian, July 2010.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid.

<sup>593</sup> There are, however, several themes which appear to be slightly problematic when searching for their pictures in the archive. Plugging 'Tony Blair', for instance, one would come up with around 5000-7000

time, archiving is not taken very seriously here because the business was said to have slightly changed, and whenever a current event requires the use of pictures from the past, these will probably turn up by the agencies on the live bin anyhow-

“...If Margaret Thatcher dies tonight, by tomorrow morning every single picture the agencies hold on Thatcher will be retransmitted...so what will happen is that we'll have someone going over all the archived Thatcher pictures, and mean while it is all coming in again anyway”.<sup>594</sup>

Whenever an agency picture is located in the papers' archive and then published, the agencies, so it appears, tend to 'turn a blind eye' (“all the papers do it, and they know it...”).<sup>595</sup> This is because the papers' annual subscriptions include the possibility of downloading pictures from their archives and so, in a way, reusing these pictures is already paid for. But monitoring such a process is almost impossible as well. Creative solutions are necessary in the 'Guardian' to fight cuts and losses, and these are applied at the pictures operations as well: graphic figures are often preferred over pictures as 'Gizmos' simply because these are free; no one is left to handle the archive, categorize pictures or create keywords because searching is said to be working better when it allows a more 'general look', and since archived pictures are received from the agencies anyhow whenever such images are required.<sup>596</sup>

Agencies' pictures are archived here without permission and can therefore be used time and time again, as if they are the Guardian's, simply because it is extremely difficult to monitor the process and since 'everybody does it'. When agencies turn a

---

pictures, and this is when it becomes a problem (“probably because he was the prime minister for such a long time since we first launched the archive...”) in which case these will have to be broken down to, say, specific years, although such issues rarely seem to appear on a daily basis.

<sup>594</sup> Roger Tooth, Head of photography, The Guardian, July 2010.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid.

<sup>596</sup> "That's ridiculous!" replied Tooth, the Guardian's head of photography, when I mentioned once the operations of the Reuters' keyword team.

blind eye, this suggests that this bidirectional relationship is fruitful for both and shows that clients are fought for in this highly competitive market because agencies eventually need clients in order to survive.<sup>597</sup> Everybody wins today. Tomorrow, however, there will be different stories to cover.

### **5.3 The International Desk: How well did we do?**

Amongst the crowded Reuters news room in London, hidden between the different stations of Text and TV, is Pictures' International desk. It is relatively small in size and not a 'department' (it is called a 'management desk' by its operators), and yet its daily routine is crucial for the overall pictures production process; its editors deal with quality control and make sure the different bureaus around the world are internationally synchronized. The work on the desk is executed by several editors: the global pictures editor, the senior editor in charge, the global sports editor, the EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) assignments editor, the chief photographer for Africa and the Middle East, the production editor and the magazine editor who recently joined the desk after working from Paris. Even though some of the editors focus on particular regions (the editors responsible for Europe, the Middle East and Africa), the desk mainly monitors the daily work of the pictures service worldwide and therefore most of the service's 'global' positions- the magazine editor, the global sports editor and the global pictures editor himself- are positioned here as well.

The work on the desk is aimed at keeping things in order, and the editors need to make sure the machine is working properly. They are responsible for planning the coverage of global sports events, logistics and negotiations with the events' organizers.

---

<sup>597</sup> Production works in a circular structure here as well (Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg).

They are responsible for speed and efficiency, focus on new equipment and technology on 'global' scales and contact the different companies in case certain problems occur internationally. They make sure the electronic diary is updated with the different events that are covered by the different bureaus and that it works properly at all times. They deal with 'sensitive' issues (pictures of nudity or young children which might cause some problems if sent to clients in specific countries; a problematic caption in terms of legal issues; a 'spiked' picture which accidentally went through) and bureaucracy, and update the guiding books.

Overall, the main goal on the desk is to make sure clients receive the best product. Thus, on a daily basis, the editors browse through the pictures' 'File', go over the Singapore reports made by the EIC's and contact the global pictures desk in case a certain picture looks a bit 'unusual' or simply sent to the wrong place. In addition, the editors also go over the daily papers ("we go over everything, tabloids, everything...") and make a daily list of the highlight events of the day- 'Iraq-deadly attacks', for instance- which are expected to be covered by Reuters during the day (although here the list is only based on events in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Similar lists are prepared in Singapore for Asia and in Washington for the Americas).<sup>598</sup> The stories that appear on the outlook are listed in an order of importance, and stories from entertainment or sports, for instance, appear in a separate group. Unlike with the agency's TV services, the 'highlights' list is not sent to clients because not all listed events are inevitably covered -

“If the Paris bureau says they're covering a demonstration by the Eiffel tower and then something else happens they will go and do that.

---

<sup>598</sup> Simon Newman, senior editor, international desk, a record of a conversation, August 2010.



We don't want clients thinking they're definitely going to get the demonstration. It's all movable; it's the whole nature of news".<sup>599</sup>

The list of the day's events is based on the 'raw' information from the bureaus- from the bottom up- and sent back to the bureaus in the form of 'big stories' to cover. Sometimes desk editors decide that a story is worth covering- the prices of gold going through the roof, for example, in which case it is immediately pinned on the international outlook and requests for pictures of gold (people selling, gold dug out of the ground) are then sent to the local bureaus as well. Even though 'big stories' erupt in particular regions, the list was described as aimed 'globally' -

"...Who ever chooses to write that list of stories of what we want to report on has to think not too locally, he has to think about a big story...even though it did not have much play in the UK or Europe, it's a big story...we try to be as global as possible".<sup>600</sup>

Nonetheless, stories might not get covered even if they are rated as important by the international desk given the daily schedule of the local departments, and certain limitations should be considered in a given day- insufficient man power, for instance. There will be a discussion between the desk and the local bureau about which events are likely to be 'big' and covered and those ignored. The needs of the international market are thought of at all times. Editors monitor the transportation of possible 'sensitive' pictures, problematic captions or 'unusual' pictures sent to the 'wrong place' as part of their daily routine. And at the same time they try to hit 'big stories' which

---

<sup>599</sup> Jonathan Bainbridge, Senior EIC, International desk, Reuters, August 2010. A highlights list is, in fact, sent to clients by the global pictures desk in Singapore but only a small sample of events listed in the outlook by the international desk will appear on Singapore's highlights.

<sup>600</sup> Jonathan Bainbridge, Senior EIC, International desk, Reuters, August 2010.

might work better on international scales and not to think 'too locally' when the daily list of stories to cover is created.<sup>601</sup>

Apart from the highlights list, an additional list of yesterday's biggest stories called the *Impact* is compiled. These stories appear in the form of a short header- 'conflict in Sri Lanka', 'elections in India' or 'elections in South Africa'- and are chosen by the editors on the international desk, although the list is flexible and changes according to the information given by the local bureaus. Events can seem irrelevant to the international desk, even though they are seen as 'big' events on local scales, and might be added- an important local football match, for instance. Once the daily impact list is compiled, it is then sent to bureaus around the world. The bureaus which the list is sent to are in: London, Paris, Madrid, Berlin, Moscow, Zurich, Jerusalem, Dubai, Cairo, Beirut, Tokyo, Beijing, Singapore, Seoul, San Paulo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Johannesburg, Washington and Sidney. It is not sent to all Reuters' bureaus because the ones on the list are seen as 'good' world representatives, and thus the impact information gathered from them gives a good impression on how Reuters did worldwide. Also many newspapers do not bother to credit pictures at all in some countries (many papers in Italy are well known for this), making the impact process extremely difficult and time consuming to execute.

The list of the bureaus is fixed, and since some of the stories might have greater impact in individual regions given their local affiliation- the baseball World Series in the United States - several bureaus will probably come up with no pictures at all. It might have worked better if the impact information had been gathered from all the selected bureaus daily, but it is received only from around 7-8 bureaus. It is an issue of staffing. The impact process is done from Monday to Friday and whenever

---

<sup>601</sup> Robertson, R. (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) *Global modernities*. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44.

major events take place (during the Olympics or the World Cup); it is then important here to know how well Reuters did on every single day of such events.

How does the impact work? Once the list of yesterday's big stories is received locally, the local administrators or picture editors go over the list, browse through the main local papers and plug in the numbers in a simple Excel table, comparing how Reuters did as opposed to its competitors. In the London bureau, the impact is based on the information gathered from four news papers: the 'Telegraph', the 'Financial Times', the 'Guardian' and the 'Sun'.<sup>602</sup> Then, based on the pictures published alongside the stories selected as 'big' ones by the international desk, the editors input the information in the Excel table under 'Reuters' (if a picture published in, say, the Guardian attached to the 'Conflict in Sri Lanka' story is from Reuters), or 'AFP/Getty', 'AP', 'EPA' and 'Other'.

When all the daily information is gathered, each table is then sent back to the international desk and is published every day on the Reuters 'Share point' software, where it can be accessed and reviewed by all of Reuters' photographers worldwide. Once a month this information is then processed by a department whose role is to measure the success of Reuters TV, Pictures and Text, and it is then calculated into a certain percentage to draw conclusions from.<sup>603</sup>

On average, the numbers are usually split equally between Reuters, Getty/AFP and AP (around 30% each and 10% for 'Others'). A bad percentage would cause for an inquiry to take place. Quite often, on 'big' stories, the impact is felt on the desk before the actual tables are received, and allows for a quick response. In cases when Reuters did not do well on a particular story, a chief photographer- whether a local or a

---

<sup>602</sup> The local pictures department in London is placed in a different building and separated from the international desk.

<sup>603</sup> Apparently there is a very good way of measuring the timing of text stories; competing neck to neck with other agencies, certain events- 'Barak Obama wins the elections', for instance- are time sensitive.

regional one- is immediately contacted, for they are often the ‘experts’ when it comes to the execution of coverage in the field within their region. They are also the first to know whether something was missed, went wrong at the scene of events (which might have affected a particular shooting) or simply that Reuters did not perform well during a particular event.

The impact information is only gathered from news papers and not from other clients such as websites, for instance, but even though newspapers do not represent Reuters’ whole circle of clients, they give a good impression on the spot and allow policies to respond fast-

“...While the news papers are only part of our client base, they’re very much the kind of the most immediate vehicle for presenting our pictures, so it is very clear. If our pictures are on the front page of every newspaper in the UK, that’s a good day. But if it’s a picture by AP and it’s a huge story, say a bomb blast in Madrid, and AP have got every single picture in a front page you might want to think well why didn’t we...we were half an hour late, or our pictures weren’t very good. You might want to try and find out.”<sup>604</sup>

There are many reasons why Reuters may lose out to other agencies in the daily coverage of events. Competition may be lost by a millisecond or by a photographer choosing a bad location. When George Michael appeared in a London court accused of crashing his car into a London shop, the next day the Guardian published AFP’s double spread picture of Michael stepping out of his car surrounded by a group of photographers and TV crews. Even though Reuters’ picture of the event had seemed promising to the editor on the international desk, he was surprised to find that the paper eventually decided to use AFP’s image. One of the Reuters pictures had been sent from the scene; it was taken at the same time but from a different angle, and

---

<sup>604</sup> Simon Newman, senior editor, international desk, August 2010.

had been found less suitable. On the other hand, certain events tested for impact- a beach volleyball match- might receive zero results from all agencies, in which case a decision might be taken to stop covering the event completely due to the lack of interest. Here the circle of production and its bidirectional connections also come into play at different levels of operation- both within the organization and between its clients.

The impact list is a good example of how news pictures are not only produced for publishing and then left to 'die', but rather gathered back by pictures personnel- both by administrators and editors at the local levels of operations and by editors at the international one- as data on how well the service did compared to its rivals. Pictures become footprints along the future moments of production.<sup>605</sup>

There is a close relationship with TV, and a daily meeting led by the desk's TV colleagues is shared with pictures in order to exchange valuable information. Led by the EMEA's TV regional editor, an overview of the events in the region is delivered. Information is also supplied by the TV personnel in Singapore via teleconference, and they all discuss the different stories of the day in turn ("we are generally the last...".<sup>606</sup>) In fact, it appears Pictures quite often have very little to contribute to such discussions, simply because they are said to be following TV. However, some information from pictures might be useful for TV as well. During the daily meeting the picture editors update their planner on future dates and events and find out whether they can use potential 'grabs', while TV might receive interesting information on particular events as well- an air guitar championship in Finland, for

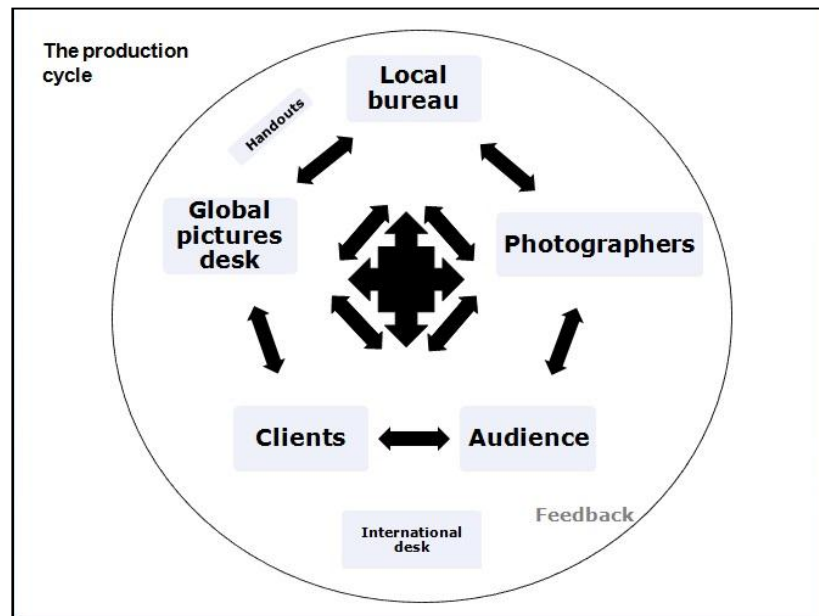
---

<sup>605</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg.

<sup>606</sup> Simon Newman, senior editor, international desk, August 2010.

instance, which might not be a big story but considered a nice light one in the 'silly season', with possible good visuals.<sup>607</sup>

Sometimes pictures are received as hand outs during the night, and these are also shared with TV and might lead to a new story, or simply used by TV as images- a satellite image taken before and after the Pakistan floods, for instance, that can be easily used in a particular TV feed. Sometimes news pictures are simply the result of collaboration with TV- whether in the form of information on new events to cover or 'grabbed' video footage. Then the daily work will be updated with new stories delivered to the different bureaus around the world, and local departments will start working on their execution. From product back to story, new ideas will soon be transcended into life.



*Reuters pictures production cycle: from story to product, from product to story.*

<sup>607</sup> A 'grab' is the term used to describe a single frame taken from a video footage which is then sent to clients as an image.

## 5.4 Conclusion

On the 'international' levels of operation, several forces appear to govern the process. The 'international' stages of production are influenced by functional issues and technical aspects as dictated by the news organization's need for routine. Working in a complex business environment, Reuters had to adjust- both in process and in structure- by producing glocal mechanisms. Signs of struggle over power and control between different occupational communities and organizations are a significant factor. There are various circular structures with bidirectional connections of cause and effect, and the audience plays a key role here as well.

The two preceding chapters conclude the entire production cycle of Reuters' news pictures based on the daily routines and norms of practitioners at different moments and sites of production. How exactly these modes of production, norms and routines, struggles and conflicts come into play in the coverage of particular news events is demonstrated next, with an analysis of four particular events and their photographic coverage.

## Chapter 6

### **An Analysis of Significant Events and their Coverage**

Journalists know precisely how to identify a news story, but often know little on what it is that makes one newsworthy. For photojournalists it is about knowing how to 'get the picture'. At times technology helps. Sometimes it is their surroundings, and often it is with the help (or lack) of both. They need to be at the 'right' place at the 'right' time. Of course, it is often the right place and time for one photographer and different for another, for they are employed by news organizations with specific needs, particular daily practices to pursue and certain practitioners to work with. Photojournalists come with varied personalities, carry alternative cultural backgrounds and are very competitive.

The observations of four events covered by a Reuters' Israeli photographer were chosen for an interpretive analysis: the firing of Israeli cannons from an IDF artillery base near kibbutz Nahal Oz on 3.11.05; the scene after an attack of a suicide bomber near the city of Tulkarem on 29.12.05; the funeral of an Israeli officer on 30.12.05 in the city of Haifa; and carrot picking on 11.5.06 near the Israeli border with the city of Gaza. In addition, four particular images were analysed that had been selected by the photographer from the great arsenal of pictures taken and sent to the local bureau in Jerusalem (all but the picture of the Israeli cannons which was sent directly to the Reuters global pictures desk in Singapore). The pictures were published by a number of Reuters clients (such as the "Yahoo" website and "The Herald Tribune" news paper) with the exception of the one chosen by the photographer from



the carrot picking, eventually left on the 'floor of the editing room' (as was decided by the chief photographer in Jerusalem at the time).

The choice to add a semiotic analysis of the four pictures taken during the coverage of four specific events is not a coincidence. For they were all carefully selected as part of four specific and highly significant events which bring to the surface- taken together and each on its own- the complex articulation of news pictures cycle of production throughout its meaningful moments and key sites in the field and beyond. Semiotic analysis, combined with the analysis of the events in which they were taken, demonstrate how the entire production process of news pictures and the international process of news making are put in motion. The analysis in this chapter is done in somewhat of a non orthodox method: first, since it is focused on the events and on the pictures as texts produced within those events. In addition, it depends on the biography of the different pictures taken within those events, supported with their semiotic analysis. With a combined analysis, I will try to illuminate how different factors govern the daily production processes of news pictures, how those pictures eventually work as news products and how their processes of production in Thomson Reuters are a case that represents the international process of news making.<sup>608</sup>

---

<sup>608</sup> This is also a good place to mention that news pictures (as they are taken throughout their processes of production) are always chosen from series and therefore sent from the field as a group- whether to the pictures department in a local bureau or to the global pictures desk, where they are assessed, processed and filtered once again. Thus, even though it appears, for a moment, as if the analysis of single pictures representing the coverage of each event is a distortion of the overall process of production, the focus of the analysis here is on the events themselves. This, as I hope to demonstrate in this chapter, will hopefully be an important contribution to the fields of commercial photography, news making and cultural production. An analysis of complete series of pictures taken during the coverage of each news event may be an additional angle to consider in the future, and might supply important information on the production of pictures as well.

## 7.1 First event: Israeli Artillery Base, November 2005

During the preparations for the tenth anniversary of the assassination of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the photographer was given instructions to report the next day at the Rabin memorial in the city of Tel Aviv.<sup>609</sup> A public meeting should take place between religious and secular Israelis as part of the ongoing events planned for the ceremony. Arriving at the scene, he is surprised to find out the event is not taking place as planned, and after a brief conversation with one of the city councils' representatives he learns that the event was cancelled. He then recognizes two other news photographers at the spot: one who works for Getty images, and a female photographer working for the local news paper 'Yedioth Ahronoth'. After a short exchange of information the three decide to 'stick around', just in case the event takes place as planned.

Soon enough other photographers gather around as well (including an AFP photographer), and the photographer decides to leave the scene but takes several pictures of the Rabin memorial before doing so. Prepared to leave, he then receives a message in his beeper device informing him of an Israeli soldier who was injured after a bomb shell landed in an IDF artillery base near kibbutz Nahal Oz in the south. The photographer verifies the details of the event with the pictures editor in Jerusalem and decides to leave immediately, so that he would be able to get to the army base in time. The event itself, so he says, is not unusual, for the army base near the kibbutz had been frequently bombed before, and many soldiers were injured in the past. However, and based on his experience from the past, he knows that such an event- especially

---

<sup>609</sup> The assassination of Israeli Prime minister and defence minister Yitzhak Rabin occurred on November 4, 1995 during a rally in support of the Oslo accords in the Kings of Israel square in Tel Aviv. Yigal Amir, the assassin (a right wing religious Zionist), opposed Rabin's peace initiative and the Oslo Accords. The assassination revealed, among others, the ongoing tension between religious Zionist and seculars within the Israeli society.

one in which a soldier was injured- would most definitely lead to the firing of the IDF towards Gaza in response. Should he decide to cover the event, he would only be able to do so if he leaves right away. Besides, the sun is just about to set in the next few hours, and it would be better for us to arrive before sunset.

