



WORLD PRESS PHOTO

# THE STATE OF NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY 2018

*Photojournalists' attitudes toward work practices,  
technology and life in the digital age*

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Cover photo:  
Li Huaifeng, China  
*Earth Kilm*  
People, Singles | 3rd Prize  
2018 World Press Photo Contest

# INTRODUCTION

In 2015 the World Press Photo Foundation, the University of Stirling, and Oxford University's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism launched the State of News Photography survey to document the hopes, fears, practices and changes in the work lives of those who make a living from taking photographs in the digital age. Over the last four years, these annual surveys produced an unrivalled database of insights.

Along with the reports published by the World Press Photo Foundation (see Hadland, Campbell and Lambert 2015, Hadland Lambert and Barnett 2016), the data has enabled scholars to publish more detailed research on issues such as gender within photojournalism (Hadland and Barnett 2018), the state of sports photojournalism (Haynes, Hadland and Lambert 2016), as well as to further investigate the high degree of risk to which so many photographers are frequently exposed (Hadland, Lambert and Campbell 2016).

While a survey of photographers who have entered the annual World Press Photo Contest between 2015 and 2018 provides detailed insights into the lives of working photographers, many photographers do not enter the competition for a variety of reasons. As a result, we do not claim that this data represents all photographers or the industry as a whole. However, detailed responses from 5,202 photographers from more than 100 countries over four years does capture many of the key issues facing people who choose to make a living from photography.

This report will summarise some of our key findings over the last four years, identify new areas of interest, and reflect, in particular, on issues of gender and diversity and their impact on the industry going forward.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## EDUCATION

- Photographers who participated in the survey are highly educated with over 70% possessing university degrees, mostly in photography, journalism and the arts and humanities.
- The proportion of photographers who received ‘in-house’ training fell from 25% of participants in 2015 to 21% in 2018.

## EMPLOYMENT

- There has been a significant decline in the number of photographers who work full-time in photography, from 74% of our respondents in 2015 to 59% in 2018.
- The proportion who identify themselves as “Press Photographers” is down from 14% in 2015 to 12% in 2018.
- The number of photographers working as stringers rose from 24% in 2016 to 28% in 2018.
- Photographers required to provide video increased from 32% in 2015 to 39% in 2018. More than 90% would prefer to shoot stills only.

## TECHNOLOGY AND PLATFORMS

- Fewer and fewer of the participants indicated they still use film cameras (18% in 2018, down from 26% of respondents in 2015)
- There was a strong increase in the use of drones from 3% of respondents saying they were using this technology in 2015 to more than 8% by 2018.
- Photographers have shifted from Facebook to Instagram as the preferred social media platform.

## SECURITY

- About 38% of photographers admit their financial circumstances are difficult or very difficult.
- Use of unauthorised work has risen from 62% of respondents being affected in 2015 to 65% in 2018. Fewer than a quarter of respondents were able to extract payment for the unauthorised use of their work.
- More photographers in our study reported they had received financial benefits as a direct result of social media, up from 25% in 2015 to 30% in 2018.
- Less than one in five of respondents said they were “unhappy” with their current assignments as photographers, with the overwhelming majority (over 62%) either happy or very happy.

