

Original Research Article

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بررسی تاریخی عکاسی جنگ ایران در بازه زمانی (۱۳۶۷-۱۳۵۹) با تأکید بر عکاسان حرفه‌ای، مستقل و نظامی

Historical Review of Iran War Photography during (1980-1988) with an Emphasis on Professional, Independent, and Military Photographers

Abstract

Problem Definition: The goals and methods of producing the work of documentary photographers, in terms of the influences they receive from each historical period, are formed at the same time as recording the work; However, what they have shown is now a symbol of the historical past. Photography, as an effective and dynamic art-media, presents many alternatives to artists and journalists. In this research, the historical investigation of these effects on war photography (backgrounds and formation process) is conducted to answer the following questions: «What have been its national and international effects, centered on influential groups of professional, independent, and military photographers?» and «What effects have the political and social factors of that period had on photography in terms of form and content?»

Objective: The primary goal of this research is to deal with the history of Iranian war photography as its formation and effects, during Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), which is called the Holy defense or the Imposed war in the country's political literature.

Research Method: The current research is conducted using a descriptive-analytical and historical method. The data was collected through a documentary-library approach using visual and interview (the author and the photographers of this course) methods.

Results: Based on the results, the two events of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war caused fundamental changes in documentary photography and, accordingly, in Iran's war photography in terms of form and content. Iranian photography was formed under the influence of the general movement of the people with mainly ideological and religious themes and a revolutionary approach. These changes, besides the revolutionary and religious atmosphere dominant in that period, result from the original and native look of many of these photographers, especially independent photographers (experienced and amateur).

Keywords

Photography, War Photography, Iran-Iraq War, Professional Photographers, Independent Photographers, Military Photographers

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Introduction

Simultaneously with the growth of the media, the development of professional photography equipment, and of course, the change in international events and relationships, photography as an art and an influential medium that displays an unmediated image of events, quickly established its place in war compared to other forms of art, media, and oral and written discourses. These factors have made war photography distinct and special compared to other sub-genres of documentary photography, and these are the commonalities and characteristics of war photography throughout its 170-year history, which have been manifested at any point in its evolution. Iran's war photography is not exceptional from these realities, of course, with revolutionary and religious concepts that were formed from the beliefs and commonalities of the Iranian society of that day and made it peculiar among all previous examples. The occurrence of the Islamic Revolution, as the most important event in the contemporary history of Iran, besides the effects it had on all the structures of the society, also changed the course of photography. Nearly most of the photographers of this period took photos under the influence of the general movement of Iranian society, and new themes, mainly ideological and religious, entered Iranian photography with a revolutionary approach. On the other hand, the events of the Islamic Revolution and the subsequent war offered a new place to Iranian photography internationally and found its way into the life of the Iranian society. This development and evolution caused the works of Iranian photographers to be published in the world's prestigious news agencies and publications for the first time, and compared to the past, the concept of photography as an independent medium was formed (at least until the end of the first period of research). The establishment of photo exhibitions throughout the country, along with the printing of photo books and publishing in the press, had an important impact on this process. This process was developed during the war imposed by the propaganda and media power of photography under the supervision of the governing institutions. The present article is a descriptive-analytical and historical research, and to answer its questions about the historical role of photography in influencing the developments or being influenced by them in one of the important periods of the contemporary history of Iran, during 1980-1988, it examines the role of three groups of professional, independent and military photographers. The formation process of Iranian war photography with the presence of photographers with various viewpoints, historically, the effects of ideology, Islamic revolution and war, is the first step in addressing this problem.

Research Method

This research is conducted using a descriptive-analytical and historical method in order to investigate and analyze the formation, characteristics, and works of Iranian war photography, focusing on three groups of professional, independent, and military photographers, during Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). In the descriptive-analytical section, library sources, documents, and photo archives, the statistical community of this research, that is, the photographers of the Iran-Iraq war, have been examined. Also, the data are collected as interviews (open and semi-structured), with fifteen photographers of the Iran-Iraq war (from all three groups of the research: professional, independent, and military), and the results obtained after the review have been added to the descriptive-analytical and historical section. Since a significant part of the data of this research was obtained through interviews, it is included in the circle of oral and non-written history.