A drive from Tel Aviv to the south takes an hour and a half, and we are in a rush. The road to the army base is so familiar to the photographer he practically knows his way by heart. We arrive at 16:15 and the photographer seems satisfied. The Israeli cannons have yet to start firing, and it looks as if the natural light caused by the sun is good. Five canons are spread over the field with approximately 60 meters between them. We are welcomed by two other agency photographers (AFP and EPA) already at the spot. All three photographers are familiar with one another and often meet at events. They exchange information about the upcoming event, and position themselves near one of the cannons.

The Israeli soldiers seem excited to see the photographers. They are familiar with their presence, photographed in the past, and such coverage is not new to them. There is still time before the firing begins, and the photographers use this break for 'small-talk' conversations with the soldiers. The soldiers moan about their short vacations (*yeziot* in Hebrew); or how the work wears them down ("We did not stop shooting for almost a week now. Do you know how hard it is to pull a *mishcholet* (cleaning rod) in a cannon's barrel?" says one of the soldiers and everybody is laughing), and they are interested in the photographers' work ("Where is it going to be published?...You are working for who? For a news agency? ...What kind of lens is it? ..." etc.).

The photographers, on the other hand, use these conversations to gather information. They are interested in details about the event- the order of the shooting

(“who is firing first, is it your cannon or the one next to it?”), the firing procedures and more. During the conversation, the commander of one of the cannons verifies that his cannon will be the first to fire and has no objections to the presence of the photographers. The timing could not have been better, and the photographers make their last adjustments before the firing begins, as they wait with anticipation.

While they are waiting for the firing to begin, a number of ‘atmosphere’ pictures are taken: a soldier cleaning a part of the cannons’ barrel, a few soldiers pulling a cleaning rod through the barrel of another or one soldier placing bomb shells in order, and a few more photographers- female UPI and an AP TV camera man preparing his camera stand- arrive and prepare for the shoot. The photographers place themselves in the exact spot and gaze suspiciously at their colleagues’ preparations. The Reuters photographer, for instance, pulls away for a different angle, and a group of photographers seem to imitate his movements. Timing is of the essence in these kinds of events, and its significance is clearly felt by the photographers’ great preparedness- nobody wants to miss the picture and end up being left behind.

Each cannon fires 3-5 bomb shells and then stops. After every set of firing the photographers change their position and run towards the next firing cannon. With the sun setting the natural light is extraordinary, and the photographers choose to use it as a background. During their preparations for the last set of firing, and as evening falls, the photographers become anxious and restless. With the last light slowly dissolving into the night, they have very little time left and gather around the same spot in order to capture the fire splashing from the cannon at the exact moment of firing. Standing nearby, and after observing a number of firing sets, I find such a move extremely difficult to execute: first, a photographer has to place himself in the perfect position, and he has to precede his colleagues while doing so. Second, he has to figure out the

exact second of firing in order to ‘catch’ it, and finally he has to release the shutter at the exact second- not too early, and certainly not too late. After a number of unsuccessful attempts made by the photographers, the soldiers’ firing procedures are finally understood: it appears that when the cannon is ready to fire, the gunner reaches out from the cannon and shouts to his fellow team mates “be careful, we are firing!”. He then rushes in, goes out again, shouts “be careful, we are firing!” one more time, and right after his second warning the firing takes place.

After several attempts the photographer shows me the picture he was so eager to capture with satisfaction; it is a picture of fire splashing out of a cannon’s barrel just when the gunner had fired, with the lights of the city of Gaza and the sunset at its background. The job is done, although the photographer still goes on with his work, sensing, perhaps, he could get an even better picture. The tough competition takes its toll, and when the night falls the photographers seem highly stressed. The commander of the fifth cannon announces they are preparing for the last set of the day. The pressure is even stronger, and when the final set begins, an EPA photographer suddenly asks the Reuters photographer which level of exposure he should use for the picture- extremely ‘unprofessional’, as I am told later on. The final set has ended, and with it the event itself.

It is 18:00, and the photographers turn to the process of sending their pictures and agree on the perfect spot for doing so. There is a nice coffee house near kibbutz ‘Kfar Azza’ just a short drive away. It has been used by the photographers many times in the past, and they favour it because it is close and quiet. Also it has many electrical outlets and a number of photographers can use it simultaneously. It has one main flaw- it is not connected to a wireless network.

During the sending process, the four agency photographers (AP, AFP, Reuters and EPA) sit side by side. From that moment on, their work becomes technical and highly structured: 1. Copying all the pictures from the cameras' memory card on to the computer 2. Basic filtering 3. Fast editing 4. Getting 'on line' 5. Trying to look for a story already written by the text department (this is made in order to speed up the writing process of captions) 6. Writing the captions 7. Sending the chosen pictures. It is getting late, and all the photographers are concentrated since the timing for sending the pictures is vital. The photographer tells me that it is most important that he sends the first and second pictures as soon as possible; these pictures would be the 'pictures of the event', the rest would be the 'atmosphere pictures' which can wait a bit longer. Given that there is no wireless connection, the photographer uses a 3G card for his connection. Using the card is not always necessary, so he says, but since the time frame at the moment is a bit tight, he may very well 'lose to the competition' without it. For slow surfing would make things complicated (it might even make the computer crash), and interfere with the sending process as well.

The photographer chooses to focus on 15-20 pictures selected out of approximately 200 pictures taken and starts working on the 'picture of the event'. We both examine the pictures selected after the first process of filtering, and the photographer explains that in many cases he might use the advice of an 'external eye' during the filtering- a waiter, or perhaps just someone who sits next to him in a coffee house. I point to a picture of soldiers pulling a cleaning rod through the barrel of one of the cannons which was spiked by the photographer, and he explains that this specific picture is problematic ("it seems as if one of them is smiling..."). At this point, the photographer decides to focus on the firing picture, and with the help of Photoshop he makes 'minor adjustments'- cut, saturation, contrast and cleaning 'dirt'

("it's from the cameras' lens, not from the scene..."). Browsing in Reuters' website he finds the event was already covered by the text department, and with the help of the written story creates the picture's caption- not before checking with 'Babylon' to see whether he has any spelling mistakes.

The EPA photographer comes by to check up on Reuters' work, and when he notices the photographer's 'picture of the event' he then looks away with disrespect ("oh, so that is your BIG picture? I have seen a similar one made by Y". [a local news photographer who was not present at the event]). The first picture is sent to Singapore after 35 minutes from the minute we sat down at the coffee house, and all other pictures- 14 all together- are sent within the hour. The photographer then talks the photos through chatting with a Singapore editor using his AOL chatting program (America On Line). The editor wants to know whether the cannons' shells were of 155mm' or 180mm', and he is disturbed by a blur in one of the pictures and asks whether it was dust caused by the firing itself. The photographer verifies and tells the editor the shells were of 155mm'.

While chatting with Singapore, the photographer surfs the Yahoo website. On the net, so he says, the pictures are published right away, having the exact timing in which they were published attached as well. This way, he could see whether his picture is published before or after his colleagues' and when. After a short while he locates a story written on the event at the 'Yahoo news' website with his picture of the event attached to it, and exactly two hours from the minute we arrived at the coffee house we then pack our things and leave.

Sending the photographer to the Rabin square a few days before the national ceremony was the result of the vast international interest surrounding the tenth year

memorial for the assassination of Rabin. The murder of an Israeli prime minister is a meaningful event with many political and social consequences. It is also an event connected directly to similar assassinations of national leaders around the world- a 'media event' that echoes at the annual Rabins' Memorial Day, and one which therefore requires the coverage of related events.<sup>610</sup>

Events are not the only condition for the production of news pictures. At times, it is only the presence of other photographers from competing agencies at the scene of the event that might load a possible scene with newsworthiness. In that sense, the event at 'Nahal Oz' might demonstrate the unique relationships between the different photographers: they are competing photographers who work for competing agencies; they struggle over the ideal spot to take their pictures from; they are highly sensitive for their colleagues' motion on the scene, worried whether they would accidentally miss the decisive moment; they compete over their pictures' time of publishing and often comment (disrespectfully, in this case) on their colleagues' 'picture of the event'.

Yet as much as they compete with each other, they also share mutual respect and are also close friends. That is why they exchange information at the scenes and sit together at the same coffee house once they have collectively agreed that it is, in fact, the best place to send their pictures from. It is that relationship between the photographers- friends and rivals- that binds them as part of an occupational community: a pack of lonely wolves fed by each other throughout the production routine in order to defeat their colleagues with the quality of their products, their quick execution and distribution.

A similar complex relationship is also demonstrated by the photographer's willingness to use an 'external eye' during the editing process, which is taken by the

---

<sup>610</sup> Katz, E. & Dayan, D. (1985) Media Events: On the Experience of not Being there. In: Religion 15(3): P. 305-314.



photographer as innocent, unbiased, detached from the event and without a hidden agenda, unlike his fellow photographers.<sup>611</sup> It is also the stranger's eye to which the pictures are addressed; the consumer that is given the position of an external editor, and one whose final choice represents the audiences' taste. Both relationships- between photographers and between external participants- are therefore good examples of the production cycle's open routine at the very early moments of production: one entwined with parallel external circles of production and practices of consumption in a relationship of cause and effect.<sup>612</sup>

Both the act of photography and the sending process show the effect of technical limitations on production. Capturing the splash of fire coming out of the cannons' barrel forces the photographer to release the shutter in a fraction of a second. Since the act of firing is faster than releasing the shutter in the camera, the chances of capturing the splash of fire with a set of a few pictures taken by the photographer (when the shutter is released separately in each) are extremely low. And he also has to substantially decrease his shutter's speed in the hope that it is 'caught' in one of them.

A long exposure in a digital camera enables the photographer to take approximately 20 pictures in 3-4 seconds in a rate of 5-6 frames per second. Using an analogue camera enables the photographer to take the same number of pictures (or more, depending on the length of the film), yet in a slower rate of approximately 3-4 frames per second. Using a digital camera the speed is doubled, enabling new possibilities to capture such unique fractions of time with the help of digital technology (those fractions have now 'stretched'). It is this special capacity of digital

---

<sup>611</sup> Sometimes, when there are no other options, he uses the 'eye' of a fellow photographer, but usually tries to avoid it ("they were at the event. They are too involved...").

<sup>612</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg. Checking whether the picture was published in the 'Yahoo' website is, of course, another example of the production process' circularity- a process in which news pictures are products at its end, but *return* in their 'final' form as feedback to the photographer in the field (as discussed earlier in chapter 4 with pictures that have '*returned*').

photography that provides a greater arsenal of pictures to choose from later on, and which gives better control over time. Now the firing picture is a 'pictorial shock'- a 'rare' surprise- where the extraordinary movement of fire is caught, and it is one which cannot be frozen by the human eye.<sup>613</sup>

With the help of the computerised editing tools, the editing process becomes diverse and allows a greater range of options. Using Photoshop, the photographer may 're-design' the limitations of time and space, liberate his pictures from their realistic constraints, and therefore create a 'new document'.<sup>614</sup> However, during the editing process the photographer avoids making 'meaningful' changes in the 'original' document. Then, the process of editing mixes different dimensions of aesthetics and news, of photography and journalism: the photographer's first obligation is to preserve the photographed- its analogical perfection (as a photographer, as a journalist).<sup>615</sup> The act of editing, then, is taken by the photographer as a way of getting the photograph 'closer' to the photographed reality by erasing the noise which disturbs its lucid mediation. At the same time, while carefully trying to preserve the 'realistic' borders of the picture (is the field in the photographs' depth more 'real' than its dirt?), the photographer uses digital editing technologies in order to improve the picture's aesthetics, for it is the dirt that 'stains' its aesthetic beauty.

Here is photography's 'magic' in its digital form revealed in the early production moments of news pictures: using digital technologies (both in the process

---

<sup>613</sup> Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography. London: Fontana. P. 32. With such a prestige denotation, this unique photograph allows the photographer to elusively conceal his preparations for such a complicated scene of recording as well (Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31. P. 21).

<sup>614</sup> Robins, K. (1995) Will Image move us still?. In: Lister, M. (ed) The Photographic Image in Digital Culture. London and New York: Routledge. P. 29-49. Robins is concerned with conceptualizing new ways of vision, offering a more relevant cultural and political location for what is assumed by many as the 'post-photographic era'.

<sup>615</sup> As a photojournalist he sees the picture as a 'perfect *analogon* of reality'- a '*message without a code*' (Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31. P. 17. Italics in origin).

of shooting and editing), the photograph's body is cut by the photographer with a scalpel; he touches its delicate secret particles and thus shatters its mystery (as was perceived once in its analogue form), but at the same time gives birth to a new document in the form of the digital image.<sup>616</sup> To the eyes of the photographer, the new document is now 'improved'- fixed by digital editing technology- and therefore functions better aesthetically and is more newsworthy.<sup>617</sup>

'Atmosphere pictures' and 'the picture of the event' are good examples of how Reuters copes with stock agencies and their competition. If in the past Reuters photographers looked for that one picture from an event, they are now delivering many more pictures: firstly, because it is cheaper (a memory card contains a much larger amount of pictures than film and can also be used time and time again). Pictures on a memory card can be erased and added without the additional cost of film. Secondly, news agencies attempt to enter the vast market of stock photography by pushing some of the pictures to different non-news magazines and supply more pictures per event to the news papers around the world, as clarified by the photographer's idea of 'atmosphere pictures'-

"...atmosphere pictures are less strong, less 'hard news'. They are used to decorate the event...there are some magazines or news papers that are not interested with the trivial picture [the picture of the event], and will therefore use other pictures from the event. Besides, the pictures often appear as part of articles, and then the picture of the

---

<sup>616</sup> Frosh, P. (2000) The Image Factory: Stock Photography, Cultural Production and the Image Repertoire. PhD, Jerusalem: Hebrew University.

<sup>617</sup> This is also a good place to mention another interesting point: the stains in the picture are not caused by the camera, but are rather marks on a document created by the photographer. Addressing the marks as signatures of the camera and not his own, the photographer reveals an interesting relationship he has with his camera, and one which seems to serve his journalistic practice. For, as a journalist, he does not violate the objective codes dictated to him by his profession. It is only the camera that created the stains and therefore interfered with his journalistic work (see for this discussion Schwartz, D. (1999) Objective Representation: Photographs as Facts. In: Brennen, B. & Hardt, H. (eds) Picturing the Past :Media, History and Photography. Chicago: Illinois, University Press. P. 158-181).

event might appear on the front page, and along the article there will be other pictures from the same event.”<sup>618</sup>

As pictures addressed to magazines and different papers, for front pages and alongside articles, atmosphere pictures must be versatile in nature and should be easily decontextualized from their frames of time and place, only to be plugged in a variety of platforms by their users. They are aimed at a wider circle of clients from news, and should be slippery by nature in order to become stripped from their newsworthiness (if it is found necessary by their users) in their moments of execution early at the scenes of events.<sup>619</sup>

When a wide and diversified collection of pictures from each event is aimed at a wide and diversified circle of clients other than news and delivered by Reuters' photographers, boundaries of photography genres collapse. Photojournalism appears not as an autonomic unit of operations but rather a colour in the palette of photography, revealed as a complex site of visual signification.<sup>620</sup> Then, photography exists as a rainbow of genres- with news, and art, and advertising interwoven together with their audiences and additional forms of visual representation at key moments.

However, the picture of the event might represent the opposite process. For the production process of a sole picture representing the entire event points towards a process of differentiation- placing the news picture within highly strict boundaries of time and place. These boundaries define the news event's unique status of singularity, and its 'picture of the event' as its sole unique representative- a unique evidence of an

---

<sup>618</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, a record of a conversation, 2006.

<sup>619</sup> However, it should be mentioned that the number of pictures sent from each event is not a fixed number and may often change in a decision made by the chief of the department. The former chief, for example, told his photographers they should get the picture of the event and no more than 2-3 additional pictures. The acting chief during my observations, however, asked for a greater number of pictures from each event.

<sup>620</sup> Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of Photographic Styles. New York: Holmes and Meier.

event of 'here and now' that is never again.<sup>621</sup> With both 'atmosphere pictures' and the 'picture of the event' in mind, the production process is taken as a dialectic one. For it is part of a wider regime of signification and therefore affected by all genres of photography. And at the same time a unique process- one like no other- responsible for the production of rare visual documents, of news in its photographic form.

This dialectic relationship gets an additional meaning through the production of the 'picture of the event' executed in a local surrounding and aimed- in its final form- for the eyes of an international audience. As a result, it requires a high level of local orientation and cultural knowledge, putting the photographer's cultural identity into play at the privileged moments of production- whether as an Israeli, a journalist working for an international news agency or both.<sup>622</sup>

In addition, many of the photographers working for Reuters in Jerusalem are Israelis who have served as soldiers in the past.<sup>623</sup> They can, therefore, find common ground in conversation with the soldiers at the scene easily, and their informal language becomes their ticket to enter the event as participant observers. Familiar with the particular meanings of different army expressions- the hidden codes and innuendoes, the language and habit of soldiers- they can enter smoothly into the soldiers' space as if they were unnoticed, and turn their appearance from complete strangers into allies.<sup>624</sup>

---

<sup>621</sup> Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography. London: Fontana. Now it also belongs to that unique genre of photojournalism- both visually and as news evidence in its photographic form.

<sup>622</sup> Its code of connotation depends not only on the reader's language, but on a shared one between the potential reader (the soldiers at the scene, in this case) and the photographer at the early moments of execution (Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31).

<sup>623</sup> The army service is mandatory in Israel for a minimum of three years for men (two for women) once turning eighteen years old. And it was (and, in a way, still is) often considered as a consensual 'circle of silence' when one looks for a job in Israel. If dismissed from the army service for any reason, it may very well affect the process of job applications and become a 'stain' on one's CV.

<sup>624</sup> Israeli soldiers often use the expression 'yeziot' (going out) in Hebrew, for instance, which- in army slang- is used to describe their weekly vacations. A foreigner who did not serve the army and is not

The soldiers' behaviour demonstrates how well they are with journalism. They are aware of being subjects of a news coverage ("you are working for who...where is it going to be published?"), and are familiar with their social obligations and responsibilities (as can be demonstrated by the commander's approval for their presence at the scene). Here is the civil contract of news in its photographic form: photographers turn into soldiers and the soldiers into journalists.<sup>625</sup>

The new virtual space signifies the merger of two completely separate occupational communities- soldiers and photojournalists- as members of one local community in which both the soldiers and the photographers cooperate and share their professional knowledge and authority at key moments of production. Yet, at the same time, the photographer is sharing an additional space- one which exceeds the boundaries of the local. Thus, when he begins sending the pictures, for example, he is acutely aware of how late it is for international deadlines. He has no time to waste, for he must send his pictures before the deadlines around the world pass; he has to compete locally with his fellow photographers to be the first to send his pictures, and internationally in order to make the deadlines around the world on time.

Torn between his national and professional identities, the photographer then struggles over the pictures' various levels of objectivity: he is obligated to his journalistic professional conduct (and thus avoids making 'forbidden' changes during the process of editing). And he is also obligated to a 'higher' level of objectivity- on international scale- for he is a photographer who works for an international news agency (and thus selects internationally appealing pictures on the account of others).

---

familiar with such meanings would probably not understand the hidden codes for the expression and might find it difficult to participate, as is the case with the word 'mishcholet'(cleaning rod) and its deeper cultural meanings.

<sup>625</sup>Azoulay, A. (2008) The civil contract of photography. New York: Zone books.

That is why, for instance, when asked why the picture of the group of soldiers pulling a cleaning rod through the barrel of one of the cannons is not acceptable, he explains that one of the soldiers seems to be smiling. The so-called smile, then, immediately makes the picture unreliable and could be interpreted in the light of indexical objectivity (was the picture altered by the photographer, making the soldier seem as



*Soldiers pulling a cleaning rod through a cannon's barrel (Israel, Nahal Oz 3/11/05).*

if he was smiling, or was he really smiling?), and a representational one (if he was smiling, does his smile represent the event as a whole?).

It is his national identity that is immediately also in play: a smiling Israeli soldier preparing a cannon to fire at Gaza may represent the Israeli soldiers as having the upper hand, and may carry political meanings as part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict- a kind of representation which might sabotage the neutrality required from an international agency (the agency cannot afford to be represented as taking sides in

the conflict). Or, if he decides to spike the picture, the Israeli photographer may be seen as unwilling to take part in the production of a 'bad' representation of his country (now the smiling soldier represents the vicious Israeli army in act of combat).