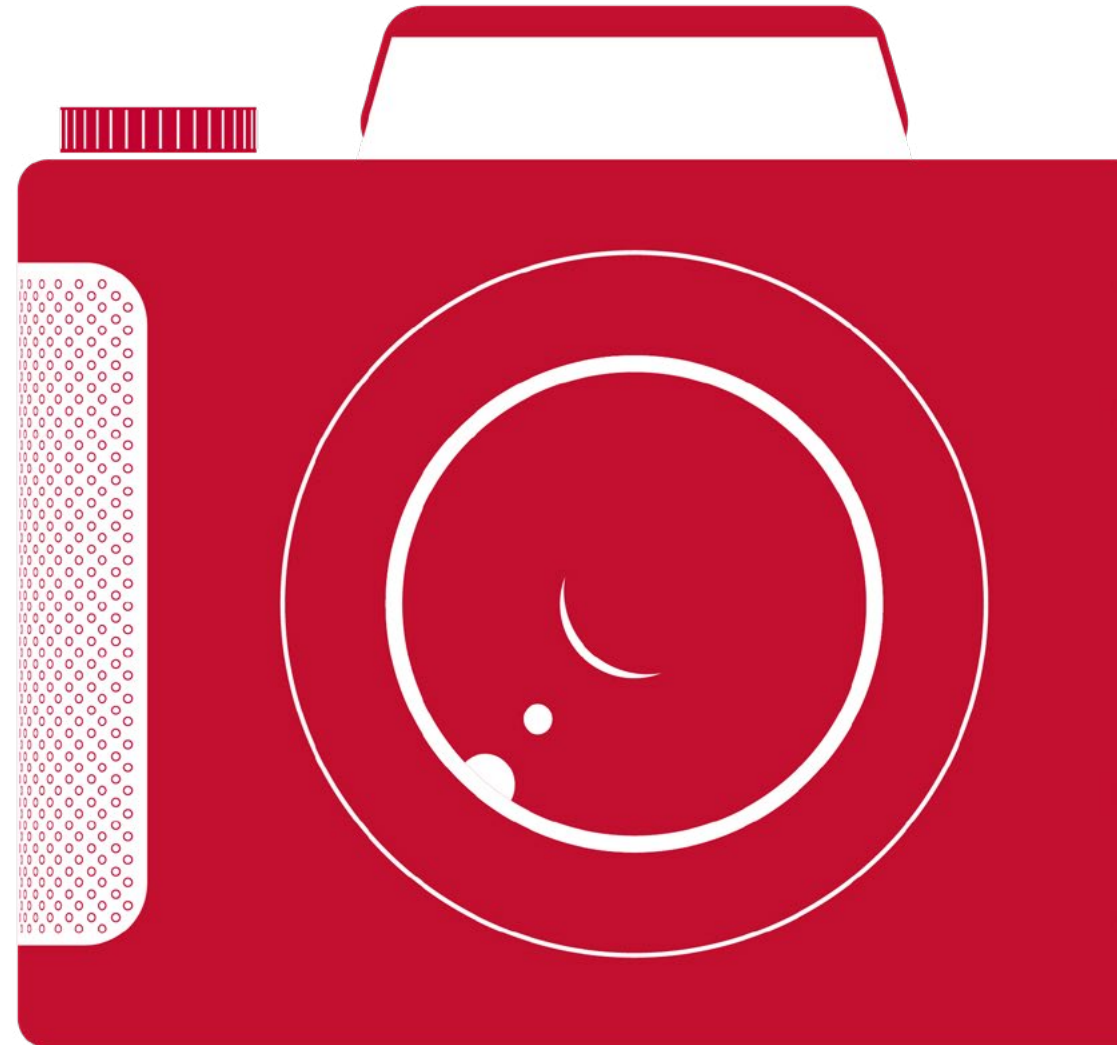
## DEMOGRAPHICS

- More than half of participating photographers are Caucasian/White, over 80% are men and about two thirds are between the age of 30 and 49.
- Only 1% of participating photographers classify themselves as Black.
- Photographers identifying as non-Caucasian/non-White were significantly more likely to report facing physical risk at work. Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were also more likely to report risk of injury or death as their more pressing concern (49% non-Caucasian/non-White, 37% Caucasian/White).
- Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were also more likely to report that risks would increase a lot over the next 5 years (13% Caucasian/White, 21% non-Caucasian/non-White).
- 69% of women photographers participating in this study face discrimination in the workplace.

# EDUCATION

Photographers as a group are highly educated, this study suggests, with 74% of our respondents in 2018 having received a university education, up slightly from 68% when we first conducted the survey in 2015. Most of the degrees obtained by participants in the study were in photography, journalism or in the arts and humanities. Interestingly, the number of respondents who had received in-house training from their companies or organisations in photography declined from 25% of participants in 2015 to 21% in 2018.

This may reflect the shifting patterns of employment in the industry, with large media firms employing fewer and fewer full-time photographers and self-employment on the rise across the period.



# EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS AND WORK PRACTICES

In 2015, 60% of the participants counted themselves as self-employed. This rose slightly to 62% by 2018. Large media companies employed about 18% of the photographers participating in the study on long term contracts in 2018, down from 20% in 2015.

More significant is the proportion of participants who said they worked full-time as photographers. In 2015, 74% of our respondents said they were full-time photographers. By 2018, this had fallen substantially to 59%.

Around 14% of participating photographers called themselves “press photographers” in 2015. This dropped to 12% in 2018.

In the 2016 survey we asked participants for the first time whether they carried out any work as “stringers”, which we described as a journalist or photojournalist “who is not on the regular staff of an organisation, but who contributes work to that organisation”. Almost a quarter of the respondents (24%) agreed this is how they mostly worked in 2016. By the 2018 survey, 28% agreed they mostly worked as stringers.

In terms of income, the 2018 survey indicated a slight increase in the proportion of participants in the lowest income bracket (US\$0-9999pa), from 35% of respondents in 2015 to 33% in 2018. Other categories were more or less stable including a small decrease in the number of photographers in the highest income category (US\$100,000+) from 27 in 2015 to 21 in 2018.

In both years about 38% of the respondents agreed their financial situation was “difficult” or “very difficult”. The proportion of respondents who were “managing” financially also remained stable at around 40-41% across the survey period.

About a third of respondents across the four years of surveys remained positive about their income in the future and believed things were going to get better (33%), and a similar proportion (around 30-31%) believed things were going to get more difficult in the year ahead.

There has been a surprising degree of stability in the subject matter of photographers’ work over the course of our surveys. Participants, for instance, were asked “in general, which sort of photography generates most (of your income?)”. Just under a third of respondents, between 30% and 32%, indicated that news photography generated most of their income. About 20% said they relied mainly on commercial photography, 16% on documentary photography, 8% on personal projects, 6% on portraiture, 7% of respondents relied mainly on sports photography, and 2% made most of their income from entertainment-oriented photographs. All these figures are remarkably consistent over the survey period.

Similarly, when asked what kind of photography respondents spent “most of the time doing”, each year the majority said news, followed by personal projects, documentary photography, portraiture and sports photography. Participants were also asked to identify photography-oriented activities carried out in addition to commissioned work. These, too, remained largely unchanged across the research period. The majority of respondents said they earned extra income from commercial work, followed by personal projects, teaching and print sales. Fewer reported consultancies, crowdsourcing or exhibitions.

The data across four years shows that photographers are continuing to battle against the unauthorised use of their work, which has worsened over the period of the study. In 2015, 63% of the respondents said their work had been used without their permission. This had risen to 65% by the 2018 survey. Less than a quarter said they had been able to extract income from unauthorised use of their work, though this had increased marginally from 20% able to get payment in 2015 to 22% in 2018. *“Copyright is continually violated by other companies or people. We are very unprotected,”* wrote one participant in the 2018 survey. There evidently remains a large gap between work being taken without permission and payment being made for the use of those images.

One area of work practice in which there was a significant change relates to the rising requirement to take video as well as still photographs in the normal course of photographers' work. In 2015, 33% of respondents said they were required to shoot video, even though they overwhelmingly preferred still photography. By 2018, this had risen to almost 39% of respondents having to shoot video. The question prompted one respondent to ask (and answer) the question *"whether generally increased use (and expectation of use) of video is adversely affecting still photography. (I think it is)."*

Over the four years, the surveys also identified a gradually increasing expectation for photographers to participate in multimedia teams (52% said they "sometimes" worked in multimedia teams in 2015, increasing to 55% by 2018). The profession remains a solitary endeavour with more than 80% of respondents indicating they work alone, a proportion that barely changed between 2015 and 2018.

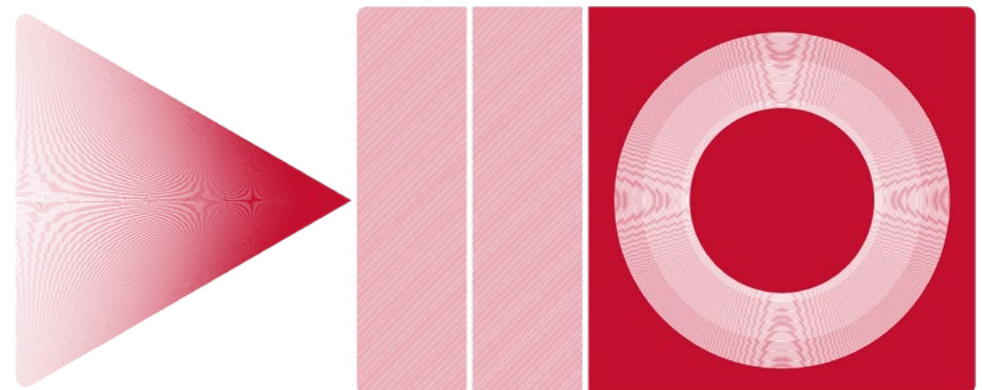
Citizen photographers continue to elicit a somewhat ambiguous response from the professional photographic community, this survey suggests. The proportion of respondents who feel negatively about the role and presence of citizen

photographers barely moved in statistical terms from 29% of respondents in 2015 to 28% in 2018. Similarly, about a third (36-37%) felt citizen photographers "added something new" to the industry. The focus of the criticism seemed to concentrate around the issue of the ethical practice of citizen photographers.