Research Background

According to the reviews of the authors in the books, articles, and theses that have been done in photography history of the Iranian war, no case was found that was done exactly on three groups mentioned in this research (professional, independent, and military). However, many research studies have been conducted on issues related to war photography, some of which are mentioned. In a research article on war photography entitled «War, Constructions of National Identity, and Photography» and based on the theories of «Michel Foucault», «Faeta» (2016) deals with the performance, functions and various effects of photography as a whole and through the war photographs recorded during the First World War. He discusses the link between photography and war as a medium in the construction of national identity using the foundations of anthropology. By examining some portraits, Faeta comes to the conclusion that through studio portraits of warriors, they tried to instill a sense of satisfactory situation, sense of responsibility and collective and national identity. In a research article entitled «War of images, contemporary war photography», «Vitaljić» (2013) has examined the reading of photographs, social effects and validity of documentary photography in the contemporary era with a view to war photography. In her opinion, documentary photography is based on a set of discursive, social, and cultural methods, and the photographer is an important element of documentary photography due to his presence at the scene of events and being a witness. Finally, with a case study of photos of the Balkan war, she concludes governments use photography as a propaganda tool to change the facts and reduce the value of real war reports to influence public opinion. Another research in war photography in Iran is done by «Masoudi» (2009), entitled «Forty evidence (First Group of Volunteer Reporter of War)». Using the method of interviewing and examining the documents related to the Forty Witnesses group, this study introduced the photographers of this group with an emotional narrative and discussed issues such as how to start and continue their activities in war photography, and the current situation of the members of this group. The research in question has avoided examining war photography independently, historically and from the perspective of its effects, and has examined war photography and its surrounding issues from the point of view of the members of the Forty Witnesses group. By examining the works left by this group, he has concluded that their works, despite being large and original in terms of the content, have failed to have a deep impact on society due to lack of attention. In a study entitled «Research of the War Photography», «Payeshenas» (2008) has investigated the status of photography and its effects on public opinion in various formats such as the press. The researcher has examined the different periods of war photography in Iran from the Qajar period to the contemporary era regarding social and political events from the aspects of news, propaganda, and historiography (from a national and international perspective), the effects of censorship and government restrictions on this process. Examining photography in terms of performance, technique, and effects of digital technology is an important part of this research; For example, part of it is about safety principles when photographing war. Also, the researcher has looked at the future issues of photography, such as the photographer's influence on reality and photo manipulation. Examining photography in terms of performance, technique and effects of digital technology is an important part of this research, for example, part of it is about safety principles when photographing war. Also, the researcher has looked at the future issues of photography, such as the photographer's influence on reality and photo manipulation. «Abbasi Ahwazi» (2014), with the title " Researching About Photography Position in Iranian Newspaper (War Photojournalism in Iran – Iraq War)" deals with the

position and effects of documentary and press photography (as a case in point, Kihan and Information newspaper) during the war period. In order to document this event and by examining the two concepts of war as a history-making event and photography as a media, he tried to deal with the effects of these two on the social and historical life of humans. In the end, he concludes, war photographs are documents that become icons on which the press depends to influence society. Moreover, during the Iran-Iraq war, photographs (as exhibitions or printed in the press) along with the medium of television, influenced the Iranian society of that period. From the results of the mentioned studies, it can be concluded that these researchers have examined the war photography from the perspective and media, history, and the effects it has had on the society in terms of culture and politics. In their categorization, the presence of a wide range of photographers has not been discussed using the categorization of this research and considering the attitude that war photographers, as mediators, are influenced by the target society and its developments and reproduce it again for consumption. Therefore, in the present article, by selecting and categorizing war photographers into three groups (professional, independent, and military), first, the effects of Iranian society on them and the method of producing their works, and then their effects on Iranian society through their works have been discussed.

Photography and War Photographers

Since war photography became a sub-genre in documentary photography, war photographers have sought to fulfill their human, historical, and professional duties (although sometimes with a customized approach) from a different point of view, compared to photographers of other styles. The reason of why war photographers knowingly risk their lives to capture these photos despite the suffering that awaits them on the battlefield implies this, and maybe it is because of these commitments that «Don McCullin» said, «If you take a picture of someone who is killed in another land, this picture is what you should say» (Howe, 2012, p. 116). This feature of war photography can be a motivating factor for people with different points of view to engage in the field of war photography, from this perspective, Iranian photographers are also in the same process. Before the start of the Iraq war against Iran, there was no specific concept called war photography in Iran, and Iranian photographers were active in the documentary style with different perspectives. After participating in recording the events of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, these photographers engaged in this area and formed the primary structure of Iranian war photography. However, according to the experts of war photography, there is a big difference between a war photographer who specifically deals with the subject of war and the scope of his activity is different wars with different geographical distribution, and someone who photographs war (at a specific geographical and historical point). Based on this approach, it can be said that Iranian photographers are in the second group according to the type of entry and continuation of activity. Iranian photographers can be examined in different areas and groups in terms of their perspective and field of activity, and it is not possible to classify all of them in one general group with the title of war photographer. Based on this, in the upcoming article, these photographers will be categorized into three groups according to their field of activity, characteristics of their works, and how to engage in war photography: 1. Professional photographers (those who worked in a news agency, newspaper, and photo agency, both national and international), 2. Independent photographers (those who did not work for a specific institution and were engaged in photography activities during the war because of their past work, personal life, and war conditions in two groups with professional

photography experience and beginners.), and 3. Military photographers (those who have practical experience in photography and have photographed in war because of organizational activity in military institutions such as the Iranian Army, Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and the War Information Headquarters).