The captions are also required to represent the picture verbally but need to be written in an international language- forcing the photographer to write in 'perfect' English, checking his spelling.<sup>626</sup> Writing his captions the 'right' way, the photographer adjusts his writing skills to a 'higher level'- an international style (both in the use of the English language, and Reuters' 'high' standards of English writing style). It is then an event that occurs in a local setting, but its visual coverage is aimed at an international market; it is a 'glocal' exemplar of constant conflicts between different dimensions of place and space, nation and profession.

These conflicts are visually represented in the 'picture of the event' itself: with the sunset in the background, minutes before the night falls, a cannon appears while firing. The fire splashed from the cannon's barrel is emphasized thanks to the darkness around it. The firing is aimed nowhere and beyond the picture's frame, with city lights at the distance but away from the aim of the cannon, which empty the picture of its conflict context. It almost implies that the firing is not aimed towards a populated area (which, of course, it is).

Behind the cannon are the shadows of four soldiers (with helmets and weapons). They are looking straight at the cannon, but the dark space in between makes them appear slightly detached, as if they are in a different dimension from where the cannon is located. With the natural light and the picture's unique angle the lower part of the frame turns black, loading the actual place in which the firing event

---

<sup>626</sup> Of course, captions never simply represent the visual, and the words in captions can never 'duplicate' the image. This will be further discussed in the analysis of the second event (see Barthes, R. (1977) *The Photographic message*. In: Heath, S. (ed) *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-3. P. 26).



occurs with mystery and secrecy. Both the soldiers and the cannon are revealed only by their shadows, making it impossible to identify the cannon and its operators as part of a particular army or force based only on the visual elements. The fire splashed out of the cannon's barrel could be from anywhere, aimed towards any place in front of the eyes of soldiers from any army standing on a mysterious field.

The picture's aesthetics gives a sense of 'universality' - it is *dislocated*, can be easily recontextualised, and is therefore perfect for multiple uses. It is a local event visually packaged with universality; a picture that has no face. It represents the existential dilemma embedded deep within the production processes of news pictures in an international news agency. It demonstrates the production of universal particularity, placing the picture and its processes of execution in an unstable space between the local and the international and between different genres of photography; it is both appealing internationally and yet tailored for the particular needs and



*A cannon firing in Nahal Oz (Israel, Nahal Oz 3/11/05)*

demands set by local news and non-news clients alike at the same time.<sup>627</sup>

This one picture shows the complex international process of news making. For it is a process responsible for the production of a unique form of photographed newsworthiness which exists everywhere as anywhere, aimed at anyone as everyone, at any time and any place. Its final outputs are both well known and are one of a kind- a timeless representation (and thus appropriate for a wide range of clients worldwide) and the face of real moments already gone that will never occur again. They are drained of place, floating in an unfamiliar space, and at the same time coerced to the boundaries of a unique and concrete one. They are the servants of the free market and its forces- both in their final form and along their moments of production- and yet constantly challenge the boundaries they meet.

## **7.2 Second event: Bombing near Tulkarem, December 2005**

At 13:00 the photographer gets a message at his beeper device, telling him of an explosion near the settlement Avnei Hefetz alongside the city of Tulkarem. The explosion was caused by an attack of a suicide bomber on his way to the centre of Israel who was stopped by an unexpected IDF barrier. It is approximately a 40 minute drive to the area of Tulkarem from the city of Modi'in, where the photographer lives, and he tells me about the event on his way to the scene. Arriving at the scene a half an hour later, I identify him and other media representatives detained at an IDF barrier located 200 meters from the scene. Since media representatives arrived fast, it appears as if they are detained just so that security forces would enter first in order to keep the scene sterile, but the photographers do not seem to approve. With the crowd creating a

---

<sup>627</sup> Robertson, R. (1992) Globalization, social theory and Global Culture. London: Sage.

certain chaos and confusion, the photographers take it at their advantage and advance towards the scene by foot.

On their way, they encounter an army vehicle in which a Major- Arabic in origin- forbids to go any further. One of the photographers- of Arabic origin as well- starts a conversation in Arabic with the Major, apparently trying to talk his way through, but it makes the other photographers furious (“he thinks that if he is an Arab they will let him go through...” says one of them out loud). The Major drives away and the photographers continue their short journey. In a matter of minutes we are all picked up by a minivan- probably intended to transport media representatives- and arrive at the scene.

I recognize the military and the police as they gather around the central spot: a number of soldiers under the command of their colonel, soldiers from the dead officer’s platoon and representatives from ZAKA, MADA, the division of identification and forensic science and the Israeli police.<sup>628</sup> There are many media representatives: photographers and TV crews, and reporters from both the local news outlets and from the major international news agencies. Once arriving at the scene the photographer encounters M., another Reuters photographer who lives nearby and was the first on the spot. The two exchange information about the event and the photographer understands that M. forgot his laptop at home while rushing to the scene of events. M. is immediately sent by the photographer (the veteran) to the Reuters office in Jerusalem with his pictures. He then explains to me that since M. was the first on the spot, he might have some rare pictures and it is extremely important these are sent right away. Besides, once the event is over, he would then start sending his

---

<sup>628</sup> ZAKA (‘Zihui Korbanot Ason’ meaning ‘Disaster Victim Identification’) is a voluntary orthodox Jewish organization often helping security forces at the scenes of disasters. Its main role is to identify victims and arrange for their proper Jewish burial, and its volunteers (mostly orthodox jews) are often the ones who collect the body parts from the different scenes when needed. MADA (Magen David Adom) is the Israeli paramedic organization.

pictures and by then M. would probably make it to the office, so they would probably not lose valuable time at all.

Talking to one of the soldiers from the IDF press unit, the photographers are briefed in detail about the event: the suicide bomber hid in a yellow taxi on his way to the centre of Israel. During the journey, the taxi was stopped by an unexpected army barrier under the command of an IDF officer from the 'Shimshon' regiment. The soldiers from the patrol ordered the civilians in the taxi to get out in order to check their identification certificates, and then the suicide bomber set off his device, creating a major explosion in which the officer and the bomber were killed, and two Israeli soldiers and a number of Palestinian civilians were injured. The massive explosion severely damaged the taxi and its surroundings. The body of the suicide bomber lay just near the taxi, and approximately 20 meters ahead a group of soldiers had already started to pick up the injured soldiers' gear. A few meters ahead, a line of kneeling soldiers with white gloves picking what appears to be the small body parts of the dead officer. Given the vast destruction, the major scene was divided into three small ones: the first surrounded the taxi and the body of the suicide bomber, the second with the injured soldiers' gear and the third with the line of soldiers picking the dead officer's body parts.

There is confusion at the scene and the photographers are not focused and highly stressed. They all fear of missing the 'picture of the event', but given it is a major event, quick action is of great importance. As a result, and since the scene is no longer a one big scene but rather three small ones, they all move slowly as a cluster, trying to carefully analyse the event and its pictorial potential. After a while, they separate to the different scenes. Within an hour they all decide to leave and agree to

meet at 'Mifgash Hashalom', a gas station and a coffee house located nearby, for the editing and sending process.

Although they seemed stressed at the scene, the photographers seem relaxed throughout the sending process and gladly cooperate with one another. So much so, that the three agency photographers who were present at the scene (Reuters, EPA and a local newspaper photographer who sells his pictures to AP) are even thinking out loud, working on their captions ("what is the soldiers' unit?... who was the officer that died?..."). Throughout the sending process the photographer shows me his 'picture of the event': it is a picture of a line of kneeling soldiers at the depth of the picture and a close up of one of them at the front, as they scour the ground for the body parts of their fellow dead officer. During the editing, the photographer explains that in such events it is important to send the pictures in a highly organized manner. The agency's procedure is that in 'big' events all the photographers send their pictures to the office in Jerusalem. Then, after being carefully selected and filtered, and according to the chief photographer's decision, they would be sent to Singapore. In addition, at events such as these the agency might also purchase pictures, and therefore it is very important to organize the pictures at the local bureau first before sending them to Singapore.

Since his pictures are not sent to Singapore, the photographer adds a short 'one line' caption. The editor in the office, so he says, would make the captions 'thicker' and then send them on. In addition, he tells me the 'big events' procedure by which the pictures are sent to the local bureau first is not always good practice, since he is the one at the scene and he is better at choosing the best pictures from the event than the editor in the office. But this is how they work and, of course, he plays it as he is

told. Within a half an hour from the moment we sat at the coffee house, and after sending 12 pictures from the event, we are ready to leave.

A scene in which a suicide bomber attacked is a good example of an exceptional news event which requires the agency's unique set of considerations and regulations. Being an act of 'terror', its news value is immediately empowered: it is a direct consequence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and thus part of the main 'story' covered here by the agency. In addition, it involves the killing of an Israeli officer and the Palestinian suicide bomber, and the injury of several Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians. At the attempt to cope with these unique newsworthy circumstances, Reuters was forced to send a photographer to the scene, but it also demonstrates the different limitations affecting the daily work of the local bureau in Israel.

Employing 15 photographers operating in the state of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, the daily filtering of the news events is an important task. Whenever 'big' events occur (a suicide bombing, for instance), they are covered first, and their coverage requires a quick and spontaneous reorganization of the 'coverage areas'- often on the expense of covering different events in other scenes. Therefore, since the photographer is the one who usually covers the areas of both north and central Israel, he was sent to the scene, even though it was 40 minute drive from his location to where the event took place. His presence at the scene eliminates his availability for covering other events; it may force the agency to use free lance photographers for any other events worth covering simultaneously. A 'big' event, therefore, calls for adjustments to be made by the agency on the spot- to create the most 'stable' social arrangements available (shifting a photographer to a distant spot) in order to cope

with such an unpredicted event. And these are based on its unique circumstances, level of importance (it has to be prioritised as a big spot news event, and therefore typified as important for coverage) and the bureaus' allocating limitations. Here again news is the result of functional considerations and allocating limitations dictated by the news organization's need for routine, so that it can handle unexpected events.<sup>629</sup>

Big events immediately turn the scene itself into a perfect setting for competition between agencies' photographers over exclusive coverage. When the two Reuters photographers meet at the scene, for example, they immediately focus on the possibility that the first to arrive might have taken some exclusive pictures. M. is then being rushed to the office, if only to get the Reuters pictures exclusively published on the expense of the competitors'. In big events, rare pictures taken before any other photographers were present may become valuable and give Reuters advantage over its rivals.

The cooperation between the two Reuters photographers demonstrates the hierarchal relationship between the department's practitioners: the inexperienced photographer becomes the senior photographer as he is the first at the scene, and then pushed back to his lower status once the veteran photographer arrives. Cooperation between Reuters photographers at a certain event does not happen very often. Usually photographers find themselves alone at the scenes of events, with no other fellow agency's photographers in sight, unless they are sent to cover 'big' events of which their coverage is planned in advance, or just by coincidence.<sup>630</sup>

---

<sup>629</sup> Tuchman, G. (1973), "Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected", In: American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 79(1), P. 110-131.

<sup>630</sup> The elections day, for example, was another event in which two of Reuters photographers were present at the Labour party house. However, unlike the cooperation observed at the scene near Tulkarem, the Reuters photographers were working then side by side in order to cover as much space as possible at the event.

This unique meeting redefines the professional boundaries of the agency's photographers and authorities: the young photographer (arriving first at the scene) is again reduced to second in command once the senior photographer arrives, and the latter becomes the only authority at the spot once the inexperienced photographer is sent to Jerusalem. Operating far from the office and often on their own, photographers are small, autonomous organizational units at the scenes of events- mini-organizations detached from their 'mother ship'- and slightly bigger ones when they encounter other fellow agency's photographers.<sup>631</sup> Seniority plays an important role throughout the execution of pictures at the scene. Operating independently in the field, the photographers have more liberty to pursue coverage as they see fit. Yet even though they seem to run their own routine at the scenes, they are always a part of a greater system with strict rules and regulations- a concrete organization in which the photographers play only a small part at key moments and sites along a great and magnificently oiled line of production.

The photographers' dual organizational identity- as autonomous organizations in the field and as part of a greater organizational system of operations at the same time- implies of a great battle over identity that comes to its peak throughout the execution of the 'picture of the event': in the divided scene, the photographer chooses to focus on the group of soldiers picking the body parts of their fellow officer. One of the soldiers kneels in his search for body parts. He does not carry a weapon and wears a pair of white gloves; another pair falls from his right pocket. He holds a white plastic bag with the Hebrew initials "Number...date...team...catalogue number" printed on it. Underneath, the Hebrew letter (צ) is printed as well, indicating that the

---

<sup>631</sup> The Reuters photographer plays a number of roles simultaneously: a photographer, an editor, a driver and a technician. And I was often told that such a responsibility on a daily basis is extremely difficult, and that there are major implications on the quality of pictures taken in the field, having to constantly shift between such roles.



bag is army property.<sup>632</sup> Behind him his fellow soldiers are lined up, kneeling as well; their weapons are on their backs, they wear white gloves and hold similar white plastic bags.



*Israeli soldiers picking body parts near the city of Tulkarem (Israel, 29/12/06)*

The angle from which the picture was taken invites the viewer to take part in the macabre process- his gaze is kneeled to the soldiers' height, to their line of sight. The close-up of the soldier at the front, empowered now by the far line of his fellow soldiers at the back, shatters the boundaries between the viewer and the distant soldiers; he now shares their experience. The Hebrew writing on the plastic bags (צבאי and מקט) immediately identifies that these are IDF's property. Lined up at the depth, their kneeling identifies their act as an IDF's and therefore local (as Israeli soldiers often do during an act of 'picking' of some sort.<sup>633</sup>)

<sup>632</sup> The circled Hebrew letter צ is a well known sign of the IDF initials for צבאי ('Army property').

<sup>633</sup> מקט is the Hebrew initials for מספר קטלוגי ('catalogue number'). The act of soldiers lining up is a familiar military act (also known as יישוב קו - an expression often used within IDF combat units

Then, when all of these signs are gathered into a collection of contradicting elements, the power of the picture is suddenly revealed: the soldiers at the scene are not in combat- their weapons are on their backs and not at the front where they would be if preparing for battle or training, the soldier at the front has no weapon at all. Their kneeling makes their posture different, not 'army like' and thus disturbing. Instead of weapons they are holding white plastic bags which seem very similar to garbage bags. Their white colour loads the situation with awkwardness, and contrasts with the soldiers' olive green uniform. It drains the 'combat like' quality of the event (it is emphasized by the helmets on their heads and the armed vest worn by the soldier at the front, suggesting that they are, in fact, present at a hostile environment). The white bags- visually connected now to the white gloves- change the soldiers' act into an almost sterilized, delicate medical act in a hospital rather than a 'soiled' one.

Between the soldier at the front and the group at the back the ground is covered with tiny pieces. These pieces would be picked up by the soldiers as they progress. The pieces' small size is now loaded with awe by the size of the plastic bags, suggesting that a horrifying act has taken place. There is meat and there is blood; it is a 'bad' death (a 'public' violent one and thus highly newsworthy), and the photograph as a news document is there to cleanse it all.<sup>634</sup> The combination between the writing on the bags and the fragments of a person to be collected adds another tragic dimension. For the same pieces would eventually be placed inside the bags and categorised by the date of picking, the picking team and their catalogue number, as if it were some military gear eventually placed in the army's warehouse.

---

describing the act of lining up) used as the best way to pick or look for something on the ground, covering a certain area with a group of soldiers.

<sup>634</sup> And it is 'hot' as well- both as meat and as news information (Seaton, J. (2005) Carnage and the Media: The making and breaking of news about violence. London: Penguin).

Yet the horror reflected from the picture is not, by any means, shared by all people; the visual signifiers are 'localised' in certain parts of the analogon, and its (full) reading therefore requires a particular knowledge of the world from its readers.<sup>635</sup> Lining-up as did the soldiers in the picture is a well familiar act embedded deep within the daily routines of Israeli combat units (a familiar drill in order to pick up 'leftovers' in the field, for instance.<sup>636</sup>) The Hebrew letter (צ) on the bag indicates that it is IDF's property, and the initials are a part of a familiar written and spoken IDF jargon loaded with additional meanings known only to Israeli soldiers, or those who served the Israeli army in their past.<sup>637</sup> The olive coloured uniforms are IDF's and are proudly presented with the close-up of the soldier at the front.

He wears a pair of red shoes, informing the 'Israeli' viewer that he might be a paratrooper and thus load the picture with the weight of historical significance: an Israeli paratrooper- a mythical symbol of strength and the greatness of the Israeli army along what is described in the Israeli history books as 'the wars of Israel'- is now kneeling without a weapon.<sup>638</sup> He gazes submissively at the asphalt road as he collects the body parts of his fellow officer. Now he is no longer just a soldier (he never was), but the symbol of tragedy and bravery at the same time: his posture symbolises the defeat of the Israeli army by enemy malice and the forces of terror, and yet an army with high values and outstanding norms, having its own soldiers as

---

<sup>635</sup> See Barthes' idea of 'cognitive' connotation (Barthes, R. (1977) *The Photographic message*. In: Heath, S. (ed) *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31. P. 29).

<sup>636</sup> Serving as a combat soldier in the past, I remember how me and my fellow soldiers had to line up throughout our shooting practices as an act of safety. Once a shooting practice had ended, we all lined up to pick the empty shells, and it was always used as the quickest way to pick garbage and clean a certain area.

<sup>637</sup> In the spoken IDF jargon, for instance, it may come up as a question "where is the צ?", searching for a certain catalogue number printed on some military equipment (often with certain sensitivity) such as a compass or a weapon of some sort.

<sup>638</sup> For many Israelis, paratroopers are often associated with the 'liberation' of Jerusalem during the 'Six days war' in 1967. Since then, they have gained a mythical status of 'the greatest of worriers' in Israeli society. In many ways, and thanks to their mythical status, Israeli Paratroopers are still considered as one of the most prestigious regiments in the IDF.

top priority- whether dead or alive (now the act of the soldiers as a group represents military solidarity, having the IDF set of values as its code of honour.<sup>639</sup>) Finally, it is the act of collecting the body parts which exceeds the hands of the soldiers. For it is not only an act solely maintained by Israeli soldiers, but rather an act of god, forcing the soldiers given their Jewish origin. They have to collect the body parts of the dead and bring them to a proper burial not only as part of an army routine, but as part of the Jewish tradition.<sup>640</sup>

However, the picture's local origin is also empowered by the activation of a different news picture from the past, used here as an intertext. In 2004 Barkai Wolfson, an Israeli photographer working for the local Israeli news paper 'Maariv', was given access to join IDF forces on their way to the 'Philadelphi rout'.<sup>641</sup> This was just a few days after 13 Israeli soldiers were killed and an armoured vehicle was destroyed in an explosion of a road side bomb detonated upon an IDF patrol in the area. Wolfson was the first photographer to take a picture of Israeli soldiers digging in the sand, searching for the body parts of the dead soldiers, and his picture immediately became famous. It was published in all the Israeli newspapers and was also awarded first place at the annual 'local testimony' competition that year.<sup>642</sup>

Read together, Wolfson's picture might be interpreted as a basic intertext *misread* by the Reuters photographer in an attempt to imbue his picture's local

---

<sup>639</sup> The small body parts on the picture now colour the forces of terror with a sense of 'third-world barbarism' as opposed to the Israeli forces and their 'first-world' civilised behaviour, as delivered through the 'first-world' eyes (Pedelty, M. (1995) War stories: the culture of foreign correspondents. London: Routledge.)

<sup>640</sup> In Judaism, the act of carrying body parts is described as a commandment based on the writings of the Rambam. This is also the reason why the act of picking body parts in the different scenes is pursued by ZAKA, where most of its volunteers are orthodox Jews.

<sup>641</sup> The Philadelphi rout separates between Gaza and Egypt. The rout was conceived as a sensitive one by the Israeli government, and was therefore monitored by the IDF. Since the disengagement of Israeli settlements from Gaza at 2005 it is no longer at the hands of the Israeli forces, and is now monitored by the state of Egypt.

<sup>642</sup> The 'local testimony' competition takes place once a year amongst Israeli news photographers. It is not considered to be a highly important event among the Israeli public, and not a significant one among local news photographers, although the winners do receive a certain amount of respect from their colleagues.

particularity.<sup>643</sup> At the front of the picture, a group of soldiers crawling in the sand in the search for body parts using their bare hands. Wolfson's choice of a high angle makes the soldiers appear lower than the camera's lens and thus belittles their presence. As a result, Wolfson detaches himself from the group- he is a neutral news photographer shooting Israeli soldiers.