Contrasting views among the respondents were clearly evident. One respondent said: *"Photographers are starting to being treated as intruders, because of the huge amount of people with cameras, that have no standards".*

While another wrote: *"The accessibility people have to photography through cell phones and social media is great, as it offers so much more new work and different styles to look at and be inspired by... it's really phenomenal."*

A third respondent suggested that *"amateur photography forces professionals to be better, to understand the fundamentals of a good photo or a good story. Whether one perceives that as a threat or an opportunity depends on the mindset of the photographer."*



# ETHICS AND STAGING

Over the past four years we have tracked participants' attitudes toward the ethics of news photography in the digital era.

In our first State of News Photography report published in 2015, we found there was a “strong consensus” among our respondents on what the ethical rules are, or should be, when it comes to photography and the digital image. This consensus has remained resolute throughout the study period.

In the 2015 report, for instance, there was strong agreement that the manipulation of photographs was an important issue for the industry and 76% of photographers indicated they believed manipulation (addition or subtraction of material content in images) was a “very serious problem”. By the 2018 study, this had risen to 85% of respondents agreeing the manipulation of photographs constituted a “very serious issue” within the profession. Around 90% agreed it is critical that photographers understand professional ethics in 2018.

In spite of this level of consensus – which has risen slowly but consistently over the four years of the study – there has been evidence of mixed attitudes and practice on staging, manipulation and enhancement. In 2018, over half the respondents agreed they routinely enhanced their images by altering contrast, hue, tone or saturation and close to 20% agreed they altered the composition of their images by adding or removing content (other than cropping).

During the period of the study, the research team attempted to collect a more nuanced picture of photograph manipulation. For instance, the purpose of the photograph was found to greatly influence photographers' attitudes to staging. In 2016, more than 60% of the respondents said they staged photographs that were portraits, which is regarded as acceptable practice. Only 6% said they staged news photographs ‘to get a better news photograph’.

In 2018, there were still 6% of respondents (or 62 photographers) who agreed that getting a better news photograph was reason enough to stage their images.

*“I rarely stage my photographs on purpose,” wrote one respondent in the 2018 survey. “But I work in underdeveloped regions a lot and people are not used to having a camera around. When they find out I’m taking photographs of them, they almost never act naturally. I’m not sure if this counts as staging a photograph?”.*

The study's data does seem to suggest differing attitudes to image manipulation in different parts of the world. In the 2016 report, staging appeared more prevalent in Europe and Africa and less prevalent in Australia and North America.

Overall, the study indicates that photographers who took part in the research were generally against the idea of altering photographs, but seemed more tolerant of staging.



# TECHNOLOGIES AND PLATFORMS

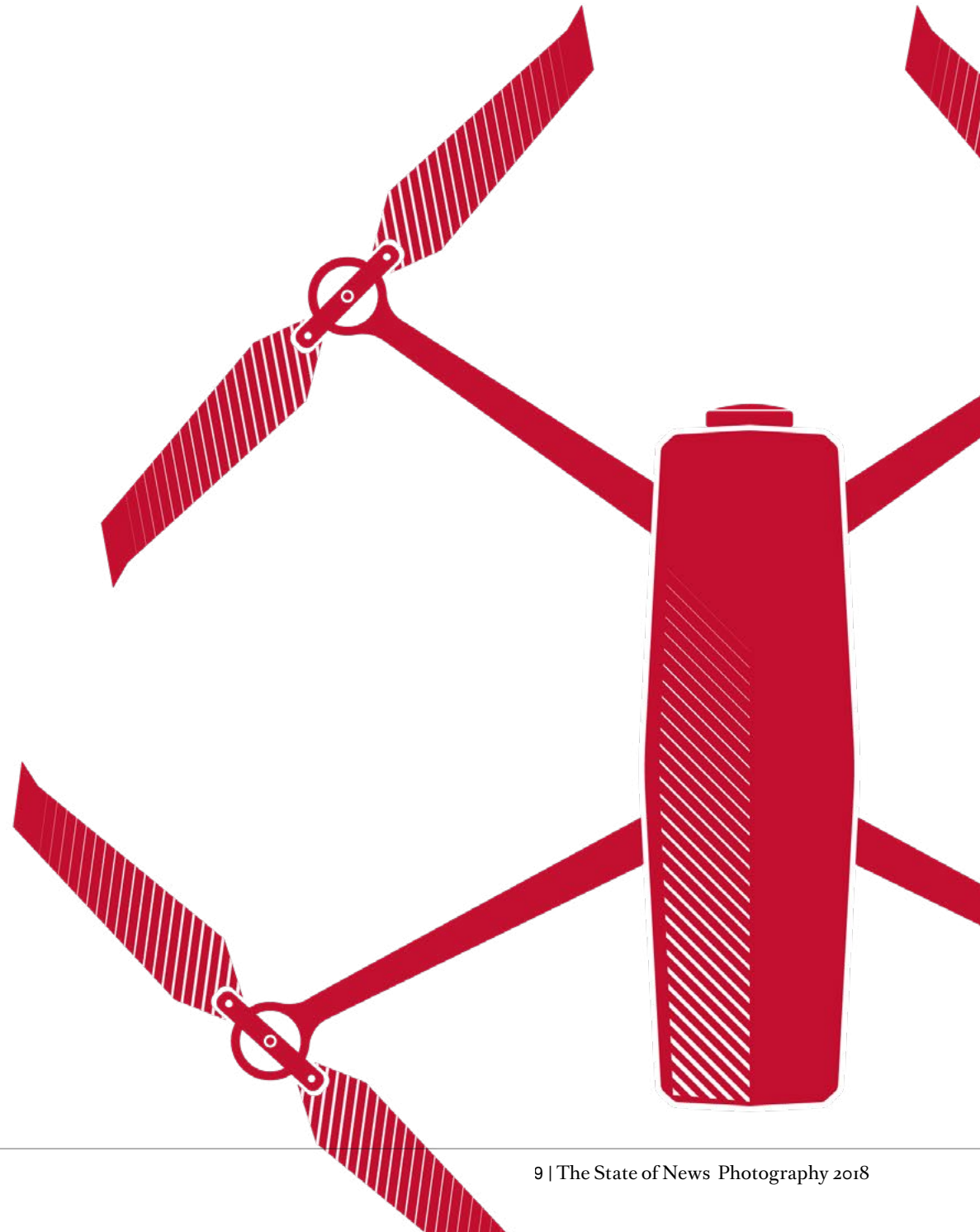
There were some changes in the use of technologies by photographers evidenced by this survey.

Fewer and fewer of the participants indicated they still use film cameras (26% of respondents in 2015 down to 18% in 2018), the use of digital cameras remained stable at around 98%. There was a dramatic increase in the use of drones, though admittedly off a low base, from 3% of respondents saying they were using this technology in 2015 to more than 8% by 2018.

The research period saw the rise of Instagram and the decline of Facebook as photographers' preferred social media platform. In 2015, 69% of respondents said Facebook was their primary social media resource. This had declined to 39% by 2018. Instagram, by contrast, was used by 9% of respondents as their primary social media platform in 2015. This rose to 49% in the 2018 study.

More photographers in our study reported they had received financial benefits as a direct result of social media, up from 25% in 2015 to 30% in 2018. A higher proportion of respondents said they used social media often or always in 2018 (60%) compared to 2015 (51%).

Around two thirds (65%) of the respondents in 2018 said they felt overwhelmed by the pace of technological change at least sometimes. This is very much consistent throughout the research period.



## SECURITY AND WELL-BEING



From the first survey in 2015, one of the most dramatic statistics has been the degree to which participating photographers feel they are at personal risk as they go about doing their work. This general trend was once more reaffirmed in the 2018 study with 91% of respondents feeling they were at risk while working as photographers.

When asked what most worried them, 42% of the respondents in 2018 indicated they were worried most by the risk of physical injury or death. More than half of the respondents said they believed that the risks of being a photographer would increase in the years ahead. The proportions of photographers who believe they face these levels of risk has remained very consistent across all four years of the study and among the more than 5,000 respondents.

In spite of these difficult circumstances, less than one in five of our respondents said they were “unhappy” with their current assignments as photographers, with the overwhelming majority (over 62%) either happy or very happy.

In addition, 95% of the respondents said they felt their work was valued at least sometimes (down slightly from 97% in 2015) and two thirds (66% in 2015, 65% in 2018) believed there would be increasing opportunities for visual storytelling in the future.

# DEMOGRAPHICS AND DIVERSITY

## 7.1 NATIONALITY

In the 2018 survey, we had 1,018 photographers taking part from a very wide range of countries, from Algeria and Belarus to Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

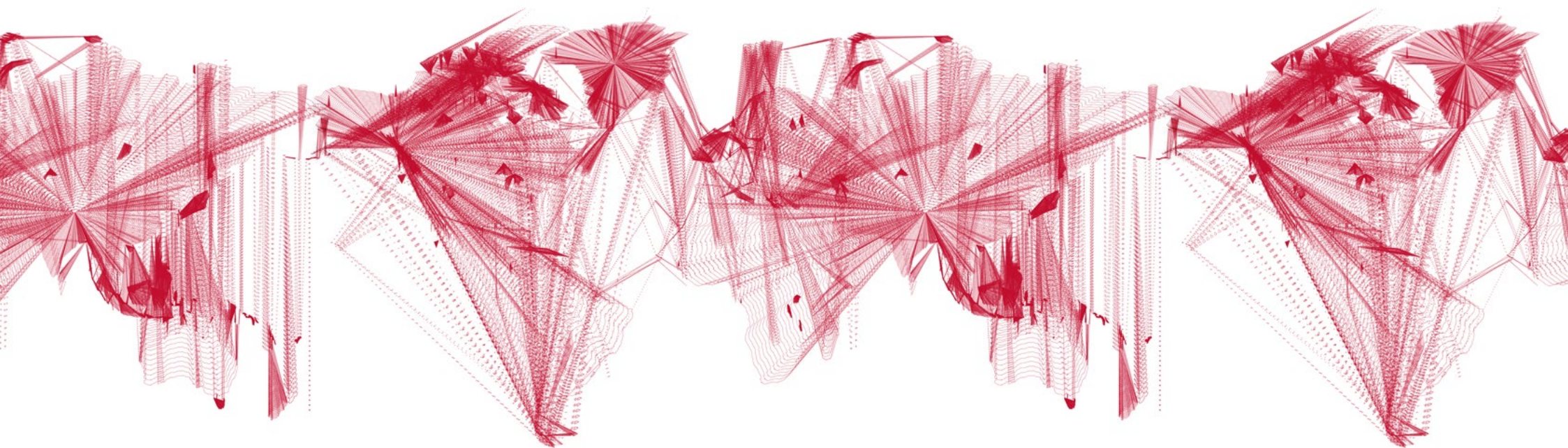
Countries who have significant numbers of photographers participating in the survey in 2018 include the United States (94 participants), Italy (93), China (56), Spain (52), India (50), United Kingdom (39), Poland (38), France (38), Germany (35) and the Netherlands (29).

There was a significant spike in the participation rate of Chinese photographers from 62 in 2015 rising to 213 in 2016 before dropping back down to 36 in 2017 (in what was a relatively small cohort overall) and then 56 in 2018. While we don't know the reason for this spike, adjustments were made to our statistical calculations for the 2016 report to reflect this unexpected jump in Chinese respondents.

The spread of nationalities participating in the study has been similar in each of the four annual surveys. Usually, the bulk of the respondents come from European countries with large groups participating from India, Brazil and China and then smaller numbers from a wide range of nations across the globe.







## 7.2 RACE AND ETHNICITY

For the last two years, we have included questions around race and ethnicity to get a better sense of the diversity of the respondents and an indication of the state of play in the industry as a whole.