Israeli soldiers picking body parts near the Philadelphi route (Barkai Wolfson, Israel 13/5/04)

Opposed to his angle, and as a demonstration of intertextual struggle, the Reuters photographer stares right at his subjects- he places his camera at their line of sight, kneels as if he was one of them and gazes at his friends in the act. Wolfson's soldiers are crawling in the sand and their act seems impossible and thus ridiculous: their weird walk and the way they turn the sand make them seem ludicrous, belittled, and identifies the situation as a senseless performance. Some are crawling and some

<sup>643</sup> Bloom, H. (1975) A Map of Misreading, London: Oxford UP.

are standing, their appearance is 'sloppy', their form is broken. The solid line of their movement is shattered and out of order, as if their act is wildly done. Reuters' soldiers, on the other hand, kneel and yet seem as if almost standing: they are all lined up and identical in uniform. They are wearing white gloves, and their sleeves are tight. There is discipline, and it is strongly felt by the presence of the soldier at the front: his shirt is placed on his body with straight lines, as if it was recently ironed. His shoes are strongly tied and his vest wonderfully fit- as a combat soldier 'should' look like, as appropriate to the delicate event he is part of. He stands as a magnified exemplar for the groups' appearance

Wolfson documents a matter of great confusion: his soldiers turn the sand as if their act is primal, un-regulated. The body parts- if found in the sand- would be gathered individually in any available container traced at the scene (in their pockets? perhaps just with their bare hands?); now it seems as if they are searching for some kind of objects lost in the sand, now the body parts are things at the end of an objectifying process- from living human organs to a pile of silent particles. The act of the soldiers in the Reuters picture, on the other hand, seems part of a strictly orchestrated operation: their straight line, the gloves and the white plastic bags given to them in advance indicate that they are following certain procedures (perhaps even written ones) for such horrifying events. The white gloves imply a medical, delicate act- this is an act of the living. The white plastic bags (perhaps produced especially for these kind of events) demonstrate the sanctity of the situation; it is a gentle matter and should therefore be kept as cleanse and sterile as it possibly can.



And so, with the help of the intertextual dialogue and based on their visual similarities and contradictions, both pictures are representatives of an endless conflict and negotiation: the undisciplined movement of the soldiers, their sloppy uniforms, the high angle and their unregulated search in the endless sand load Wolfson's picture with a sense of defeat. His confused soldiers represent a weak army, out of order; they crawl like defeated animals searching the body parts of their fellow soldiers who were killed in a horrifying explosion. Their faces are pointed at the ground- they are faceless, and they are silent. The Reuters picture can be seen as a misreading of Wolfson's, although not as the means of draining the picture from its local colours, but rather by glorifying its sense of particular place and belonging: the well organized routine, the soldiers' neat appearance and the close-up of the one at the front load the picture with a scent of a particular personality and therefore one begging for empathy.

In contrast to Wolfson's picture, the other photo documents heroism- it is visual evidence of an army who leaves no one behind and of sanctity. It is not simply a military assignment of collecting body parts, searching for them on the ground, but rather a mission of gathering the particles of the living; now the gaze is pointed up above as if it were a religious act of some sort. As such, they require the use of extraordinary containers in which they would be placed in and delicate tools to gather them with- medical, pure and virginal like the rubber white gloves and the white



plastic bags. Then their white colour loads the event with a sense of sanctity and purity. Then the Reuters photographer is a Jewish- Israeli, and his picture is from 'here'- it is a picture of 'Jewish-Israeli' origin. Its visual elements are now the footprints revealing the photographer's local identity, inviting only a selective group of spectators- a Jewish-Israeli audience of viewers- to participate in a privileged dialogue through which their cultural identities is eventually moulded.

'Inviting' the picture from 2004 as an intertext is then necessary in order to 'fill in the gaps' within the pictorial text.<sup>644</sup> Discussed as a creative text that exists as part of a dynamic and creative system of production, the Reuters picture is interwoven with all the creative forces surrounding it (the Reuters picture, read now with the help of the intertextual exchange, would also allow for a closer reading of Wolfson's picture taken here as an intertext.<sup>645</sup>) It becomes a reaction of a combination of forces- an outcome of a unique relationship (whether in the form of struggle or acceptance) with different texts.<sup>646</sup> Then the 'new' picture- it is now a revision of the 'old' one- becomes an expression of a 'misreading'.<sup>647</sup>

However, the struggle discussed here is, by no means, a matter of big artists against giant ones from their past, and thus one which represents their Bloomian anxiety, but over the territory of place and belonging: representing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the eyes of the Reuters photographer, it is a rare document

---

<sup>644</sup> Perminger, A. (2001) Intertextuality and the work of François Truffaut. PhD, Tel Aviv: University of Tel Aviv. P. 4. [Hebrew]. My translation. Perminger addresses intertextuality in cinematic texts and makes a distinction between cinematic intertextuality and intertextuality in film. Nonetheless, certain theoretical aspects within the intertextual discourse did seem appropriate here as well in order to supply an additional perspective for the picture's complete reading. Thus, the 'activation' of an intertext is seen essential here in order to 'complete' the semiotic analysis and therefore achieve a deeper reading of the 'activating' text. (See for that matter Riffaterre, M. (1990) Compulsory Reader Response: the Intertextual Drive, In: Worton, M. & Still, J. (Ed), Intertextuality- Theories and practices, Manchester: Manchester UP. P. 56-78).

<sup>645</sup> Perminger, A. (2001) Intertextuality and the work of François Truffaut. PhD, Tel Aviv: University of Tel Aviv. P. 4. [Hebrew].

<sup>646</sup> Bloom, H. (1975) A Map of Misreading, London: Oxford UP.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid.



visualizing the photographer's torn identity- a local photographer at the service of an international news agency. And whenever events are a matter of national security, the objective values required by his profession are overcome by his national sense of belonging. For it is then that he no longer serves simply as a photographer working for an international news agency, but rather a Jewish-Israeli one working for a foreign news agency. Now both communities- his occupational one and his national one- are entwined.<sup>648</sup>

This ongoing tension is also expressed by the transformation of the picture's caption as it is first sent from the field to the local bureau in Jerusalem, then to Singapore and finally published by one of the agency's clients. Written by the photographer in the field, the event carries a national connotation -

"Israeli soldiers search and collect part of the bodies of Israeli soldiers. December 29, 2005. REUTERS/... "

Apart from mentioning the Israeli soldiers searching for body parts, the bodies of the victims are given a nationality as well on the expense, to some extent, of some 'dry' informative details about the event itself (where and how the event occurred, for instance). A de-contextualization process is now in play: it was a one-time Israeli traumatic event in which Israeli soldiers took a substantial part in, and it is stripped from its historic significance as part of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian dispute. The text here is clearly detached from the image, and therefore, in a sense, one which 'produces an entirely new signified'.<sup>649</sup>

---

<sup>648</sup> Zelizer, B. (1993) Journalists as Interpretative Community. In: Critical Studies in Mass Communication 10: 219-237. See also Zandberg, E. & Neiger, M. (2005) Between the Nation and the Profession: Journalists as Members of Contradicting Communities. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 27(1): P. 131-141; Nossek, H. (2004) Our News and Their News. In: Journalism Vol. 5(3): P. 343- 368 & Liebes, T. (1992) Our War/ Their War: Comparing the Intifada and the Gulf War on US and Israeli Television. In: Critical Studies in Mass Communication 9(1): P. 44-55.

<sup>649</sup> Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31. P. 27.

Then, at the local office, some details are added and others are changed by the editor-

"Israeli soldiers collect and search for body parts following an explosion close to an army checkpoint near the West Bank city of Tulkarm, December 29, 2005."

With the help of the caption the picture becomes an international commodity, and it is placed in the wide context which might be sold to an international audience better: it is described as an explosion near a military barrier which took place near the city of Tulkarem. And yet the explosion has no 'face'; there is no sign of a suicide bomber, or the unexpected army barrier forcing the taxi to pull over (which apparently led to the explosion). Instead, it is an explosion (perhaps an accident?) which occurred when Israeli soldiers simply happened to be near.

Changing the words- from "search and collect part of the bodies" to "collect and search for body parts"- is probably done in order to maintain a 'proper' English style, and could therefore be easier to read and understand on international scale. The body parts have been stripped from their Israeli nationality, forcing the photographer's to hide again in the shadow, where it belongs, as required by the codes of his profession. For his choice of words (causing him to write in 'bad' English) would most certainly reveal his own nationality (an Israeli? a Palestinian?) and might even indicate of some political affiliation adapted by the local bureau.

Finally, the caption appears to be transformed one last time when the picture was published on the front page of the "Herald Tribune" the next morning -

**"Suicide bombing in Mideast-**

Israeli soldiers collecting and searching for body parts after an explosion close to an army checkpoint in the west bank on Thursday.

The army had been on high alert after reports that a suicide bomber was trying to enter Israel.”<sup>650</sup>

Now the text seems ‘closer’ to the image: its visual elements are shared with the verbal message, and “...the connotation of the language is ‘innocented’ through the photograph’s denotation”.<sup>651</sup> With the help of the caption, the document becomes a global sign: it reflects the Israeli-Palestinian conflict- one in which Israeli soldiers fight against an army of suicide bombers in the West Bank. And the vague explosion is now a deliberate action caused by an attack of a suicide bomber who tried to enter an Israeli territory. Now the picture and its caption are a visual-textual representation of a conflict in which both sides are sacrificing victims.

The picture made it to the front page of the ‘Herald Tribune’. On the left hand side of the front page it receives a status of factual information. The combination of the picture with the caption underneath treats the visual elements of the picture as obscure pieces of information explained by the text, and it is less obvious as opposed to other elements on the page (it is reduced in size and located on the left



Front page, *Herald Tribune* (30/12/06)

bottom of the page. The main picture is located at the top centre in twice its size). The black frame around both the picture and the caption separates it from other informational elements on the page and therefore empowers its awkwardness.<sup>652</sup>

<sup>650</sup> The picture’s caption as it was published on the front page of the ‘Herald Tribune’, 30/12/ 2006.

<sup>651</sup> Barthes, R. (1977) *The Photographic message*. In: Heath, S. (ed) *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31. P. 26.

<sup>652</sup> Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (1998) *Front Pages: (The Critical) Analysis of Newspaper Layout*. In: Bell, A. and Garrett, P. (eds) *Approached to Media Discourse*. London: Blackwell. P. 186-220.

It is a startling event (picking body parts is not something one encounters every day), and one which carries a powerful local scent. It is positioned second in importance, less than other more ‘comfortable’ events which had occurred in more ‘familiar’ places- the main picture in the centre in which the city of Florence is seen covered in snow, or the one of the head of the Italian bank in the centre- and are thus more easily read by an international audience.<sup>653</sup> And since the event represented by the picture is of such a strange event that it is difficult to understand only by its visual elements, its caption becomes inseparable to its decoding process, as if it were a comic strip.<sup>654</sup> Then, the picture and the caption transform into a combined system of visual and textual signs that needs an integrated reading.<sup>655</sup>

It is an inseparable synthesis of text and image in which the visual represents the *local* (and thus detached from the world of the international spectator), and the textual *international* and thus closer to it.<sup>656</sup> It is the visual-textual language of glocalization. Published on the front page of its client, the transformation is complete: from an unfamiliar immigrant and thus an irrelevant picture for an international circle of clients, it is now a well framed and thus grounded system of signs (visual-textual)

---

<sup>653</sup> In their analysis of front pages, Kress and Van Leeuwen point to the importance of the audience’s common cultural background. In this specific case, and since the “Herald Tribune” is distributed worldwide, it calls for an ‘international’ common background that is essential for the page’s unique reading. (Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (1998) *Front Pages: (The Critical) Analysis of Newspaper Layout*. In: Bell, A. and Garrett, P. (eds) *Approached to Media Discourse*. London: Blackwell. P. 186-220).

<sup>654</sup> Abbott, L. (1986) *Comic Art: Characteristics and Potentialities of a Narrative Medium*. In: *Journal of Popular Culture* 19(4) : P. 155-176.

<sup>655</sup> Barthes refers to them as two separate structures- the text and the image- requiring a complete reading of both separately in order to understand how they complement one another. Nonetheless, the text is seen here not simply as parasitic on the image and that which controls and comes to rationalise the image, as suggested by Barthes, but both structures are discussed here in a complex bidirectional relationship (Barthes, R. (1977) *The Photographic message*. In: Heath, S. (ed) *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31).

<sup>656</sup> Holtzman, A. (1997) *Literature and plastic art*. Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuhad and the Rabinovitz foundation for the arts. [Hebrew].

placed in a welcoming neighbourhood of signs on international scale (Herald tribune, front page).<sup>657</sup>

Once it is published, the photographer encounters his picture on the “Herald Tribune”’s front page, as would the audience of spectators, and so would his colleagues. A front page publication in a prestigious international news paper is evidence of the photographer’s success overseas (Reuters photographers often see their pictures published on local news papers, and when they get a picture published on an international paper it proves their work is appreciated abroad). The published picture becomes an incentive for the photographer and his colleagues. Once viewed by other personnel along the production line and beyond, it reasserts the Reuters brand as one with high quality standards- with its final outputs and its lines of production designed for perfection. It is therefore part of the organizational metta format of success- a sign among other signs bound together as a set of unwritten instructions to help reproduce successes and avoid failures.<sup>658</sup>

This set of instructions is ingrained as an essential learning process and part of the working experience acquired by the agency’s photographers, editors and managers working for the organization. They make up the organization's experience in producing success, to the cultural industry’s in which it operates and eventually to a cultural sense of comfort and confidence. And when the news picture is published (and is therefore successful), it becomes a form of existential security- a cultural mechanism through which the existential experience of the spectator is soothed.<sup>659</sup>

---

<sup>657</sup> The name of the paper (here it is the “Herald Tribune”) affects the reading of the photographic message as well, and adds to (or even sometimes completely changes) the meaning of the photograph (Barthes, R. (1977) *The Photographic message*. In: Heath, S. (ed) *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31).

<sup>658</sup> Frosh, P. (2003) *The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry*. London, New York: Berg.

<sup>659</sup> Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self- Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

For it is then that the horrifying visuals reflected from the picture of the searching soldiers (body parts scattered on an asphalt road, soldiers picking the body parts of their fellow officer) become a place for comfort, and one which "...delineates the dangerous territory outside order, and throws into sharp relief the proper limits of that which is ordered".<sup>660</sup>

### **7.3 Third event: The funeral of an Israeli officer, December 2005**

Prepared to leave the coffee house at 'Kfar Shalom' a few hours after the explosion near Tulkarem occurred, the photographer reminds me about the next day's event- the funeral of the Israeli officer who was killed in the explosion. That is, of course, if there are no other unpredictable events that take precedence tomorrow. The next morning we head towards the military cemetery located in the city of Haifa. The photographer asks around for the exact location and we arrive at 11:00 am. There is a huge crowd, and the ceremony is just about to begin. The photographer takes his two cameras and a hat, and as we enter the cemetery he joins a group of photographers standing right next to the officer's grave.

When the ceremony begins, the noise made by the huge crowd turns into the sound of tears and grieving. Covering an occasion such as this is demanding: the photographer and his colleagues are positioned very close to the dead officer's family, mourning the loss of their loved one. Behind the family there is a big group of people. It seems as if they do not approve of the photographers' work. Besides, a very strong sun light is thrown on the photographer's camera, and he blocks the sun with his left hand during the shoot, trying to control the amount of light needed for a successful

---

<sup>660</sup> Seaton, J. (2005) Carnage and the Media: The making and breaking of news about violence. London: Penguin. P. 32.

picture. A stranger complains to the photographer about where he is standing: trying to get a good spot, he stepped on one of the gravestones next to the officer's open grave. The photographer shifts immediately. A car stops at an inner road near the grave and out comes Ehud Barak- a 'family's friend', as some in the crowd whisper- although the photographers are not at all impressed by his presence.<sup>661</sup> Half an hour from the moment we arrived to the cemetery we are ready to leave the scene, and head towards a coffee house nearby.

On the way, the photographer describes the difficulties he encountered. Events like funerals, so he says, are highly sensitive but unfortunately happen quite often, and he has been sent to cover funerals numerous times in the past. Nonetheless, and even though he has gained a lot of experience, it is always hard and complicated every time. In order to get the perfect picture from this particular funeral he had to get extremely close to the grieving family and yet keep enough distance to be respectful, not to be too obvious, or vulgar, and minimize his already disturbing presence as much as possible. Once these kinds of events come to an end, he continues, he usually experiences enormous mental stress. For he feels for the families' grief but he is determined to excel in his job, and this specific funeral was extremely hard for him.

Throughout the editing process, the photographer claims he has many 'strong' pictures. Which ones should he submit? When asked why not send them all he declines ("it is unprofessional..."). Six 'extremely good' pictures are chosen out of a total 120 and are edited. I then interrupt by asking him about whether there is actually a good reason for editing, and he then explains briefly about the editing process: whatever it is that would be changed in the process of editing, so he says, is based

---

<sup>661</sup> Ehud Barak was the Israeli prime minister in 1999. In 2005, he tried to run again for the leadership of the Israeli labour party but dropped the race in the light of his weak showings at the polls and left politics to pursue his business career. In 2007 Barak went back to politics and is now acting as minister of defence.

only on what he sees in the field- different distortions caused by the camera and not because of the picture (he then shows me how, for instance, the soldiers' uniforms turned bluish instead of olive Green in one of the pictures). However, he would not hesitate to crop the picture- "framing it in a better way". Within an hour, and after sending six pictures to the office in Jerusalem, we are ready to leave.

News events such as the officer's funeral are the result of former events, and are an extension of a story- a 'follow up'. After the explosion, the photographer could predict a funeral would take place the next day and prepared for it: he knew exactly what special gear he should take (a hat for example), and what he was expected to produce under Reuters' 'good' pictures formula.<sup>662</sup> Funerals make similar images, and within those images the photographer would try to focus on the major ones and give these some thought, even before arriving at the scene-

"...it is pretty trivial, certain squares that you are looking for. A funeral for example- you are looking for the people with the expressions, crying people, the casket, the body, pain and tears; those kind of things."<sup>663</sup>

Funerals require decent dress and restrained behaviour (unless one is close to the deceased, in which case emotion is forgiven and almost recommended), and the photographer thought of this before going; he is aware of the obtrusive nature of his profession- especially in events such as funerals.<sup>664</sup> A photographer finds it difficult to blend into a funeral's crowd (funerals are not events in which it is appropriate to take pictures), and so would a journalist (for then his presence at the event loads the

<sup>662</sup> Ryan, B. (1992) Making Capital from Culture: The Corporate Form of Capitalist Cultural Production. New York: Walter de Gruyter.

<sup>663</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006, in an interview with no connection to this specific event.

<sup>664</sup> Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of Photographic Styles. New York: Holmes and Meier.



funeral with publicity- shattering the boundaries of the private, violating the event's 'intimacy'.<sup>665</sup>) The news photographer- loathed and despised now wearing both his hats (as a journalist and as a photographer)- would therefore have to minimize his disturbing presence as much as he could if only by wearing a hat or a modest set of clothing in the attempt to preserve the 'choreography of the unobtrusive'.<sup>666</sup>

For photographers, then, the 'best' news pictures are taken when they manage to see and yet remain themselves unseen (is it not the case with ethnographers as well?). It is only then that their chances of capturing the events in their 'natural' surroundings and in their purest untouched form are substantially increased. To the eyes of news photographers, the picture is therefore nothing but a clear window connecting reality with their documenting profession (as photojournalists)- a perfect 'analogon' of reality- whose execution is dominated by their journalistic codes of objectivity.<sup>667</sup> For there is clearly some sort of a reality out there waiting to be captured (and its documentation should therefore be 'fixed- like the colour of the soldiers' uniforms changed from blue to green as they 'truly' are), and journalists (photojournalists) aspire for its perfect revelation at all times.<sup>668</sup>

In funerals, the 'true' nature of things is revealed to the photographer through the unprecedented exposure of emotions expressed by the crowd: it is a rare moment of truth- 'authenticity' in all its glory- and therefore one that screams for documentation. And that unique moment is 'intimate', privately owned; it is the bedroom in the house of emotions intruded by the photographer and his camera that

---

<sup>665</sup> Pantti, M. & Wieten, J. (2005) Mourning Becomes the Nation: Television Coverage of the murder of Pim Fortuyn. In: *Journalism Studies* 6(3): P. 301-313.