It is worth noting that the concepts of race and ethnicity are interesting to social scientists but there is no agreed harmonised measure applicable across nations (see e.g. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnick and Warner 2014). The concepts that social scientists associate with race and ethnicity are often different in different countries (e.g. skin colour, national origins, language, religion, culture), while in some countries, even referring to ‘race’ as a construct may cause offense. In a number of nations, including the United States, a question on subjective ethnic identity is regarded as a plausible means to measure ethnicity through surveys – respondents are invited to choose, from a list of category options, the descriptor which best describes how they see their own ethnicity. Moreover, since the United States is unusually ethnically diverse, its national measure is often, de facto, plausible, albeit imperfect, in other countries. Accordingly, the WPP survey used a version of a US census ethnic identity question, recognising that caution over its quality should be exercised.

A similar approach has been taken in some other cross-national survey projects (e.g. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International version).

Respondents could choose to make a note of their thoughts on this question of ethnic identity, and one photographer wrote: *“Do not like this question. I am a human being”*. This is fair and typical of the sentiments that questions around race or ethnicity routinely generate. Other suggestions from respondents for race/ethnic classifications included European, Persian, Jewish, Russian, world citizen and various combinations such as Caucasian/Latino and Portuguese/Venezuelan. Each suggestion highlights the complexity of racial and ethnic groupings and the dangers of exclusion and generalisation. *“I don’t see any reason why you need to know if I am Black or white, yellow or green,”* wrote one photographer. The researchers do argue that however complex, inadequate or contested these classifications might be, there is value in understanding the broad racial and/or ethnic composition of our participants, and of the industry as a whole. Our hypothesis was that, like gender, there would be significant disparities worth noting. So it proved.



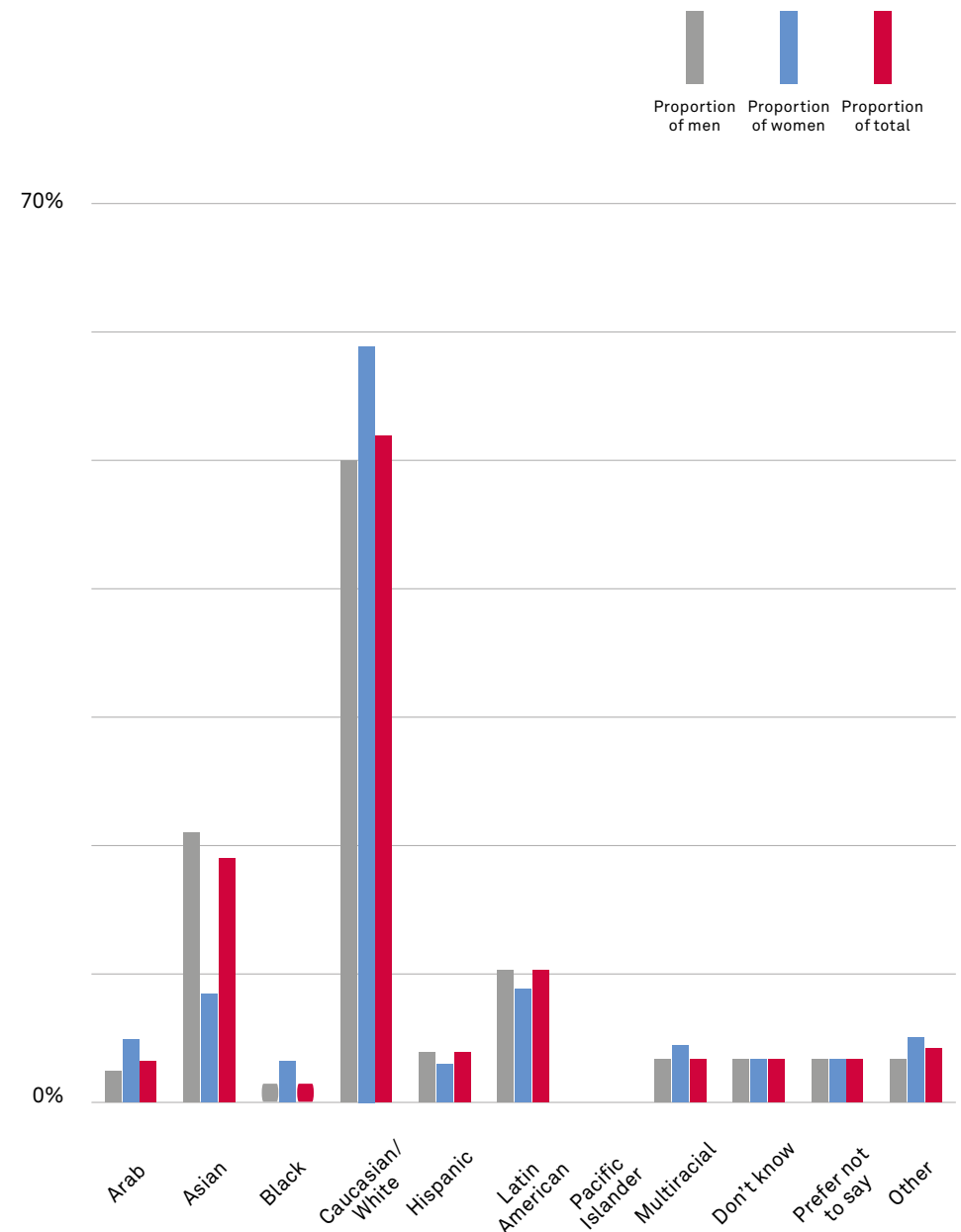
In this year's cohort, more than half of our respondents classified themselves as Caucasian/White (51.3%). The next largest groups were Asian (19%) and then Latin American (10%). None of the others had more than 4%. There were only 14 Black respondents in 2018, representing 1.4% of the total, a very small increase from the 12 Black respondents in 2017.

It is worth noting that there does not seem to be a gender imbalance across most race/ethnicity groups. There is a generally equal proportion of men and women identifying with each group, the exceptions being the Asian group (with 21% of the total number of men and 9% of the total number of women identifying with this group) and the Caucasian/White group (with 50% of the total number of men and 58% of the total number of women identifying with this group). However, given that these are the largest groups, it could be that the numbers in the other group are just too low to find a gender pattern.

Some of the respondents did comment on the impact of race and ethnicity on the organisation of the sector and on the obstacles this created. *"Ninety percent of the industry is white and lacks the capacity to help people of colour (Arab, Asian, Black) break into the industry,"* wrote one respondent. Another said:

*"There is a very definite lack of African photographers featured and given space in the global industry. If an American photographer is working in Africa they will get the job over the just as talented local photographer. What more can be done to support African photographers in the industry? I know there is the African Photojournalism Database initiative but still American photographers seem to get most of the African news and editorial jobs that get published in the international press".*

The answers to the race and ethnicity question in 2018 were very similar to the results from 2017, the only other year we have asked how participants would classify themselves in race/ethnic terms. In 2017, there were slightly more Caucasian/White respondents proportionately (55%), a similar number of Asian respondents (19%) and an equivalent spread among the other categories. This suggests the racial and ethnic spread of participants in the survey, and in the competition, looks fairly stable with Caucasian/White photographers over-represented and Black, Arab and Latin American photographers under-represented.



Given the smaller numbers in many groups, it was not possible to analyse race and ethnicity work patterns at a very detailed level. Given that Caucasian/White is the most represented group, we present a short analysis below between this group and the other groups combined (Caucasian/non-Caucasian (or other) ethnicity). We note that this is an imperfect way of analysing race and ethnicity issues, as the category of ‘Other ethnicity’ is far from a homogenous group and there may be many various important distinctions between their work practices. However, it does serve to highlight the apparent privileges of the Caucasian/White group in some areas. All race and ethnicity figures are based on the 2018 cohort.

Photographers who are not Caucasian/White were more likely to have a university education (72% Caucasian/White, 79% non-Caucasian). Caucasian/White photographers were slightly more likely to study photography at university (33% Caucasian/White, 27% non-Caucasian/non-White) whereas non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were more likely to study journalism (17% Caucasian/White, 30% non-Caucasian/non-White). Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were also more likely to receive in-house training in photography (18% Caucasian/White, 24% non-Caucasian/non-White). More Caucasian/White photographers were self-employed (72% Caucasian/White, 49% non-Caucasian/non-White). Whereas more non-Caucasian/non-White photographers had long-term contracts at larger employers (12% Caucasian/White, 26% non-Caucasian/non-White). Caucasian/White photographers were more likely to be employed by print-only newspaper companies (62% Caucasian/White, 37% non-Caucasian/non-White) whereas non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were more commonly employed by print-only magazines (14% Caucasian/White, 24% non-Caucasian/non-White) and photo agencies (5% Causasian/White, 13% non-Caucasian/non-White).

Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were more likely to report that they thought photography was always valued (12% Caucasian/White, 37% non-Caucasian/non-White) and there were more opportunities than ever (24% Caucasian/White, 42% non-Caucasian/non-White). Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were also more likely to always feel positive about the future of photography (18% Caucasian/White, 34% non-Caucasian/non-White).

### Description of role

	Non-Caucasian %	Caucasian %	Total %
Photojournalist	44	35	39
Press photographer	10	14	12
Documentary photographer	28	34	32
Multimedia journalist	4	2	3
Visual journalist	2	2	2
Visual storyteller	9	9	9
Other	3	4	4
TOTAL	100	100	100

*P-value: 0.026 | Cramér's V = 0.126*

Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were more likely to label themselves as photojournalists whereas Caucasian/White photographers were more likely to label themselves as documentary photographers and press photographers.

Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers reported they shot more news (58% Caucasian/White, 73% non-Caucasian/non-White), whereas Caucasian/White photographers did more commercial work (26% Caucasian/White, 18% non-Caucasian/non-White) and documentary work (61% Caucasian/White, 44% non-Caucasian/non-White).

Roughly what proportion of your income do you get from photography?

	Non-Caucasian%	Caucasian %	Total %
None	3	1	2
Only a small bit	14	11	12
A useful amount	13	8	10
Important amount	11	10	10
Most of my income	10	11	11
Almost all (90%)	11	16	14
All (100%)	38	43	41
TOTAL	100	100	100

P-value: 0.013 / Cramér's V = 0.133

Estimated annual income from photography

	Non-Caucasian%	Caucasian %	Total %
0 - 9,999	38	29	33
10,000 - 19,999	28	21	24
20,000 - 29,999	11	13	12
30,000 - 39,999	8	10	9
40,000 - 49,999	3	9	6
50,000 - 59,999	6	5	6
60,000 - 69,999	2	5	3
70,000 - 79,999	3	4	3
80,000 - 89,999	1	2	2
90,000 - 99,999	0	1	0
More than 100,000	2	3	2
TOTAL	100	100	100

P-value: 0.026 / Cramér's V = 0.126

Caucasian/White photographers more commonly got all or almost all of their income from photography. They also seemed to be better paid for their work, although it is worth noting that there were no significant differences in how the photographers felt about their financial situation.

## Do you feel you face physical risk at work?

	Non-Caucasian%	Caucasian %	Total %
Never	7	10	9
Sometimes	55	66	61
About half the time	10	8	9
Often	19	15	17
Always	9	2	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	100	100	100

*P-value: 0.026 / Cramér's V = 0.126*

Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were significantly more likely to report facing physical risk at work. Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were also more likely to report risk of injury or death as their more pressing concern (37% Caucasian/White, 49% non-Caucasian/non-White). Non-Caucasian/non-White photographers were also more likely to anticipate that the risks they faced in their work would increase considerably over the next five years (13% Caucasian/White, 21% non-Caucasian/non-White).



7.3 AGE

Almost two-thirds of the photographers who participated in the study this year are between the ages of 30 and 49, with more than 80% between the ages of 20 and 59. With only a very small number of photographers in the 60+ category, it is perhaps not surprising that some of the respondents cited “ageism” as a problem within the industry, particularly for older women. “As a photographer, I feel barriers exist regarding age,” wrote one respondent. “When I was starting out, opportunities existed for those 35 and over. When I reached 35, it switched – the majority of current opportunities are for photographers 35 and under.”

Other photographers agreed: *“There is also no help for those who decide to enter the industry later in their lives and too much assistance for graduates and young people. I feel older people 40+ that I have met are frustrated by the lack of opportunities, especially those who have just started.”*

Financial situation at present

	Average age	Frequency
Very difficult	40	128
Difficult	41	260
I am managing	43	411
Good	43	193
Very good	46	26

P-value: 0.00

The data suggests that when it comes to their finances, the older the photographer, the better the situation. The mean age climbs steadily up through each of the categories from an average of 40 years in the “very difficult” category up to 43 in the “I am managing” category and on to 46 years in the “very good” category.

With age comes a degree of pessimism, as this table indicates. Older photographers in our study tended to be less positive about their finances and generally felt their income had declined significantly over the last five years.