<sup>666</sup> Rosenblum, B. (1978) *Photographers at work: A sociology of Photographic Styles*. New York: Holmes and Meier.

<sup>667</sup> Barthes, R. (1977) The Photographic message. In: Heath, S. (ed) *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31. P. 17.

<sup>668</sup> Schudson sarcastically addresses the dispute between scientists and journalists as to whether news is manufactured or rather a way of representing world events as they truly are (see Schudson, M. (1989) The sociology of news production. In: *Media, Culture & Society*, 11: P. 263-282).

has now been violated in the name of testimony. Throughout the photographic event an exchange has been made, and this purified moment (for this is 'life' to the news photographer) becomes no longer only the property of a private experience (is it really?) but shared with the photographer in a rare combination of time and place; he has managed to stare at reality and capture it in its nudity. And once that moment is acknowledged, it would get squeezed to its full by the photographer. Now he is no longer a participant observer trying to get unnoticed in order to get the event's 'natural' flavour, but *over present*. Yet the price paid by his disturbing presence is small change when a priceless piece of reality has already been captured.

The funeral is not simply a private event, and it is an open one allowing for all to pay their tribute. In fact, many people at the funeral are not at all 'familiar' with either the officer or his family (as are me and the photographer), and they came only to pay their respects. The great public present at the funeral is therefore a small local community sharing a local grief. And at the same time, it is also part of a wider imagined national community, grieving for the death of the officer. For he is now a victim of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (he was killed by an act of terror and an explosion caused by an attack of a suicide bomber.<sup>669</sup> Ehud Barak then becomes not simply a close friend of the family but the Israeli minister of defence, and thus the local community's ministerial representative). Finally, the two communities become part of one international imagined community of emotions- an 'imagined feeling community' sharing the emotional pain of loss.<sup>670</sup> The funeral invites a crowd whose publics' identities are struggled over and yet simultaneously shared: it is a public physically present at the event, a local community which is also a part of an imagined

---

<sup>669</sup> Anderson, B. (1991) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. London: Routledge.

<sup>670</sup> Pantti, M. & Wieten, J. (2005) Mourning Becomes the Nation: Television Coverage of the murder of Pim Fortuyn. In: Journalism Studies 6(3): P. 301-313.

national one (whose membership is acquired thanks to the national news coverage and through a national consensus), and finally part of a wide international imagined community of emotions (strengthened by the international news coverage of the event).

This unique triangular relationship comes into play along the formation of a particular cultural identity- an Israeli local one whose boundaries are empowered given the political impact of the event, and a hybrid one owned by the international emotional experience of loss.<sup>671</sup> And it celebrates the funeral as an extraordinary event connecting between private and public spheres- a unique crossing through which the private becomes part of a public and the public becomes a mixture of privates. Finally, this relationship also demonstrates how emotions and their exposure are a complex cultural site through which the existence of the private in the public sphere is expressed, for-

"[Emotional Literacy] draws attention to a psychological relationship between private and public spheres and the cultural/ political necessity of managing individual emotional states. In doing so, it also highlights the fragility of the border separating the private and the public, inner and other worlds. At an individual level, and sometimes at a collective level, emotions leak out and disturb others".<sup>672</sup>

This site in which identity is struggled over and shared at the same time is reflected through the photographer's tormented self: he belongs to the occupational community of news making (and thus a member of additional sub occupational

---

<sup>671</sup> Pantti, M. & Wieten, J. (2005) Mourning Becomes the Nation: Television Coverage of the murder of Pim Fortuyn. In: *Journalism Studies* 6(3): P. 301-313.

<sup>672</sup> Harding and Pribram address the expression 'Emotional Literacy' as a basic platform for understanding feelings in historic and cultural contexts in which feelings might come across, and the ways those contexts might influence on an emotional experience. (Harding, J. & Pribram, E. D. (2002) The power of Feeling. In: *Cultural Studies* Vol. 5(4): 407-426. P. 408.)

communities- news photography, local and international news organizations).<sup>673</sup> He is a member of a wide imagined (and the physically present) local community of Israelis (a complex and unstable system of sub communities on its own right). And his strong emotional reaction experienced at the event (he said so himself) connects him to an emotional international imagined community.

These layers of identity contribute to the formation of the photographer's cultural identity. They float in an unstable space, constantly shifting in a dialectic relationship of separation and belonging. Such instability is expressed at different moments throughout the execution of the funeral's picture- the decision to enter the Jewish cemetery with a hat and not with a yarmulke, for instance.<sup>674</sup> Thus, since the photographer is not 'familiar' with the officer or his family, he could, at the first level, perform slightly in favour of his profession as a journalist (and as one working for an international news organization) and less as an Israeli or Jewish (or both). For the coverage of an Israeli soldier's funeral is a highly sensitive event with major political implications, and one that requires a highly 'suspicious' lens (yet is it not that the coverage of a victim's funeral is already one sided by definition?).

But in funerals, as always, the photographer performs in all his 'colours'. Sometimes different layers are more dominant than others, but all are present even when they are quieter. This was expressed by a former chief of the Reuters' Jerusalem pictures department and the photographer himself during the coverage of a funeral in a documentary made on the Reuters picture department in Jerusalem in 2005-

---

<sup>673</sup> See, for instance, Gregory, K. (1983) Native view Paradigms : Multiple cultures and culture conflicts in organizations .In: Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 28(3), P. 359-376. As a matter of fact, the photographer actually uses the term himself when asked why he chooses not to send all the 'strong' pictures ("it is not professional...").

<sup>674</sup> It is a Jewish custom to wear a yarmulke (or, at least, some sort of a head cover; many secular Jews often wear a hat) when entering a Jewish cemetery. In this case, the photographer chose to wear a hat despite his religious beliefs (he is not a secular Jew but a traditional one). Now his journalist's hat replaces his religious one.

Reinhard: "Covering funerals is always difficult for us. Gil [photographer] saw the destruction at the site, and now he has to cope with the funeral of the Israeli soldier who was killed there."

...

Gil: "I always think that it could be one of my friends, my brother...it can be every one...Last year one of my friend's brother was killed in Bethlehem, and I came to the funeral- not to cover, only to be there, to be with him. And I looked at the photographers and what they were doing. It's disgusting, and I know that I look exactly the same, but what can I do? it's my job. "

...

Gil: "The soldier like today is 20 years old. He didn't start his life, it's very hard to see. One minute changes all the life in the family."

...

Gil: "...At the beginning, when I started to work at this job and I covered the first funeral, I wanted to cry and I've stopped myself. Then I understood that I need to cry. I've also cried today. Not only me, but most of the photographers."<sup>675</sup>

---

<sup>675</sup> Reinhard Krause & Gil Cohen Magen, "Shooting under fire" (2005)- a documentary made on the Reuters pictures department in Jerusalem. In the documentary, the crew accompanied Krause- Reuters' chief photographer in Jerusalem at the time- and a few of the department's photographers. Gil Cohen Magen, one of the most experienced photographers operating in the department back then, appeared in this segment in a funeral of an Israeli soldier who was killed a day before during a terrorist attack.

This eternal conflict is expressed at its peak in one of the pictures which was sent to the Reuters office in Jerusalem: the characters of three women appear in the centre- probably members of the dead officer's family. Two of them appear to be screaming with pain and point their gaze down the grave. The third one, the youngest among the three (perhaps the daughter of one of them), looks straight to the camera while grabbing the other two, as if she is trying to prevent their inevitable collapse. A young man stands next to her- he wears a red yarmulke on his head- screaming in pain, and in the back another guy who looks at the grave with his hand covering his mouth, as if he has experienced a horror of some sort. This is the "...empathic truth of gesture in the great circumstances of life".<sup>676</sup>



*The funeral of an IDF officer (Haifa, Israel 30/12/06)*

<sup>676</sup> Baudelaire cited in Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography. London: Fontana. P. 23.

The inner borders of the picture are set with the help of two Israeli soldiers dressed in their ceremony uniforms (light green) and a beret on their heads: one appears in half his body (the other half, along with his head, was 'mercilessly' cropped in the editing process). The other gazes with an expression of restrained emotions outside the photograph- he is, after all, a soldier in duty, and therefore cannot show his emotions. They are 'terribly' unmoved, and therefore emphasize 'the grief of the moved'.<sup>677</sup>

This is a Jewish funeral, as clearly expressed in the picture's visual elements: three men who are present in the picture wear yarmulkes on their heads (one wears a hat in the shape of a yarmulke). In the centre, a white napkin is held by an old man holding on to a screaming lady. Like an act of magic, the napkin appears as if it is embraced with some sort of light (how is it that only the napkin is lit?) from up above- it is touched by the hand of god, and therefore loads the event with a higher providence.

The officer's funeral is a private event, and the pain of the present- judged especially by the facial expressions of the three women at the centre of the picture- is their own private emotional experience. Here is the visual representation of the hidden souls of the three: it is a cosmic moment- the melting of spirit and material, life and death, time and space. And the real 'truth' of life is fully expressed while getting closer (physically, spiritually) to its end. For it is death that is the setting "... wherein the dull monotony of life is transcended to take on a true individuality: as if

---

<sup>677</sup> Seaton, J. (2005) Carnage and the Media: The making and breaking of news about violence. London: Penguin. P. 188.

the approach of death somehow strips away the false trappings of sociality, to reveal the vital heart of an otherwise invisible truth".<sup>678</sup>

The young woman amongst the three shares the emotional stress of the event as she holds her fellow women and stairs right at the camera- she is their last resort before they emotionally collapse, and therefore guards the remains of their dignity from the photographer's greed (if she does not hold them, perhaps they would fall down, faint and get hurt; perhaps 'embarrass' with their unpredictable behaviour if it is not for her grip). Her facial expression is twisted with pain and she looks tormented, as if she is begging for her life and her close ones', for the death of the officer; the camera is aimed at her as a weapon and she is nude and exposed.

But they are not alone. There is a packed crowd behind them that appears to be greater than that which is contained in the frame. A public has come to pay its respect, even if the officer and his family are not at all 'familiar' to most of its members. It is now an event representing a shared destiny- that of constant fear from terror- and therefore one that involves a sense of closeness, of unity, of a community. Here is a rare visual documentation of an imagined community- one whose members have nothing in common other than the feeling of unity (the two women at the front with their black coats, one with speckled spots and a coif on her head- are they even from 'here'?.<sup>679</sup>) Here is a local national community holding on to its communality as the means of maintaining an existential security, ontological, once the physical being of one of its members has ceased to exist.<sup>680</sup>

---

<sup>678</sup> Clark describes Miller's interpretation of Foucault's idea of death and its relevance to the individual. (Clark, D. (ed) (1993) The Sociology of Death: Theory, culture, practice. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. P. 3).

<sup>679</sup> Anderson, B. (1991) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. London: Routledge. The word 'here' in this context refers, of course, to whether they are from Israel.

<sup>680</sup> Giddens, A. (1991) Modernity and Self- Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.



This is the face of the “ambiguous myth of the human ‘community’”, and this is a great visual representative of “the great family of men”.<sup>681</sup> For “...man is born, works, laughs and dies everywhere in the same way; and if there still remains in these actions some ethnic peculiarity, at least one hints that there is underlying each one an identical ‘nature’, that their diversity is only formal and does not belie the existence of a common mould”.<sup>682</sup> And once portrayed as a form of a (universally) familiar documentation, the picture of the community would then turn to an impressive document in its own right, for this is the ‘universality of human actions’, and this is no other than a glimpse at the human mirror.<sup>683</sup>

Once the picture is published, the boundaries between the private and the public are shattered one last time. The feeling of local communality exceeds its local boundaries towards a wider imaginative community, with the picture’s spectators as its additional members. The picture is expressed in its dual performance, both constructing and representing a sense of unity, through which the locality of the imaginative community becomes abstract- from a community physically present at the event to a wider one present in its awareness. And the same local community is then revealed as part of a universal one, celebrating the expression of feeling- that of loss, of suffering, of the perception of life and of the human fear from its ending, having death remain as “the great extrinsic factor of human existence”.<sup>684</sup>

---

<sup>681</sup> Barthes, R. (1973) The great family of man. In: Mythologies. London: Paladin Grafton Books. P. 107-111. P. 107.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid.

<sup>684</sup> See Giddens, A. (1991) Modernity and Self- Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press. P. 162. The same idea was also supported in a series of psychological researches, addressing the issue of whether the expression of emotions is changing between cultures, or if it has common universal characteristics (See Ekman, P. & Friesen, W. V. (1987) Universal and Cultural Differences in the Judgments of Facial Expressions of Emotion. In: Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Vol. 53(4): 712-717. See also Lutz and Abu-laghd and the idea of emotions as social, cultural, political and historical (and thus can be argued as being particular), as well as located in ‘the psyche or the natural body’(hence universal) and their creation through socio-cultural discourse (Lutz, C. A. & Abu-Lughod, L. (1990) Language and the politics of emotion. Cambridge:

Death, therefore, appears here as a problem, and the collective fear from its occurrence operates as an existential mechanism essential for the existence of individuals in society. And the shared attempt to overcome the fear from death (it is well expressed in the picture through the petrified facial expressions on the women's faces at the centre, as they look straight at the face of death) is eventually the one which maintains, among others, that same ontological universal security for the daily experience of life. Death is therefore "...*always* a problem for *all* societies, since every social system must in some ways accept death, because human beings inevitably die, but at the same time social systems must to a certain extent deny death to allow people to go on in day-to-day life with some sense of commitment".<sup>685</sup>

The play between the private and the public, life and death, receives additional meanings in an attempt to examine the 'life' of the picture as a photograph. For the photograph is, by its nature, a sense of death- a frozen moment of time and space in the past that is never again and thus was never alive.<sup>686</sup> And it is up to the "(terrified) photographer", therefore, to "exert himself to the utmost to keep the photograph of becoming death".<sup>687</sup> It is he who gives the photograph 'life', and the photograph which makes the spectator animated and thus alive. And in the picture, life is no longer a matter of self but of a public, for "the 'private life' is nothing but that zone of space, of time, where I am not an image, an object".<sup>688</sup>

---

Cambridge University press). Once the picture is published, it may then become a spectacle of suffering- a representation of transnational news (in this case, a visual evidence of the 'universal' feeling of suffering) creating a 'beyond the nation' community by "...establishing a sense of a broader 'we'." (See Chouliaraki, L. (2006) The spectatorship of suffering. London: Sage Publications. P. 10. Although, for Chouliaraki, the 'we' appears to represent the 'imagined community' of the West, observing the suffering of the West's other.

<sup>685</sup> Mellor, P. A. (1993) *Death in High Modernity: The contemporary presence and Absence of Death*. In: Clark, D. (ed) The Sociology of Death: Theory, culture, practice. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. P. 11-30. P. 13. Italics in origin; Giddens, A. (1991) Modernity and Self- Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

<sup>686</sup> Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography. London: Fontana.

<sup>687</sup> Ibid. P. 14.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid. P. 15. Barthes analyses the picture of himself, but it is relevant here as well.

The picture is a crossing: the officer's relatives with their 'private' experience who are, at the same time, members of a physically present local public and an imaginative one (once the picture is published, they would share their sense of local communality with 'local' spectators). Then they are also members of a universal community, representing both the experience of life and the emotional experience when they are close to death. And they are a public matter once they have turned from physically living private subjects into an object (they are now also part of an image). Finally, it is that very same image that reflects the complex formation of the photographer's identity: he is a photographer (who is the producer of an image that floats between the international and the local), a local spectator (Israeli, Jewish), and a member of the national community and of a universal one, sharing the emotional experience of loss.

Here is a powerful image: a news picture constantly floating between the private and the public, the local (particular) and the international (universal), the real and the imaginative, the abstract and the concrete. And it is one that reflects the tormented identity of its creator- performing both as an Israeli at the service of a foreign news agency, and a foreign photographer located in Israel who works for an international news agency. It is therefore a document carefully packaged for the specific needs of an international news agency, aimed for the use of an international circle of clients.

#### **7.4 Fourth event: Carrots picking near Nahal Oz, November 2005**

It is a 'slow' morning. The photographer takes advantage of the free time to think of a feature story to cover. He does not have any specific instructions from the

office, just as long as he comes up with a story from the southern region. Lately, there has been a lot of action in the south, including the firing of 'Qassam' rockets and bomb shells from the city of Gaza to Israeli territory, and he is advised to have his feature story connected to the past events one way or another.<sup>689</sup> We head towards kibbutz Nahal Oz in the south and encounter a truck delivering carrots. The driver points us to where the carrot picking takes place, and on our way the photographer tells me he had an idea to make a story on carrot picking in the south for quite some time, and this seems like a good opportunity. However, he stops at the artillery base nearby, just in case there is something worth covering there.

There is no activity in the army base- there is no firing, no preparations are being made, and the soldiers have already finished cleaning the cannons. Within 15 minutes we head towards the picking area, where we encounter an extraordinary machine for lifting the carrots from the ground. After a short conversation with the vehicle's operators- Bedouins from the city of Rahat- we are surprised to discover that a Qussam rocket fell right in the field not long ago. The driver tells us he came to work in the field, as he does every day, and saw a huge hole in the ground with the metal wrecks of the rocket. He was not sure at first and called the police, and they immediately identified the remains of a Qussam rocket and closed the area. A few days later he came back and has been working here ever since.

The photographer takes pictures of the carrot field and the machine in action. Its operators are intrigued by why they are being photographed; they ask who the pictures are for, and say they would like copies. The photographer explains that he works for Reuters and would be happy to send them copies. Within a half an hour we leave the field and return to the army base, although it seems quiet as it was before;

---

<sup>689</sup> The term 'Qussam' is often used to describe home-made 'Hamas's' rockets. The first Qassams were developed and fired in 2001 and had a range of about 4 km (2.5 miles), and they are occasionally fired at Israeli territory from Palestinian territories up to this day.

there is still no sign of action, and one of the officers explains it is indeed a quiet day and that nothing happened. Nonetheless, the photographer takes pictures of a few soldiers working on a canon's barrel, a soldier guarding with an army vest and another working with bags of explosives. We leave again and enter 'Nativ Haasara', a small settlement located nearby. The photographer looks for interesting pictures of the Israeli West Bank barrier- "there is nothing to cover here", he says ("at least if there was some sort of a car near the barrier, I would take a picture. But there is no motion, no nothing. It is not worth shooting").<sup>690</sup> We leave the settlement and head towards kibbutz 'Yad Mordechai'- its resting area is a famous spot for those heading south- to send the pictures.

The photographer decides to spike the barrier's and the army base's pictures and focus on the ones from the carrot picking. He selects those containing movement- carrots falling from the vehicle, 'liveliness' ("in the pictures from the base there is no action"). The best picture, so he says, is the one in which the driver accidentally looks at the camera and smiles, and that is exactly why he decides not to send it- it looks 'staged'. Finally, six successful pictures are selected and sent to the local office in Jerusalem. In a matter of minutes, Oleg, the chief photographer, replies. He does not think they will use the pictures ("the world has no interest in some carrot picking" says the chief). The photographer is disappointed. He thinks his carrots pictures are pretty good, and that the head of the department 'does not understand the job'.

---

<sup>690</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006. The Israeli West Bank barrier is being constructed by the state of Israel since 2002, and consists of a network of fences of vehicle-barrier trenches surrounded by an on average 60 meters wide exclusion area and up to 8 meters high concrete walls. It is located mainly on Israeli occupied territories in the West Bank and partly along the 1949 Armistice line (Green line) between Israel and Jordan, which now demarcates the West Bank. As of April 2006, the length of the barrier as approved by the Israeli government is 703 kilometres long. Approximately one third of the barrier has not yet been constructed and some parts are still under construction. The barrier project is considered highly controversial, and a matter of great dispute in the Israeli society and between Israeli and Palestinian authorities.

Pictures such as these, so he says, could be easily sold to agriculture magazines or others, and this is exactly what the agency needs.