Things getting better financially in the last year

	Average age	Frequency
No, getting much worse	42	115
No, a bit worse	43	194
About the same	43	368
Yes, getting a bit better	40	283
Yes, much better	39	58

P-value: 0.00



## Income from photography now, compared to five years ago

	<i>Average age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<b>A lot less</b>	46	150
<b>A bit less</b>	45	192
<b>Pretty much the same</b>	45	178
<b>A bit higher</b>	41	264
<b>A lot higher</b>	39	124

*P-value: 0.00*

While on average older photographers are better paid, they are also more likely to report that things are getting worse for them financially. Older photographers were also less likely to have their own website and considered them not very important for their work. Younger photographers, by contrast, were the opposite.

The reluctance to embrace websites is repeated when it comes to social media, with older photographers generally avoiding social media and younger photographers more likely to embrace it.

## Personal website important to work

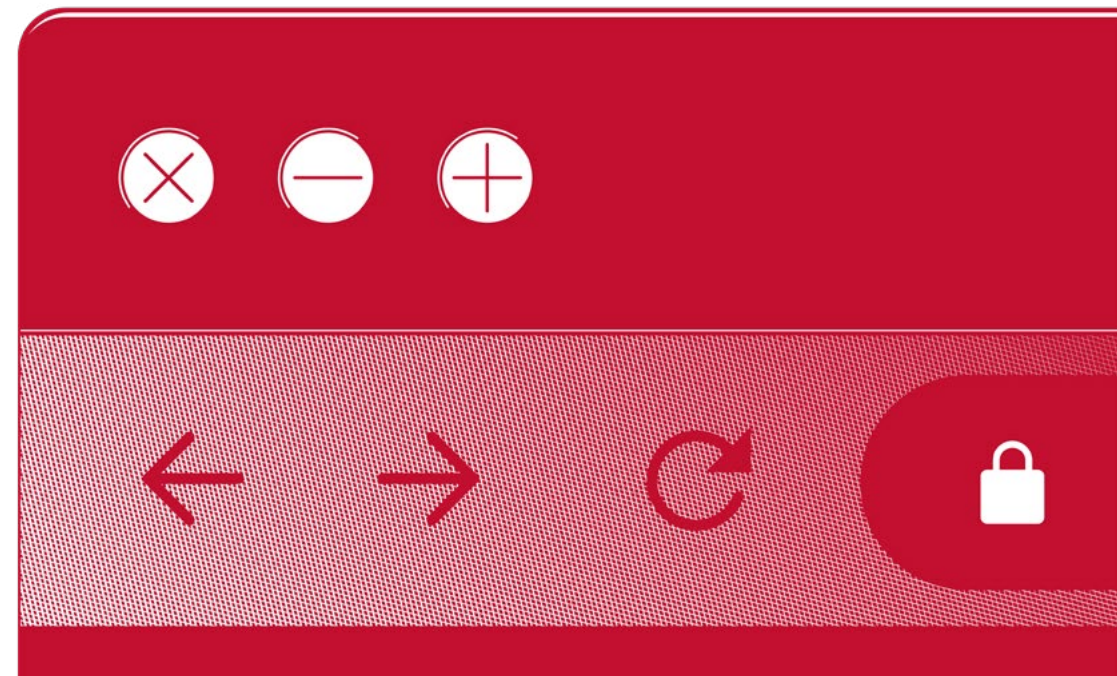
	Average age	Frequency
Don't have website	43	160
Not at all important	46	31
Only a small bit	45	111
Neither important nor unimportant	41	76
Important	42	361
Very important	40	279

*P-value: 0.00*

## Use social media as part of work

	Average age	Frequency
Never	48	61
Sometimes	44	258
Neither a little nor or lot	39	89
Often	42	324
Always	40	286

*P-value: 0.00*



Age differences are evident, too, in how our photographer respondents felt their work is valued, on the opportunities photography was likely to present and with regard to the future generally. In each case, age was commonly associated with attitudes to each of these. It is worth noting that as most of our respondents are in their 40s, what looks like a marginal difference between, for example, 41 and 43 is significant.

Older photographers also appeared to be less positive about photography as an industry and are clearly concerned about its future.

I feel photography is valued

	Average age	Frequency
Never	43	43
Sometimes	43	257
About half the time	40	232
Mostly	43	255
Always	41	231

P-value: 0.017

Photography has more opportunities than ever

	Average age	Frequency
Never	45	24
Sometimes	42	132
About half the time	41	196
Mostly	44	351
Always	41	315

P-value: 0.004

Feel positive about future of photography

	Average age	Frequency
Never	45	58
Sometimes	42	206
About half the time	41	229
Mostly	42	281
Always	42	244

P-value: 0.120



## 7.4 GENDER

In the last two studies, in 2016 and here in 2018, the researchers asked a specific set of questions of women photographers in an effort to understand the gender imbalance within the industry, but also to gather more specific information around the blockages and obstacles to greater diversity.

In 2018, almost 68% of women respondents (126 photographers) confirmed they faced discrimination in their work as photojournalists. This has decreased slightly from the 2017 study (72%). This discrimination occurred largely on the basis of gender (61%), but was also triggered by other factors such as age, ethnicity, socio-economic status and nationality.

In the 2018 study, 53 female respondents (or 28% of this group of 187 female participants) agreed they considered age to be a barrier in their work.

One participant in the study commented: *“I’ve encountered editors of major newspapers or magazines who have -- in person -- been discriminatory and blatantly sexist in their attitudes, even before they looked at my work -- simply on the basis of seeing that I am female and not young.”*

Other obstacles, or areas of discrimination, identified by women photographers in this year’s survey included stereotyping (56%), sexism within the industry (54%), a lack of opportunities for women (49%), and social and family expectations (42%).

*“Strangely since I had children it looks like I have no more assignments,”* one respondent wrote in the 2017 survey. *“Like people are thinking that I am no more able to work. That didn’t happen to my husband, who is also a photographer.”*

We have commented in previous reports about the gender disparity within professional photography globally. This year, a slightly higher proportion of women participated in the survey. In 2018, 18% of the total respondents were women, up from 15% in 2015. This still represents only a very small proportion of the total number of respondents who remain overwhelmingly male, as they have for all four years of the study. Qualitative data supports the heavy male bias in professional photography, particularly in news and sport photography, and also in regions such as Asia and South and Central America.