On our way back, the photographer describes the organizational changes taking place in Reuters. 'Getty Images', so he says, appears to be taking over the market of news pictures as well as stock's, and this is mainly because their work practices are better. Its photographers cover the same events as the news agencies but send more pictures per event, with a 'variety' as top priority ("a Getty's photographer would take pictures of a cannon's barrel from all sorts of angles..."). Getty's photographer would probably send 20 pictures from that same event and Reuters only 5-6 pictures. The 20 Getty images would be sold for the same price as Reuters's. As a result, Getty has a wider and more diverse circle of clients (apart from news), and makes profit at the expense of the news agencies. In addition, its archive is accessible on the web unlike the agencies', and therefore it gets greater publicity.

The solution, says the photographer, is a make-over of the agencies' daily routine. Such pressures led to the opening of a 'Magazine desk' in Paris, and the reason why Reuters aspires to broaden its circle of clients beyond news and finance. Features are now favored. Yet the photographer believes that his carrot pictures were spiked because of a personal issue between himself and the current chief of the department, who appears to be acting more like a photographer and less as a manager ("hasn't done the switch").

We discuss the job requirements of the chief photographer- whether he needs to be an excellent photographer to do the job of a manager first of all. The chief, says the photographer, is envious and belittles the photographer's success (much like other photographers who resent the success of their colleagues sometimes). If this kind of behavior is from other photographers, "...it is OK. But for him as a manager, to envy

his photographers is completely wrong. In fact, it will eventually backfire, for the success of his staff is much like his own, and not on his expense."<sup>691</sup>

The idea of a *feature*- expressed as part of the photographer's jargon and part of the department's daily routine- reflects additional meanings within the production process. Originally a French term (probably from the words *Feture* or *Faiture* meaning *fashion* or *form*), the idea accuired additional meanings at the begining of the twentieth century and became accociated with the American film industry. At the start of this, short movies were shown before the main film, and in order to separate them and the main show, the term 'Featured Presentation' (and simply 'feature' later on) was used.<sup>692</sup> As part of the daily news routine, the expression is also used to describe 'soft news' stories based on a wide range of issues whose sucessful coverage is not constrained by immediacy (unlike 'hard news' or 'spot news' stories that are often based on unscedualed events and demand speed.<sup>693</sup> )

Used as part of the Reuters' pictures routine, the concept *feature* appears to be fed by two meanings: as an expression used in the world of movies, it binds the production processes of movies and news pictures together. It therefore connects the production processes of news pictures with a greater system of production and consumption in popular culture, and thus articulated as an open system of production in a complex relationship of cause and effect (unlike Rosenblum's autonomic and closed genres of photography.<sup>694</sup>)

---

<sup>691</sup> Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters Israeli photographer working in Israel, April 2006.

<sup>692</sup> Bailo identifies the emergence of the second wave of independent films in America (what he calls 'feature films') at around 1911, as a "...multiple-reel narrative with unusual content and high production costs that merited special billing and advertising." (See Bailo, T. (1985) The American film industry. London: University of Wisconsin Press, revised edition. P. 109-110.)

<sup>693</sup> Tuchman, G. (1973) Making News by Doing Work: Routinizing the Unexpected. In: The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 79(1). P. 110-131.

<sup>694</sup> Rosenblum, B. (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of Photographic Styles. New York: Holmes and Meier.

The need to develop feature stories as part of the department's daily routine also shows the influence of the market. The demands of Reuters clients (based, in turn, on their interpretation of the demands of their consumers) for different kinds of news pictures explain the emergence of features. Their production is tailored accordingly: much like 'hard news' pictures, future feedback would, in turn, go right to the heart of the production process of features- whether by improving failing features or reproducing successful ones. This elaborate system of cultural production is entwined with consumption and is responsible for the production of 'unique' texts (as news and as photographs), but also for the production of consumed products.<sup>695</sup>

'Features' also represent Reuters' struggle with competitors. With the help of features, the agency is attempting to enrich the variety of its products and increase its revenues; they help it broaden its circle of clients and maintain its powerful grip in the international news arena. Features clearly indicate of the influence of Getty Images on Reuters as well. Getty is considered to be one of the biggest stock agencies in the world and one of Reuters pictures biggest competitors. It has been one of the agencies' stubborn opponents in the international news pictures market because of its Rights controlled selling system, familiar as part of the selling schemes of stock agencies.<sup>696</sup>

In the rights controlled system, free lance photographers are paid when their pictures are sold (the company then purchases the rights for their unlimited use in the future). Photographers are also entitled to a percentage of profit (between 36%-50% once the marketing and operation expenses are deducted by the agency) based on

---

<sup>695</sup> Negus, K. (1997) The Production of Culture. In: P. Du Gay (ed.) Production of Culture/ Cultures of Production. Open University/Sage, Milton Keynes/London, P. 68-102.

<sup>696</sup> In fact, Getty Images PLC is described today as the strongest among stock agencies. It owns various companies such as the 'Image bank', 'Tony Stone Images' and a number of historic archives. Its main competitors are Corbis, owned by Bill Gates, and Jupiter Images (especially since 2004). Those three compete with approximately 2500 mediocre companies, and with a wide section dealing with specific photographic genres. (See Frosh, P. (2000) The Image Factory: Stock Photography, Cultural Production and the Image-Repertoire. PhD, Jerusalem: Hebrew University; Frosh, P. (2006) What's Behind the Spectacle? An Update on Stock Photography and the Visual Content Industry. In: Journal of the Arts Council of Korea, No. 3 (Summer), P. 256-278.)



sales. The pictures are stored as part of the company's stock, copied and categorized in the company's archive so that a picture might come up in a number of categories. Some pictures are distributed through printed catalogues, CD's and a web site tailored to clients (mostly advertising companies, marketing departments and graphic designers), who could then purchase the rights for an exclusive use for pre set periods of time. They can be on the web with free access to all.<sup>697</sup> This system of production and marketing is worthwhile for the company and its photographers. The photographers pay only for the materials and expenses of shoots, and enjoy a solid income according to the (possibly multiple) use of their pictures by company's clients. The company, on the other hand, covers the expenses of marketing and distribution, but owns a huge stock of photographs for unlimited use and thus the potential profit with no additional expenses per picture.<sup>698</sup>

In Reuters, however, the system works differently: its photographers are staff and their monthly salaries are fixed.<sup>699</sup> The quantity of their delivered pictures does not relate to their earnings, and may rise or fall dependant only on the news cycle. It sells to a smaller list of news institutions around the world, and pictures are usually sold on annual subscriptions which are tailored for the specific needs of its clients. Their prices are calculated on clients' circulation, platform and modes of publication.<sup>700</sup>

Getty is an enormous competitor whose strength is felt right at the heart of the Reuters pictures service. Thus, it is up to Reuters' photographers to cover news events and tailor their pictures to news organizations, and their execution is coerced to the

---

<sup>697</sup> Frosh, P. (2000) The Image Factory: Stock Photography, Cultural Production and the Image Repertoire. PhD, Jerusalem: Hebrew University.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid.

<sup>699</sup> The few free lance photographers Reuters buys pictures from every now and then receive a onetime payment of usually \$75 per picture (unless a certain picture is highly exceptional, in which case a negotiation would probably take place).

<sup>700</sup> This was discussed earlier in chapter 5 under 'sales'.

constraints dictated by the news discourse and its pressures (codes of objectivity, for example). In addition, they are under strict time frames given the volatile nature of news events, and thus both their production and distribution processes are limited.

Getty's photographers cover a more diverse set of events, and their pictures are targeted at a greater and more diversified circle of clients besides news organizations. Unlike Reuters pictures whose archive is accessible only to media organizations and institutions, its existing clients (and potential ones) are exposed to its lines of products, with free archive access. In the field, Getty's photographers send back more pictures per event in order to supply a more diverse coverage, which can then become suitable for a number of categories (eventually exposed to a far more diversified and thus wider circle of clients through the archive). Since they get paid per picture, that is also an incentive.<sup>701</sup>

Reuters production of features may represent a trend used as a business mechanism- to enlarge the company's revenues and strengthen its lines of production against its stock rivals headed by Getty. A news picture becomes not simply a product, but also the outcome of an ongoing struggle between competing agencies (both stock and news), having the characteristics of both its fighting parents embedded in its DNA. These changes set the tone for the international pictures market in the future, with news pictures and their international processes of production becoming more and more similar to stock's. Pictures are thus programmed for decontextualization early in

---

<sup>701</sup> However, the technological developments over the 1990's have improved the selling schemes of the stock agencies, and enabled an additional selling system called 'Royalty Free'. According to that system, the agencies sell some of the pictures on a onetime payment basis and for multiple uses by their clients- payment per picture and not per use. This, of course, has a huge impact on photographers' earnings, for they are entitled a single payment given to them once the picture is sold and no additional revenues on the pictures' various uses by the clients. This would also be a good place to mention that the competition in the market works in both directions, and with the influence of parallel production systems (international news agencies, for instance), stock agencies are going through some major organizational changes as well. To cut expenses, for example, the agencies also employ staff photographers, and they offer monthly and annually subscriptions for their clients as well (Frosh, P. (2006) What's Behind the Spectacle? An Update on Stock Photography and the Visual Content Industry. In: *Journal of the Arts Council of Korea*, No. 3 (Summer), P. 256-278.)

their creation, and are thus prepared for multiple contexts, platforms and modes of usage.<sup>702</sup> With news turning to stock, this may lead to a point when Getty becomes the most powerful player in the international pictures arena.

With feature pictures taken at the event by the photographer as 'dead' ones which require some sort of 'movement', this points yet once again to the elusive relationship of news pictures with film.<sup>703</sup> For it is then that the photographer is the producer of pictures, but the consumer of movies. The pictures' process of production also becomes part of a wider context- that of visual production (film or video)- governed by the dominant conventions of photography.<sup>704</sup>

The photographer's desire to capture 'movement' also points to his dual and conflicting occupational identity- a photographer and a journalist- put into play when the photographer refuses to treat the photograph as a dead object. Placed in the field, the photographer therefore becomes an eyewitness of movement (an event that happened) which occurred in the past and is now gone. But the 'frozen' picture releases the testimony of movement (which took place in 'real life') given its ontological nature (for the picture is 'dead'). Here is the dialectics of the news photograph: the photographed referent was captured by the camera but the motion is gone, turning the picture into a complete document of evidence and yet one from which the motion of its testimony is necessarily missing.<sup>705</sup> Obsessed by the photographer in him he then struggles to bring life to his picture in a battle already lost given the photograph's frozen nature.<sup>706</sup> At the same time- now captivated as a

---

<sup>702</sup> Frosh, P. (2006) What's Behind the Spectacle? An Update on Stock Photography and the Visual Content Industry. In: Journal of the Arts Council of Korea, No. 3 (Summer), P. 256-278.

<sup>703</sup> Barthes himself stated how he disliked movies and had a passion for photographs given their 'lack of movement'- inviting the spectator's imagination to take place in their reading (Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography. London: Fontana.)

<sup>704</sup> Foucault, M. (1980). Power/ Knowledge. Brighton: Harvester.

<sup>705</sup> See Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography. London: Fontana; Sontag, S. (1979) On Photography. New York: Dell.

<sup>706</sup> Barthes, R. (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography. London: Fontana

journalist- the photographer is also obliged to preserve the motion, not only as the means to preserve the photographic experience in full, but also given the codes of objectivity dictated by the picture's newsworthiness (for something had occurred in reality and thus has to be recorded in full).

This conflict is eventually settled with the simulation of motion as an adequate replacement for the evidence of one- a car shot as driving next to the Israeli barrier (although it is no longer driving in the picture), or carrots shot falling from the picking machine (and they are no longer falling as well).<sup>707</sup> Yet once photographed, they have become forever frozen, motionless. Now the photographer stands helpless as the docile servant of the photographic text; categorizing his photographed 'movements' by their 'stillness' (does a picture of a car near the barrier has more motion in it than just the concrete barrier?) is all he is left with. Once the picture of the carrot picking is chosen, the journalist overcomes the photographer, turning the coverage of the carrot picking as having more motion than the coverage of a silent concrete barrier- as he witnessed at the scene of events, as news in its photographic form 'should' look like.

A similar conflict is expressed as the photographer decides to spike a 'good' picture, as the machine's driver was caught smiling at the camera, which made it look as if it was 'staged'. Then the journalist takes over, for a staged smile reveals the photographer's presence and makes the event 'unnatural'. His presence empties the event of its newsworthiness. Here the photographer's journalistic values are revealed; his duty is to 'represent reality' rather than produce a reality, even during the coverage of 'soft news' events.<sup>708</sup>

---

<sup>707</sup> The attempt to 'capture' motion in his pictures by using different angles can be addressed under Barthes' photogenia- technical effects realised at the different levels of the production of the photograph, representing a coding of the photographic analogue (Barthes, R. (1977) *The Photographic message*. In: Heath, S. (ed) *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31).

<sup>708</sup> Tuchman, G. (1973) Making News by Doing Work: Routinizing the Unexpected. In: *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 79(1). P. 110-131.



*Carrots' picking near Nahal Oz- looking for some 'movement' (Israel, 11/5/06)*

There is an additional meaning to the term feature, based on the 'story telling' aspects of journalistic reports. This meaning comes into play when features are taken as part of the field of narrative, and can therefore be explained on two levels.<sup>709</sup> The first considers feature pictures as news products delivered by the agency. They exist as stories- news stories- and lean upon a great heritage of research focusing on the making of news as weaving stories, and on its makers as story tellers.<sup>710</sup> The second is based on their visual form as photographs and the story nature of photographs. They appear as texts- a collection of ideological signs made for 'reading' and interpretation- and the photographer as a metta-story teller.<sup>711</sup> And both exist in a delicate and unstable web of dialogues, maintained both inside the organization and beyond.

The feature story is fed by distinct and colliding dimensions of the photographed news story and its tellers: first, in a closed system of production-

<sup>709</sup> Tuchman, G. (1973) Making News by Doing Work: Routinizing the Unexpected. In: The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 79(1). P. 110-131.

<sup>710</sup> Tuchman, G. (1976) Telling Stories. In: Journal of Communication 26 (Fall): P. 93-97.

<sup>711</sup> Wells, L. (2004) Photography: A Critical Introduction. London: Routledge.

between those practitioners who contribute to the creation of such stories daily inside the organization, and as the output of an international news agency (and thus maintained in a constant international dialogue of news story telling). Then, as part of an open greater system, it also negotiates with news story characteristics as expressed in other news organizations (the refusal of the chief photographer to push the pictures forward since “the world has no interest in carrot picking [as a kind of story]” is unlike, perhaps, the opinion of an editor working for a local news organization). The production of the photographic story is also a metta-story of production tailored for the codes of consumption (the world’s lack of interest turns here into a matter of world consumption). Finally, features are part of a wide narrative system- one which maintains daily products and the relationship between the spokesman and the audience. It maintains the transformation of knowledge and the experience as essential ingredients of language and life in society.<sup>712</sup> The photographer goes out to track a news ‘story’ (the carrot picking), packaged in its final form as a ‘news photograph’, and stamped as a ‘feature’. The way the story is built leans upon elements that determine both news and photographic stories, and eventually as tools for the creation of a story in its most basic form- a speaking event with a beginning, middle and an end.<sup>713</sup>

Features are maintained in an ongoing dialogue- a daily conversation between production and consumption, between news and photography (and between ‘hard news’ photography and feature news photography), between the chief photographer and the photographer. This dialogue is maintained between the agency and other news organizations, between its cultural industry and other cultural industries under the pressures of a cultural economy. It is therefore the photographer who plays the role of

---

<sup>712</sup> Labov, W. (1997) Some Further Steps in Narrative Analysis. In: Journal of narrative and life history, 7. P. 1-13 <<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~labov/sfs.html>>.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid.

the story teller in its purest form, with feature pictures demonstrated as pure and basic stories-

“The classic image of the story-teller is someone who can make something out of nothing, who can engage our attention with a fascinating elaboration of detail that is entertaining, amusing and emotionally rewarding. From the first lines of such a narrative, we know that we are in the presence of a gifted user of the language. Credibility is rarely an issue here. Tall tales, myths and outright lies carry the day, and we normally do not know or care whether the events as told were the personal experience of the story-teller or anyone else.”<sup>714</sup>

Features are also interesting given their unique relationship to news events and the creative activity of the photographer. As stories that do not need to be ‘timely’, features are treated as royalty.<sup>715</sup> They are not based on events of the ‘everyday’ (at least not like ‘regular’ news pictures produced by the agency), and thus vary in their ways of production. They are outside the limitations of time and space that determine ‘regular’ news events, and their quality rests in their stories and their ability to become visually arresting. The photographer is given the liberty to look for a quality (although suitable) story to cover. He spends time researching, uses the best technology, plans his schedule carefully in advance and edits in his spare time (the idea to capture the carrot picking in action, which occurred to the photographer even before going to the scene, and once filtering other possible options, like the artillery base or the barrier in ‘Nativ Haasara’) in a serenity which is not part of his daily routine.

---

<sup>714</sup> Labov, W. (1997) Some Further Steps in Narrative Analysis. In: Journal of narrative and life history, 7. P. 1-13. P. 2 <<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/sfs.html>>.

<sup>715</sup> Tuchman, G. (1973) Making News by Doing Work: Routinizing the Unexpected. In: The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 79(1). P. 110-131.

Superficially, features have creative potential- especially for photographers who see themselves with an artistic eye. But reality prevails, since the photographer works as a photojournalist at the service of an international news agency; he is not an artist, and the features cannot be a pure emanation of his imagination.<sup>716</sup> They are the outcome of the work experience and the organizational history, and therefore must be tailored specifically for the organization's capabilities and standards, and aimed at the client's taste and demands. That is why, when the photographer sends his pictures, the chief photographer replies he does not think they will be of any use for Reuters since the world has no interest in them; now they are not produced in the light of the standards of Reuters' products (as pictures? as news? as news products aimed abroad?) and are therefore disqualified.

Adorno and Horkheimer's 'pseudo-individuality' helps explain this: the photographer is given the creative liberty to produce new pictures as he wishes, just as long as they conform to the organizational spirit, of the industry in which it operates, for "...the constant pressure to produce new effects (which must conform to the old pattern) serves merely as another rule to increase the power of the conventions...".<sup>717</sup> Individuality and originality, therefore, receive their definitive meaning within the daily processes of production. In that sense, features are an elaborate and sophisticated tool used by the organization in order to release the individual's pent up frustration. It is a clever way to increase the organization's revenues while taming the wild photographer, for he is a photographer, and, unlike his office bored colleagues, is given the privileged liberty to pursue creative moments.

---

<sup>716</sup> In its 'pure' artistic kind of way (is there such a thing?). In this case, the photographer is first a photojournalist and only then an artist (although some do not see themselves as artists at all).

<sup>717</sup> Adorno & Horkheimer cited in Negus, K. (1997) *The Production of Culture*. In: P. Du Gay (ed.) *Production of Culture/ Cultures of Production*. Open University/Sage, Milton Keynes/London, P. 68-102. P. 75.



Yet he is but a simple labourer helping to carry out and duplicate the organizational format of good products throughout his daily routine.<sup>718</sup>

The complex relationship between the photographer and his chief appears at its peak at this specific event: the explicit refusal to use the pictures on the chief's side, and the photographer's protest upon the chief's failing behaviour as a manager all point to a delicate and volatile relationship between the two. From the photographer's point of view, the chief as a veteran photographer, who was promoted and holds the position of a chief photographer, exists in two different occupational communities simultaneously and does not act professionally in either one. Both the photographer and his chief seem to struggle over organizational and social power as part of an ongoing conflict whose seeds were planted long ago, illustrating how certain moments and sites of production often turn into an arena in which modes of power and control are contested between different occupational communities inside the organization.<sup>719</sup>

Furthermore, the photographer said the chief refused to use his pictures because of personal reasons, not 'professional' ones (in fact, the photographer mentioned that it is highly 'unprofessional', since the pictures could be sold to different magazines around the world that do not necessarily focus on news). Then, the two become the representatives of different occupational communities, and their struggle turns into one of conflicting cultural backgrounds- an eternal hierarchal struggle between occupational communities whose members belong to other communities as well (now they are also a local photographer and a foreign chief

---

<sup>718</sup> Ryan, B. (1992) Making Capital from Culture: The Corporate Form of Capitalist Cultural Production. New York: Walter de Gruyter. The chief's reply could also be interpreted as an example of somewhat of a hegemonic thinking: the chief photographer refuses to use the pictures as the representative of the world, and the local bureau and Reuters as the world's messenger (therefore its products are the most reliable? with the best quality as opposed to the products made by its competitors? or is it that the profession of news is the world's most valuable representative?). When, in fact, he is representing Reuters clients and them alone (if not just himself).

<sup>719</sup> Gregory, K. (1983) Native view Paradigms: Multiple cultures and culture conflicts in organizations .In: Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 28(3). P. 359-376.

photographer, for instance). It is the battle between the two that demonstrates a typical organizational behaviour in which each community strives to position itself at the top of the organizational pyramid.<sup>720</sup> Each strives to absorb its organizational status in order to make its powers an organizational standard (and thus the 'right' organizational behaviour). Delicate micro connections at specific moments and sites along the production routine of news pictures make a difference.<sup>721</sup>

Analysing the production process of feature pictures reveals additional dimensions: it exists under constant external pressures- whether by competing organizations and the consumer audience, or parallel processes of production. It is influenced by the organization and its daily practices, its practitioners and their relationships from within- the production routine as complex moments and sites through which different occupational communities at the local bureau (chiefs, photographers), and specific organizational practices performed by an international news agency are constantly interplayed. These layers, both inside and outside the organization, are constantly in motion and entwined, turning the production routine into an arena in which power is constantly contested: between discourses of photography and news, between local stories and metta narratives. This is a unique cultural production process representing a culture of production maintained between the micro and the macro levels of operation and pressure, structure and process.<sup>722</sup> It embraces the 'cultural worlds' of those who put culture into work and work into culture, compressed together in the economic structures of the daily routine.<sup>723</sup>

---

<sup>720</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1986) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge.

<sup>721</sup> Negus, K. (1997) The Production of Culture. In: P. Du Gay (ed.) *Production of Culture/ Cultures of Production*. Open University/Sage, Milton Keynes/London. P. 68-102.

<sup>722</sup> Jensen, J. (1984) An Interpretive approach to cultural production. In: Rowland, W. and Watkins, B. (eds) *Interpreting Television*. London: Sage. P. 98-119.

<sup>723</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion

This project is an example of what Mitchell called exercise of 'showing seeing'.<sup>724</sup> It demonstrates how a significant news organization- Thomson Reuters international news agency- 'sees' the world by focusing an ethnographic eye on the daily work invested in the construction of its pictorial products. The evidence suggests that, much like the production of all cultural artefacts, the production of news pictures is complex and goes through significant moments and sites as they are executed- from the minute they were conceived as an idea and up to their final form as products ready for distribution and reception:

It supports the idea that such moments and sites are very much dictated by the organization and its need for routine in the field and beyond. These effects often come into play in the form of different technologies and accessories used by photographers and editors in the field, such as cameras or editing software, and their standards of use dictated by the organization; company cars; chairs and computer screens; shift schedules or allocation of photographers to the different regions.

Yet there are other forces in play through which the news product is moulded. These are economic pressures and competition and their effects at every stage of the process- whether from competing international news organizations or institutions in other sectors (such as Getty PLC). There is also evidence of influence from other industries (such as the film industry). There is evidence of different glocal mechanisms invested in the process of production to produce adjustments to a constantly changing international market by tailoring the agency's news products to

---

<sup>724</sup> Mitchell, W. J. T. (2002) Showing seeing: A critique of visual culture. In: Journal of visual culture, Vol 1(2): P. 165-181.

the particular needs set by local news clients. There is also evidence of the effects of such a special international business environment in which the agency operates on every aspect of its organization. This expresses the process of production of news pictures as an open system affecting parallel production routines, yet structured by such processes as well.

There are also significant cultural forces to consider. These bring to bear the cultural identities of key practitioners and take the form of struggle over social power: between different occupational communities (chief photographers vs. photographers, photographers vs. editors, the head of photography and deputy editor); between nationalities (locals vs. foreigners, Israelis vs. Palestinians); between departments (Pictures vs. TV); between organizations (international vs. local) and cultural industries. When these economic and cultural forces affect the production routine- both as external pressures from outside the organization, and in the form of delicate micro connections from within- they perform the complete cycle of a cultural economy.

Much like stock photography, news pictures are produced in circular structures- from story to product, and from product to story. They are distributed to clients as a final product ready for publication by different local news outlets. But they are injected back into the production routine by different players. Published pictures are gathered back as evidence of success or failure (known as the *impact*) to improve future processes. However, so do complaints made by furious consumers, compliments given by satisfied clients and special requests for particular stories sent to local bureaus. Nonetheless, there are also significant linear structures through which power is exercised at some stages within such circles which help put the production routine in motion; editing decisions made by a photographer in the field or

an editor in the office, or different relationships of authority maintained at different levels of operations (a chief photographer having the last word, for instance) all have an impact.

Finally, and with such circular structures in mind, there is a far stronger relationship between production and consumption than has been previously suggested. The audience plays a pivotal role at various moments and sites throughout production. It is an active force affecting future processes at the levels of reception (circulation of clients' papers, stories favoured). But the audience also plays a significant role before that in production: at the events in the field (which often allows for the news coverage to take place); in the form of 'external editors' throughout the process of selection; or in visual consumer practices performed at different levels (editors selecting 'Top pictures', photographers bringing their visual memory into work). There is a strong connection performed at various moments and sites between the news text, its producers and its audiences even at the 'earliest' stages of production. Much like Azoulay's civil contract of photography, a complete analysis of its processes of production should take into account all of its participants, approaching the news text "...as an unintentional effect of the encounter between all of these", when none "have the capacity to seal off this effect and determine its sole meaning".<sup>725</sup>

Apart from offering some explanations, this project also raises new questions. It reveals there needs to be more ethnographic work on media institutions, in particular on international news agencies and their processes of production, and

---

<sup>725</sup> With her theory of photography, Azoulay calls to take into account the camera, the photographer, the photographed subject and the spectator, although in commercial photography, as demonstrated in this project, there are, of course, more 'professional' practitioners to consider as well (Azoulay, A. (2008) The civil contract of photography. New York: Zone books. P. 23). Foucault supports a similar holistic perspective, seeing production as a particular force that "...traverses and produces things...a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression." (Foucault cited in Rabinow, P. (1984) The Foucault reader: an introduction to Foucault's thought. London: Penguin books. P. 61).

greater focus on local news organizations and their connections with international news agencies ought to be pursued as well. Research still needs to unveil the consumption practices of news. Much work is also needed along the lines of news audiences and of the production of commercial photography and news photography in particular. And much more locally, work in the occupied territories, the West Bank and Gaza is needed to complete the cycle of production from both sides of the border.

In order to help create a healthier social system of trust, news organizations should be assessable- particularly those who knowingly do not maintain a clear policy of transparency, and close their gates to outsiders- and should therefore be forced to reveal their complex ways of seeing and unravel the work routine through which their different forms of representation acquire their special powers of signification. Then we may discover how 'visuality' performs as a social construction of the visual and a visual construction of the social.<sup>726</sup> In time, it might get us closer to uncover the forces of newsworthiness, which we so often tend to take for granted, and of those powerful news institutions we often take as naturally trustworthy.

---

<sup>726</sup> Mitchell, W. J. T. (2002) Showing seeing: A critique of visual culture. In: Journal of visual culture, Vol 1(2): 165-181. P. 179.

## Appendices

**Appendix 1.0**

Reuters Editorial Pictures by country, 2010

<b>Europe</b>	26. Lithuania	<b>Middle East &amp; Gulf</b>	<b>Asia</b>	91. Cuba
1. Albania	27. Luxembourg	49. Israel	68. Afghanistan	92. Ecuador
2. Andorra	28. Macedonia	50. Bahrain	69. Australia	93. El Salvador
3. Armenia	29. Malta	51. Egypt	70. Bangladesh	94. Guatemala
4. Austria	30. Moldova	52. Iran	71. Cambodia	95. Haiti
5. Azerbaijan	31. Monaco	53. Iraq	72. China	96. Honduras
6. Belarus	32. Montenegro	54. Jordan	73. Hong Kong	97. Jamaica
7. Belgium	33. Netherlands	55. Kuwait	74. India	98. Mexico
8. Bosnia	34. Norway	56. Lebanon	75. Indonesia	99. Nicaragua
9. Bulgaria	35. Poland	57. Oman	76. Japan	100. Panama
10. Croatia	36. Portugal	58. Qatar	77. Malaysia	101. Paraguay
11. Czech Republic	37. Romania	59. Saudi	78. New Zealand	102. Peru
12. Cyprus	38. Russia	60. Syria	79. Pakistan	103. United States
13. Denmark	39. San Marino	61. U.A.	80. Philippines	104. Uruguay
14. Estonia	40. Serbia	62. Yemen	81. South Korea	105. Venezuela
15. Finland	41. Slovenia		82. Thailand	
16. France	42. Spain	<b>*Africa</b>	83. Vietnam	
17. Georgia	43. Sweden	63. Algeria		
18. Germany	44. Switzerland	64. Kenya (and East Africa)	<b>Americas</b>	
19. Greece	45. Turkey	65. Morocco	84. Argentina	
20. Hungary	46. Ukraine	66. Senegal (and West Africa)	85. Bolivia	
21. Iceland	47. United Kingdom		86. Brazil	
22. Ireland	48. Vatican City	67. South Africa (and southern Africa)	87. Canada	
23. Italy			88. Chile	
24. Latvia			89. Colombia	
25. Liechtenstein			90. Costa Rica	

\* Reuters photographers are not based in all African countries. Clients' requests have to go through the regional chief.



## **Appendix 2.0**

### Selected Words and Expressions

**Extend a picture-** Whenever a picture seems appropriate for broader use, an EIC would take a decision to send it to additional regions other than those which the picture was already sent to in an earlier shift.

**Handouts-** An expression used to describe pictures received by the Global Pictures Desk from different organizations such as national agencies, government offices etc.

**A Play-** The same picture which was first sent by the agency to clients was then published by a number of news outlets (websites or news papers, although it is used usually to describe its publication on front pages) on the same day.

**Spike a picture/ Unspike/ Spikes-** Also known as "killing a picture" or bringing one back to life by 'unspiking' it. "Spikes" would be the term used to describe 'dead' pictures which an EIC from the Global Pictures Desk would go through at the beginning of his shift and "unspike" those he would still find worthy of distribution.

**Stringer-** A photographer not on the full-time staff.

**"Don't France out!"-** An expression used by sub editors, telling their colleagues not to put restrictions on certain countries. Then a certain picture would be distributed to France, for example, instead of being categorized as "France Out".

**"Fight the grey dots"** - An expression used for pushing sub editors to send pictures as soon as possible. An unsent picture would appear as a grey dot; a picture which was already sent out would immediately turn green.

**"Hold the picture!"-** When a photographer identifies a certain problem with pictures which were already sent out (a word misspelled in a caption, for example), he would then immediately contact the Global Pictures Desk. If the picture was not yet sent to clients, the sub editor who received the call would shout "hold the picture!" with its specific details, notifying his fellow editors not to send it away.

**Travelling light-** In stressful environments and during time sensitive events the photographer would move around carrying only his cameras.

**A Returned picture-** A picture was distributed by the Global Pictures Desk and was then published by one or several of the agency's clients. A photographer would then spot his picture as it was published; it then returns to him, only now he is its spectator.

**"The Japanese phone"** - Since Reuters' biggest clients come from Japan, a specific telephone set is used only for speaking with Japanese clients. Given that most of the

Japanese clients' editors do not speak English very well, two of the sub editors on the global pictures desk speak fluent Japanese and would therefore answer the Japanese phone whenever it rings and accept their special requests (calls from Japan are also received in other telephone sets other than the Japanese phone, and would be addressed to a Japanese speaker on the desk if necessary).

**To push a picture-** Means sending one to clients. It is often used to demonstrate the importance of speed while sending the pictures to Reuters' clients.

**A slug-** Each caption that is attached to a picture receives a tagged title of some sort called a 'slug'. A violent event between Israelis and Palestinians, for instance, would appear as 'Palestinians/Israel/violence'.

**A grab-** Using a single frame from a video footage and sending it to clients as an image.

**Mods and Gizmos-** Both are terms used in 'The Guardian' to describe the smaller pictures which appear on the paper. 'Mods' (as these are attached to modular stories) are small pictures attached to a story, and the tiny ones are called 'Gizmos'. Sometimes Gizmos appear as pictures, but in many cases they appear simply as a graphic figure (say '30%') alongside a story; then it is free and saves money instead of paying for the use of a freelance photographer's picture.

**The 'MED' (Media Editor)-** Also known as the 'File', is the term used to describe all the pictures flowing into the global pictures desk in Singapore and kept in the system on a daily basis. Most of these pictures are eventually sent to clients, some are spiked and some are also dealt with at different departments, such as the magazine desk or the keyword team.

**'Direct/Inject'-** The term used to describe the process in which certain photographers or local editors are authorised to send pictures directly to clients; it is a process which often occurs during big events with sensitive time frames, where a large number of pictures was taken.

## Bibliography

*Abbott, L.* (1986) *Comic Art: Characteristics and Potentialities of a Narrative Medium.*

In: Journal of Popular Culture 19(4): P. 155-176.

*Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M.* (1977/1944) *The culture industry: enlightenment as mass deception.* In: Curran, J., Gurevitch, M. and Wollacot, J. (eds.) Mass communication and society. London: Edward Arnold. P. 349-383.

*Anderson, B.* (1991) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. London: Routledge.

*Appadurai, A.* (1996) Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

*Azoulay, A.* (2008) The civil contract of photography. New York: Zone books.

*Bailo, T.* (1985) The American film industry. London: University of Wisconsin Press, revised edition.

*Bagdikian, B.* (2000) The media monopoly. (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Boston: Beacon Press.

*Barthes, R.* (1984) Camera Lucida: Reflections of photography. London: Fontana.

*Barthes, R.* (1977) *The photographic message.* In: Heath, S. (ed) Image, Music, Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 15-31.

*Barthes, R.* (1977) *From work to text.* In: Heath, S. (ed) Image-Music-Text. New York: Hill and Wang. P. 155-164.

*Barthes, R.* (1977) *The third meaning: Research notes on some Eisenstein stills.* In: Heath, S.(ed) Image-Music-Text. New York: Hill and Yang. P. 52-68.

*Barthes, R.* (1973) *Myth today.* In: Mythologies. London: Grafton books. P. 74-117.

*Barthes, R.* (1973) *The great family of man.* In: Mythologies. London: Grafton books. P. 107-111.

- Baudelaire, C.* (1859) The Salon of 1859. In: Chrvet, P. E. (1981) (ed.) Baudelaire, Selected writings on Art and Artists. Cambridge: Cambridge University press. P. 285-325.
- Bazin, A.* (1967) The Ontology of the Photograph. In: Gray, H. (ed) What is Cinema? Vol 1. Berkeley: University of California Press. P. 9-16.
- Benjamin, W.* (1992) The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In: Illuminations. London: Fontana. P. 211-244.
- Berger, J.* (1972) Ways of seeing. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Berkowitz, D.* (2000) Doing Double Duty: Paradigm Repair and the Princess Diana what-a-story. In: Journalism 1(2): P. 125-143.
- Bielsa, E.* (2008) The pivotal role of news agencies in the context of globalization: a historical approach. In: Global Networks 8(3). P. 347-366.
- Bloom, H.* (1975) A Map of Misreading, London: Oxford UP.
- Bourdieu, P.* (1993) The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on art and literature. Cambridge: Polity press.
- Bourdieu, P.* (1986) Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste. London: Routledge.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T.* (2004) News Agencies as News Sources: A Reevaluation . In: Paterson, C. & Sreberny, A. (eds.) International News In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Eastleigh: University of Luton Press. P. 31-46.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T.* (1998) The globalization of news. London: Sage Publications.
- Boyd-Barrett, O.* (2000) National and international news agencies: issues of crisis and realignment. In: Gazette, Vol. 62(1). P. 5-18.

- Boyd-Barrett, O.* (1998) 'Global' News Agencies. In: *Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T.* (eds.) The Globalization of News. London: Sage. P. 19-34.
- Boyd-Barrett, O.* (1980) The International News Agencies. London: Constable.
- Burgin, V.* (1982) Thinking photography. London: Macmillan.
- Burns, T.* (1977) The BBC: Public institution, private world. Basingstoke: Mcmillan.
- Burns, T.* (1972) Commitment and career in the BBC. In: *Mcquail, D.* (ed.) Sociology of mass communications. London: Penguin. P. 281-310
- Carey, J. W.* (1989) A cultural approach to communication. In: Communication as culture: Essays on Media and society. London: Unwin Hyman. P. 13-36.
- Chouliaraki, L.* (2006) The spectatorship of suffering. London: Sage Publications.
- Clark, D.* (ed) (1993) The Sociology of Death. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Clausen, L.* (2004) Localizing the Global: 'domestication' processes in international news production. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 26(1): P. 25-44.
- Clausen, L.* (2003) Global News Production. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business school press.
- Clausen, L.* (2003b) Global News Communication Strategies- 9.11.2002 Around the World. In: Nordicom review No. 3. Fall Edition. Goteborg: Nordicom. P. 105-116.
- Clifford, J. & Marcus, G. E.* (1986) Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. California: University Press.
- Cohen, A., Levy, M. R., Roeh, I. & Gurevitch, M.* (1996) Global Newsrooms, Local Audiences: A Study of the Eurovision News Exchange. London: John Libbey & Company Ltd.
- Couldry, N.* (2000) Inside culture. London: Sage.
- Curran, J. & Seaton, J.* (2003) Power without Responsibility: The press and broadcasting in Britain. London: Routledge (6<sup>th</sup> edition).

*Curran, J., Douglas, A. and Whannel, G.* (1980) The political economy of the human-interest story. In Smith, A. (ed.) Newspapers and democracy. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. P. 288-342.

*Defoore, J.* (2005) Reinventing the Wires: How Getty images is shaking Up the Wire service Business, and what AP and Reuters are Doing in Response. In: PDN. <[http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/eseach/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1000865082](http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/eseach/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000865082)>.

*Dimaggio, P. and Hirsch, P. M.* (1976) Production organizations in the arts. In: Peterson, R. A. (ed) The production of culture. Beverly Hills/London: Sage Publications. P. 73-91.

*Dreier, P.* (1982) Capitalists vs. the media: an analysis of an ideological mobilization among business leaders. In: Media, Culture and Society, 4. P. 111-132.

*Du Gay, P., Hall, S. Janes, L., Mackay, H. and Negus, K.* (1997) Doing cultural studies: the story of the Sony walkman. London: Sage.

*Du Gay, P.* (1997) Production of culture/cultures of production. London: Sage.

*Edwards, E.* (1992) Photography and Anthropology: 1860-1920 . New Haven: Yale, University Press.

*Ekman, P. & Friesen, W. V.* (1987) Universal and Cultural Differences in the Judgments of Facial Expressions of Emotion. In: Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 53(4): P. 712-717.

*Elliott, P.* (1977) Media organizations and occupations: an overview. In: Curran, J., Gurevitch, M. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) Mass communication and society. London: the Open University. P. 142- 173.

*Ellis, J.* (2000) Seeing Things: Television in the Age of Uncertainty. London, I. B: Tauris.

- Epstein, E. J.* (1973) News from nowhere. New York: Random house.
- Evans, H.* (1997) Pictures on a page: Photo-journalism, graphics and picture editing. London: Pimlico.
- Ewha, B. J.* (2003) News agency Wars: The Battle between Reuters and Bloomberg. In: Journalism Studies Vol. 4(3) : P. 387-399.
- Fenby, J.* (1986) The International News Services. New York: Shocken Books.
- Fishman, M.* (1990/1980) Manufacturing the news. Austin: University of Texas press.
- Foucault, M.* (1980). Power/ Knowledge. Brighton: Harvester.
- Frosh, P.* (2006) What's Behind the Spectacle? An Update on Stock Photography and the Visual Content Industry. In: Journal of the Arts Council of Korea, No. 3 (Summer). P. 256-278.
- Frosh, P.* (2003) The image factory: consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry. London, New York: Berg.
- Frosh, P.* (2000) The Image Factory: Stock Photography, Cultural Production and the Image- Repertoire. PhD, Jerusalem: Hebrew University.
- Gallagher, M.* (1982) Negotiations of control in media organizations and occupations. In: Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) Culture, society and the media. London: Routledge. P. 151-173.
- Galtung, J. and Ruge, M. H.* (1965) The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers. In: Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 2, No. 1. P. 64-90.
- Gans, H.* (1979) Deciding what's news: a study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek and Time. New York: Pantheon.