*“A handful of men own all the newspapers in my country,”* wrote one respondent. *“The government should limit ownership.”*

Another female photographer observed: *“I think that how photojournalists are employed in today’s era of rapidly rising living costs – almost exclusively as private contractors – without any parental leave, health or pension benefits, dramatically influences the people who are able to choose to work in the field over the long term. I look around our industry and it’s true, I see a lot of men, but mostly what I see is people with no kids. I feel like the gender makeup is more equal among photographers in their 20’s but it becomes much less balanced among photojournalists in their 30’s and beyond, with men making up the majority. These men though, who make up the majority of older photojournalists, at least the ones I know, are for the most part, childless, or they have a partner who is the primary parent, or stays at home full time. If I look at my female colleagues, many of them are in the same position.”*

Another participant commented that while the surveys had recently included a section on women photographers, there was nothing seeking to understand dynamics within the LGBT community: *“I feel that I face stigma, obstacles to my career and the way editors see me and my work, and it would be good to have an opportunity to see how many LGBT photographers are entering the (competition). LGBT colleagues I have spoken to also face specific risks as we are LGBT, these risks and perceived risks also have a huge impact on our mental wellbeing and health, and can affect our position in the industry, just as some women might feel their gender affects their position in the photojournalism industry, for numerous reasons”.*

A further participant argued that class was one lens through which a critical assessment of the state of news photography had not been conducted: *“I believe that you should be addressing the cavernous class divide in photography. The industry is oversaturated with middle class photographers. In my experience, in the UK at least, the photography industry is a middle class clique with overpriced portfolio reviews and pay to play awards and grants and a cabal of middle class picture editors who mostly work with the same middle class photographers. All of these factors continually exclude those from working class backgrounds. If you don’t have rich parents bankrolling you as an emerging photographer it is increasingly difficult to work in this industry.”*

We combined the responses for the 2017 and 2018 female respondents. This led to a total sample of 302 women photographers (115 in 2017 and 187 in 2018).

## Do you face barriers (discrimination) in your work as a photojournalist?

	Frequency	%
Yes	209	69
No	92	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	301	100

The majority of the sample reported that they faced discrimination at work. Their gender and age were most commonly cited as the root of this discrimination.

Some of the female respondents cited specific cases of discrimination that had affected them in the workplace. According to one female photographer who took part in the 2018 survey: *“Some photographers verbally bully and physically assault female photographers. It is all too easy for a male photographer to intentionally, aggressively, or negligently hit another photographer with his camera (despite warnings that they were getting too close) and then falsely claim it was an ‘accident’ or just part of doing his job, or ‘no big deal’-- which makes it difficult for the victim to prove, and deters female photographers from reporting assaults.”*

She continued by suggesting that *“channels need to be established so that freelance photojournalists can safely report assaults and other forms of abuse from other photographers, or others at the sporting venue, without fear that they will be disbelieved or that they will face retaliation by revoking their media credentials. Not all physical assaults on women are sexual assaults. There should be discussion of establishing a way for freelance photographers to report verbal and intentional physical assault of all kinds, without endangering their careers.”*

A respondent in the 2017 study wrote: *“Men are preferred at jobs and I get up to 30 percent less salary than my males colleagues.”*

## Do you think these barriers are due to any of the following?

	%
Gender	64
Age	28
Socio-economic status	11
Nationality	10
Ethnicity	5
Other	3

Women photographers participating in our study felt that the biggest obstacles to their own and other women's success were sexism in the industry and industry stereotypes and practices. Many women also felt that there was a lack of opportunities and felt family and societal pressure.

## In your opinion, what are the biggest obstacles to women succeeding as photojournalists?

	%
Sexism	54
Industry stereotypes or practices	53
Lack of opportunities offered by media companies and photo agencies	48
Social and family expectation	41
Lack of regular income	34
Lack of access to training and equipment	8
Other	5

When asked what could be done to support women in the industry, the most common answer was “more assignments”. Up to 55% wanted more grants and funding opportunities and around half of the women suggested that higher/consistent pay would be beneficial. The data suggests that financial concerns are a pressing issue for women photojournalists. Some 43% suggested that mentorship and more female editors and directors would help to support women photojournalists. Fewer suggested that family social support and training opportunities were what was needed.

## What could be done to better support and advance your career and the careers of other female journalists?

	%
More assignments	63
Grants/funding	56
Higher/more consistent pay	48
Mentorship	43
More female editors/directors	43
Family/social support	31
Training	24
Other	5

The majority of women photographers have applied for five or fewer awards/funding opportunities in the previous year. These women were asked the main reason for applying for five or fewer and the majority reported this was due to lack of time (26%) with the next most common answer being that they didn't believe their work was at the appropriate standard (19%).

According to one respondent, *“I only apply to contests that fit (and win some, by the way). Grants take more time than they are worth and so I am extremely selective to what I put my time into... I've spent thousands of hours applying over the years. I gave up and have found other means of making money, like working in the private sector to fund my photography.”*

Certainly, the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys support the notion that gender is a key factor within professional photography and has a substantial impact on work practices, the degree of risk and on the rewards and opportunities to be found with the sector.

In the past year, how many awards and/or funding opportunities have you applied for?

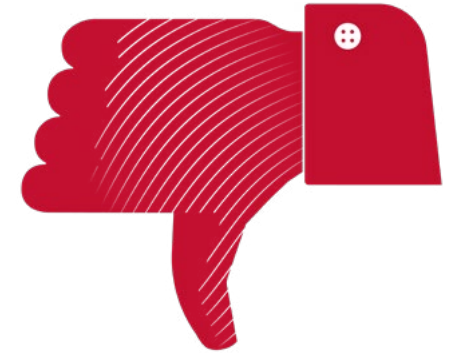
	%
0 - 5	55
6 - 10	24
11 - 15	10
15 +	10

If you answered 0 - 5%, why did you only apply for this number?

	%
Lack of time	26
I don't think my work is at the same level as other entrants	19
I don't meet the criteria	14
Other	14
I don't feel comfortable entering contests	6



# CONCLUSION



The research team, supported by the World Press Photo Foundation and the University of Stirling, have collected an important dataset over the last four years that we believe will lead to far greater understanding of the pressures, activities, needs and value of professional photographers in the digital era. In the years ahead, this dataset will be further analysed and assessed.

There is no question the profession as a whole is under considerable pressure from changing technologies, competition, physical risk, copyright theft and prevailing patriarchal structures and processes. Making a living from capturing images in the digital era is increasingly difficult and requires ever greater degrees of versatility, flexibility and perseverance. The power of the image and of visual storytelling has only grown in the digital era. It can only be hoped that the industry can find a way both of diversifying but also of safeguarding the dedicated people whose work does so much to illuminate and encapsulate our world and what happens within it.



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