*Garnham, N.* (1995) Political economy and cultural studies: reconciliation or divorce?. In: Critical Studies in Media Communication, Vol. 12 (1) March 1995, P. 60-71.

*Garnham, N.* (1990) Capitalism and communication: Global culture and the economics of information. London: Sage.

*Garnham, N.* (1979) Contribution to a political economy of mass communication. In: Media, Culture and Society, 1(2): P. 123-146.

*Geertz, C.* (1973) The interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic books.

*Gendron, B.* (1986) Theodor Adorno meets the cadillacs. In: Modelski, T. (ed.) Studies in Entertainment. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IA, Indiana: University Press. P. 18-36.

*Giddens, A.* (1991) Modernity and Self- Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

*Golding, P. and Murdock, G.* (2005) Culture, communications and political economy. In: Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) Mass media and society (4<sup>th</sup> edn). London: Arnold/New York: Oxford University Press. P. 60-84.

*Gregory, K.* (1983) Native view Paradigms: Multiple cultures and culture conflicts in organizations .In: Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 28(3). P. 359-376.

*Grossberg, L.* (1995) Cultural studies vs. political economy: is anyone else bored with this debate?. In: Critical studies in mass communication. Vol. 12(1), P. 72-81.

*Gurevitch, M., Levy, M. R. & Roeh, I.* (1991) The Global News Room: convergences and diversities in the globalization of television news. In: Dahlgren, P. & Sparks, C. (eds.) Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere. London: Routledge. P. 195-216.



*Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (1982) Culture, society and the media. London: Routledge.*

*Gürsel, Z. D. (2007) The Image industry: The work of international news photographs in the age of digital reproduction. PhD, Berkley: University of California.*

*Hall, S. (1992) Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies. In: Grossberg, L. , Nelson, C. and Treichler, P. (eds.) Cultural studies, New York: Routledge. P. 277-294.*

*Hall, S. (1973) The Determinations of News Photographs. In: Cohen, S. and Yong, J. (eds.) The manufacture of news. Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage. P. 176-190.*

*Hallin, D. C. and Mancini, P. (2005) Comparing media systems. In: Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) Mass media and society (4<sup>th</sup> edition). London: Hodder Arnold. P. 215-233.*

*Hamilton, J. T. (2004) All the news that's fit to sell: how the market transforms information into news. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.*

*Hampton, K. & Wellman, B. (2002) The not so Global Village of Netville. In: Wellman, B. & Haythornthwaite, C. (eds.) The Internet in Everyday Life. Blackwell publications: London. P. 345-371.*

*Harcup, T. & O'Neill, D. (2001) What is News? Galtung and Ruge Revisited. In: Journalism Studies Vol. 2(2): P. 261-280.*

*Harding, J. & Pribram, E. D. (2002) The power of Feeling. In: Cultural Studies, Vol. 5(4): P. 407-426.*

*Hardt, H. & Brennen, B. (1999) Picturing the Past: Media, History and Photography. Chicago: Illinois, University Press.*

*Heath, S. & Skirrow, G. (1986) An interview with Raymond Williams .In: Modelski, T. (ed) Studies in Entertainment: Cultural Approaches to Mass Culture. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. P. 3-17.*

- Heffernan, J. A. W.* (1993) Museum of words: The poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Herman, E. S. & McChesney, R.* (2001) The Global Media : The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism. London and New York: Continuum.
- Herman, E. S. and Chomsky, N.* (1988) Manufacturing consent. New York: Pantheon.
- Heron, M.* (1996) How to shoot stock photos that sell. New York: Allworth.
- Hesmondhalgh, D.* (2002) The cultural industries. London: Sage.
- Hogarth, P.* (1986) The artist as reporter. London: Gordon Fraser.
- Holtzman, A.* (1997) Literature and plastic art. Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuhad and the Rabinovitz foundation for the arts. [Hebrew].
- Horvit, B.* (2006) International News Agencies and the War Debate of 2003. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 68(5-6): P. 427-447.
- Jensen, J.* (1984) An Interpretive approach to cultural production. In: Rowland, W. and Watkins, B. (eds) Interpreting Television. London: Sage. P. 98-119.
- Kadushin, C.* (1976) Networks and circles in the production of culture. In : Peterson, R. A. (ed) The production of culture. Beverly Hills/London: Sage Publications. P. 107-123.
- Katz, E. & Dayan, D.* (1985) Media Events: On the Experience of not Being there. In: Religion 15(3): P. 305-314.
- Kellner, D.* (1995) 'Cultural studies, multiculturalism and media culture'. In: Dines, G. and Humez, J.M. (eds.) Gender, race and class in media: A text-reader. London, Sage. P. 5-17.
- Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T.* (1998) Front Pages: (The Critical) Analysis of Newspaper Layout. In: Bell, A. and Garrett, P. (eds) Approached to Media Discourse. London: Blackwell. P. 186-220.

- Labov, W.* (1997) Some Further Steps in Narrative Analysis. In: Journal of narrative and life history ,7. P. 1-13. <<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/sfs.html>>.
- Lash, S.* (1988) Discourse or figure? Postmodernism as a Regime of signification. In: Theory, Culture and Society 5: P. 311-336.
- Leong, S. T.* (2009) A picture you already know. In: Klein, A. (ed) Words without pictures. Los Angeles: Lacma. P. 250-262.
- Liebes, T.* (1992) Our War/ Their War : Comparing the Intifada and the Gulf War on US and Israeli Television. In: Critical Studies in Mass Communication 9(1): P. 44-55.
- Lih, A.* (2004) Wikipedia as participatory journalism: Reliable sources? Metrics for evaluating collaborative media as a news source. Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> international Symposium on on-line Journalism, April 16-17, 2004, Austin: Texas. P. 1-31 <<http://online.journalism.utexas.edu/2004/papers/wikipedia.pdf>>.
- Lutz, C.A, & Collins, J.L.* (1993) Reading National Geographic. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.
- Lutz, C. A. & Abu-Lughod, L.* (1990) Language and the politics of emotion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mattelart, A.* (ed.) (1986) Communicating in popular Nicaragua. New York: International general.
- Maynard, M. & Tian, Y.* (2004) Between Global and Glocal: Content Analysis of the Chinese Web Sites of the 100 Top Global Brands. In: Public Relations Review 30: P. 285-291.
- Mcmanus, J. H.* (1994) Market driven journalism: Let the citizen beware. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.
- Mcquail, D.* (1994) Mass Communication Theory. London: Sage.

- Mellor, P. A.* (1993) Death in High Modernity: The contemporary presence and Absence of Death. In: Clark, D. (ed) The Sociology of Death . Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. P. 11-30.
- Michel, U.* (2000) The art of seeing: The best of Reuters photography. London: Reuters.
- Mie'ge, B.* (1989) The capitalization of cultural production. New York: International general.
- Mie'ge, B.* (1987) The logics at work in the new cultural industries. In: Media, Culture and Society, 9: P. 273-289.
- Mie'ge, B.* (1979) The Cultural commodity. In: Media, Culture and Society, 1: P. 297-311.
- Mitchell, W. J. T.* (2002) Showing seeing: A critique of visual culture. In: Journal of visual culture, Vol. 1(2): P. 165-181.
- Mitchell, W. J. T.* (1994) Picture theory. Chicago: University of Chicago press.
- Mitchell, W. J. T.* (1992) The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post Photographic Era. Cambridge, MA: the MIT Press.
- Molotch, H. & Lester, M.* (1974) News as purposive behaviour: on the strategic use of routine events, accidents and scandals. In: Tumber, H. (ed) (1999) News: A Reader. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P. 37-49.
- Mosco, V.* (2009) The political economy of communication. London: Sage.
- Murdock, G.* (1982) Large corporations and the control of the communications industries. In: Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. (eds.) Culture, society and the media. London: Routledge. P. 118-150.

- Murdock, G. and Golding, P.* (1973) For a political economy of mass communications. In: Miliband, R. and Saville, J. (eds.) Socialist Register. London: Merlin Press. P. 205-234.
- Murdock, G.* (1973) Political deviance: The press presentation of a militant mass demonstration. In: Cohen, S. and Young, J. (eds.) The manufacture of news: a reader. Beverly Hills: Sage. P. 156-175.
- Negus, K.* (1997) The Production of Culture. In: P. Du Gay (ed.) Production of Culture/ Cultures of Production. Open University/Sage, Milton Keynes/London. P. 68-102.
- Negus, K.* (1992) Producing pop: Culture and conflict in the popular music industry. London: Edward Arnold.
- Ngugi Wa, T.* (1986) Decolonising the mind. London: James Curry.
- Nossek, H.* (2004) Our News and Their News. In: Journalism Vol. 5(3): P. 343- 368.
- O'Neil, O.* (2002) A question of trust: the BBC Reith lectures 2002. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Pantti, M. & Wieten, J.* (2005) Mourning Becomes the Nation: Television Coverage of the murder of Pim Fortuyn. In: Journalism Studies 6(3): P. 301-313.
- Paterson, C.* (2006) News agency dominance in international news on the internet. In: Papers in International and global communication No. 01\06. May. P. 1-24.  
<<http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/cicr/exhibits/42/cicrpateron.pdf>>.
- Pedelty, M.* (1995) War stories: the culture of foreign correspondents. London: Routledge.)
- Perminger, A.* (2001) Intertextuality and the work of Francois Truffaut. PhD, Tel Aviv: University of Tel Aviv. [Hebrew].
- Peters, J. D.* (2001) Witnessing. In: Media, Culture and Society, 23(6). P. 707-723.

- Peterson, R. A.* (1976) The production of culture. Beverly Hills/London: Sage Publications.
- Picard, R. G.* (2004) The economics of the news paper industry. In: Alexander, A., Owers, J., Carveth, R., Hollifield, A. C. and Greco, A. N. (eds.) Media economics: Theory and practice (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum. P. 109-126.
- Pike, R. & Winseck, D.* (2004) The Politics of Global Media Reform , 1907-23. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 26(5): P. 643-675.
- Rabinow, P.* (1984) The Foucault reader: an introduction to Foucault's thought. London: Penguin books.
- Rafaeli, S. Hayat, T. And Ariel, Y.* (2009) Knowledge building and motivations in Wikipedia: Participating as "Ba". In: Ricardo, F. J. (ed.) Cyberculture and New Media. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi. P. 51-68.
- Rantanen, T.* (2002) The Global and the National: Media and Communications In Post Communist Russia. Boulder: Rawman & Littlefield.
- Read, D.* (1999) The power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849-1989. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Riffaterre, M.* (1990) Compulsory Reader Response: the Intertextual Drive. In: Worton, M. & Still, J. (Ed), Intertextuality- Theories and practices, Manchester: Manchester UP. P. 56-78.
- Ritchin, F.* (1990) In Our own Image: the coming revolution in photography. New York: Aperture.
- Robertson, R.* (1995) Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. & Robertson, R. (eds.) Global modernities. London: Sage Publications. P. 25-44.

- Robertson, R.* (1992) Globalization, social theory and Global Culture. London: Sage.
- Robins, K.* (1995) Will Image move us still?. In: Lister, M. (ed) The Photographic Image in Digital Culture. London and New York: Routledge. P. 29-49.
- Rosenblum, B.* (1978) Photographers at work: A sociology of Photographic Styles. New York: Holmes and Meier.
- Rosenblum, B.* (1978) Style as social process. In: American Sociological Review, Vol. 43 (June). P. 422-438.
- Rubinstein, D. & Sluis, K.* (2008) A life more photographic: Mapping the networked image. In: Photographies, Vol. 1(1) March. P. 9-28.
- Ryan, B.* (1992) Making Capital from Culture: The Corporate Form of Capitalist Cultural Production. New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Saville-Troike, M.* (1989) The Ethnography of Communication: An introduction. Basil Blackwell: New York.
- Schudson, M.* (2005) Four approaches to the sociology of news. In: Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. (eds.) Mass media and society (4<sup>th</sup> edition). London: Hodder Arnold. P. 172-197.
- Schudson, M.* (1989) The sociology of news production. In: Media, Culture & Society, 11: P. 263-282.
- Schudson, M.* (1978) Discovering the news: A social history of American newspapers. New York: Basic books.
- Schiller, H.* (1976) Communication and Cultural Domination. New York: Sharpe.
- Schwartz, D.* (1999) Objective Representation: Photographs as Facts. In: Brennen, B. & Hardt, H. (eds) Picturing the Past: Media, History and Photography. Chicago: Illinois, University Press. P. 158-181.

- Seaton, J.* (2005) Carnage and the Media: The making and breaking of news about violence. London: Penguin.
- Sekula, A.* (2003) Reading an archive: Photography between labour and capital. In: Wells, L. (ed) The photography reader. London: Routledge. P. 443-452.
- Sekula, A.* (1986) The body and the archive. In: October, Vol. 39 (Winter). P. 3-64.
- Shkedi, A.* (2003) Words Trying to Touch: Qualitative Research- Theory and Practice. Tel Aviv: Ramot. [Hebrew]
- Sontag, S.* (1979) On Photography. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Tagg, J.* (1988) The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories. London: Mcmillan.
- Thompson, M.* (2008) The trouble with trust. In: The Political Quarterly, Vol. 79(3), July-September: P. 303-313.
- Tomlinson, J.* (1999) Globalization and culture. Blackwell publishers: Polity.
- Tuchman, G.* (1991) Media institutions: Qualitative methods in the study of news. In: Jensen, K. B. and Jankowski, N. W. (eds.) A hand book of qualitative methodologies for mass communication research. London and New York: Routledge. P. 79-92.
- Tuchman, G.* (1978) Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality. New York: Free Press.
- Tuchman, G.* (1976) Telling Stories. In: Journal of Communication 26(Fall) : P. 93-97.
- Tuchman, G.* (1973) Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected. In: American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 79(1), P.110-131.
- Tunstall, J. and Palmer, M.* (1991) Media moguls. London: Routledge.
- UNESCO* (1982) Culture industries: a challenge for the future of culture. Paris, UNESCO: France. P. 1-223.
- <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/Ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=49972&gp=0&lin=1&ll=1>>.



- Volkmer, I.* (1999) News in the global sphere: A study of CNN and its impact on global communication. Luton: University of Luton.
- Wellman, B. & Hampton, K.* (1999) Living networked on and off line. In: Contemporary Sociology: 28(6). P. 648-654.
- Wells, L.* (ed) (2004) Photography: A Critical Introduction. London: Routledge.
- White, D. M.* (1950) The Gatekeeper: A case study in the selection of news. In: Journalism Quarterly, 27: P. 383-390.
- Wilke, J.* (1998) The Struggle for Control of Domestic News Markets (2). In: Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (eds.) The Globalization of News. London: Sage. P. 49-60.
- Williams, R.* (1981) Culture. London: Fontana.
- Williams, R.* (1974) Television, Technology and Cultural form. London: Fontana.
- Williams, R.* (1961) The long revolution. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Wittle, A.* (2004) Culture, labour and subjectivity: for a political economy from below. In: Capital and class, 84: P. 11-30.
- Xin, X.* (2006) A Developing Market in News: Xinhua News agency and Chinese Newspapers In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 28(1): P. 45-66.
- Zandberg, E. & Neiger, M.* (2005) Between the Nation and the Profession: Journalists as Members of Contradicting Communities. In: Media, Culture and Society Vol. 27(1): P. 131-141.
- Zelizer, B.* (1995) Journalist's "Last" Stand: Wire photo and the discourse of Resistance. In: Journal of Communication 45(2), Spring: P. 78-92.
- Zelizer, B.* (1993) Journalists as Interpretative Community. In: Critical Studies in Mass Communication 10: P. 219-237.

## Additional Sources and Websites

### Additional sources

1. Allen, K. "Thomson Reuters merger moves closer". Business. The Guardian. 19 February 2008.  
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2008/feb/19/reutersgroup.reuters>>.
2. Fenby, J. "Glen Renfrew: The man who took Reuters to market and into the digital age". Obituary. The Guardian. 7 July 2006.  
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/jul/07/reuters.pressandpublishing>>.
3. Handworker, C. "Tom Glocer, Reuters CEO: If people pay for a ringtone, why not pay to read 2,000 words?". Consumerism. The Marker. 24 October 2009. [Hebrew] <<http://www.themarker.com/consumer/1.538405>>.
4. Irby, K. "Super bowl XLI coverage: A new era with all the comforts of home". Poynter. 3 February 2007. <<http://www.poynter.org/uncategorized/80603/super-bowl-xli-coverage-a-new-era-with-all-the-comforts-of-home/#>>.
5. Johnson, C. "Reuters doctoring photos from Beirut? ". Little Green footballs. 5 August 2006. <[http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=21956\\_Reuters\\_Doctoring\\_Photos\\_from\\_Beirut&only](http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=21956_Reuters_Doctoring_Photos_from_Beirut&only)>.
6. Keinan, E. "Reuters CEO: good news are coming from surfers". Computers. Ynet. 21 October 2009. [Hebrew]  
<<http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3793342,00.html>>.
7. Lang, D. "Reuters photojournalist and his driver killed in Baghdad". PDN. 12 July 2007 <<http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/>>

- [esearch/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1003611067>.](#)
8. Lang, D. "Reuters investigation leads to dismissal of editor". PDN. 18 January 2007 <[http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/esearch/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1003534746](http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/esearch/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003534746)>.
  9. Lappin, Y. and Bodoni, R. "Reuters admits: The picture was doctored with the help of a graphic software design". World. Ynet. 6 August 2006. [Hebrew] <<http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3287145,00.html>>.
  10. Lappin, Y. "Reuters admits to more image manipulation". News. Ynet. 8 July 2006 <<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3287774,00.html>>.
  11. "Reuters drops Beirut photographer". BBC News. 6 August 2006. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/5254838.stm>>.
  12. Schlesinger, D. "Report on Reuters actions after publishing altered photographs". Blogs dashboard. Reuters. 18 January 2007. <<http://blogs.reuters.com/blog/archives/4322>>.
  13. Seelye, K. Q. & Bosman, J. "Bloggers drive inquiry on how altered images saw print". Technology. The New York Times. 9 August 2006. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/09/technology/09photo.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=bloggers%20drive%20inquiry%20on%20how%20altered%20images%20saw%20print&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/09/technology/09photo.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=bloggers%20drive%20inquiry%20on%20how%20altered%20images%20saw%20print&st=cse)>.
  14. Shuckleford, R. "Another fake Reuters photo from Lebanon". My Pet Jawa. 6 August 2006 <<http://mypetjawa.mu.nu/archives/184206.php>>.
  15. "Thomson and Reuters agree on 17\$ billion merger". Mergers and acquisitions. Dealbook. The New York Times. 15 May 2007 <<http://dealbook.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/05/15/thomson-and-reuters-agree-to-17-billion-merger/>>.

16. Prakash, V. "Training for the unforeseen". Photographers blog. Reuters. 8 May 2008 <<http://blogs.reuters.com/photographers-blog/2008/05/08/11373/>>.
17. Wearden, G. & Allen, K. "Reuters agree to Thomson merger". News. Media. The Guardian. 15 May 2007 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2007/may/15/reuters.pressandpublishing>>.

## Websites

1. [www.bearstearns.com](http://www.bearstearns.com) (for Bear Stearns Company Inc.)
2. [www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com) (Bloomberg)
3. [www.epa.eu](http://www.epa.eu) (European Press photo Association)
4. 'Freedom forum journalists memorial' website (<http://www.newseum.org/scripts/Journalist/orgDetail.asp?size=10&page=1&orgID=598>)
5. [www.gannett.com](http://www.gannett.com) (the American news, information and communications company Gannett)
6. [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk) (The Guardian. For the Guardian's writing style see <http://www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide>).
7. [www.lehman-docket.com](http://www.lehman-docket.com) (for the official file for bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc.)
8. [www.mcclatchy.com](http://www.mcclatchy.com) (The American communications company)
9. [www.pmo.gov.il](http://www.pmo.gov.il) (Israeli government press office)
10. [www.Thomsonreuters.com](http://www.Thomsonreuters.com) (for Reuters pictures see [http://pictures.reuters.com/c/C.aspx?VP=XSpecific\\_REU.HomePageSpotlight\\_VPage](http://pictures.reuters.com/c/C.aspx?VP=XSpecific_REU.HomePageSpotlight_VPage).)
11. [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)