Professional Photographers

Determining the photographer's identity can provide valuable context about the work in question; a context through which researchers can infer information about style, approach (such as a documentary photographer's approach versus a staged or posed photograph), subject engagement, etc. (Ghafouri, 2017, p. 180). For this reason, knowing the work and the job status of its registrant can be important in examining the output and impact of the photo. Because of their status and job concerns, professional photographers have covered post-revolution events faster than other groups. Between 1979 and 1980, extensive conflicts took place in Kurdistan, Turkmen Sahara, and Khuzestan, between government forces and mainly local forces and photographers like «Jahangir Razmi» in Kurdistan and «Abbas Attar» in Khuzestan covered them (See Figure 1). However, the beginning of Iraq-Iran war photography should be found in the works of press photographers. Just fifty days before the official start of the war, the first video reports were prepared by photographers such as «Bahram Mohammadi Fard» (Jomhuri-e Eslami newspaper) and «Abbas Maleki» (Kayhan newspaper) of the first Iraqi border movements (Mohammadi Fard, interview, August 2020). However, war photography in Iran officially began with the photo of «Abbas Fathi» (photographer of Keyhan newspaper), from the aerial bombardment of Tehran's Mehrabad airport at the same time as Iraq's extensive attack on Iran on 22 September 1980 (See Figure 2).



Figure 1. Abbas Attar, «Conflicts of Khuzestan», Khorramshahr, 1979. Source: <https://abbas.site>.



Figure 2. Abbas Fathi, «Bombing of Mehrabad Airport by Iraq», September 1980. Source: <https://hamshahrionline.ir>.

After the official start of the war, people like «Rasoul Mollaqolipour», «Saeid Sadeghi» and «Bahman Jalali» who had a history of documentary and press photography, were among the first photographers who reached the border areas, including Khorramshahr. These photographers and others, because they were still caught in this surprising shock, considered themselves as witnesses of the events and the photo as a document to prove it. Regardless

of observing any conventional technical and aesthetic principles, they used to photograph these areas with an emotional look. «At that moment, we stopped thinking about form, light, and frame division. The war had preyed on many children, women, and men and disrupted the normal life routine of the people. The only positive effect of our presence was that we could share in the pains and sufferings of those who were captured by brutal aggression and put that injustice in front of history with our camera» (Sadeghi, interview, March 2020). After the formation of the first such experiences in war photography, professional photography officially began its activity, which can be divided into two specific periods because of the presence of different ranges of photographers: 1. From the beginning of the war in 1980 to 1982 (including many photographers, such as independent photographers, national news agencies, photographers of military institutions, Iranian photographers working in news agencies and international agencies, such as «Reza Deghati», «Manoocher Deghati», «Alfred Yaqobzadeh», «Kaveh Golestan», «Kaveh Kazemi» and female photographers, such as «Fateme Navab Safavi» and «Maryam KazemZadeh»), and 2. From 1982 to the end of the war in 1988, including photographers from news agencies and national press, such as «Dariush Goudarzi Kia», «Ibrahim Shateri», «Amirqoli Nakhaei», «Ali Fereydouni», «Ahmad Nateghi» (IRNA), «Bahram Mohammadi Fard», «Saeid Sadeghi», «Khosro Varkani» (Jomhuri-e Eslami newspaper), «Jahangir Razmi» (Ettelaat newspaper), «Hamidreza Moghimi», «Hamidreza Najafzadeh Shahri», «Abbas Maleki» (Kayhan newspaper), «Majid Doukhtechizadeh», «Azizollah Naeimi» (Broadcast Photography Unit) whose presence was controlled and organized by institutions such as the War Information Headquarters. Some of these photographers in both groups entered the operational areas intermittently and left the area after taking photos and video reports. The second group had a permanent presence in operational and war areas, and due to their continuous presence and familiarity with the events, their field of activity was wider (Mirhashemi, interview, July 2015). However, there were not many photographers who were in the second category, and this was not possible for every photographer to stay there, and there were many limitations in this area. These photographers were much more successful than those who used to enter the region intermittently; Because due to their constant presence and connection with the events in the war areas, they recorded more works in terms of quantity and quality. Many of these photographers, who started from the war, gained their photography experiences from everyday life during the war time, and by actively participating in the war, they gradually achieved a kind of coexistence with it, and their photography perspective was formed in line with the events and people of the war. (Rastani, interview, August 2016). Iranian photographers active in news and international agencies are in the first period of war photography, i.e., 1980 to 1982, and for this reason, they could not participate widely and actively in Iran's war photography. In terms of theoretical and visual study, these photographers had the background in war photography, and since their works were prepared with war and news photo stereotypes, the atmosphere of war violence was clearly seen in their works. What is clear when examining the world's famous war photographs is that recognizable narrative allusions not only refer to familiar themes of violence, bravery, sacrifice, heroism, and sometimes tragedy, but are also tied to old visual conventions. The fascinating realism of war photography, largely a product of the photographer's belief in the presence of the photographer on the scene and his spontaneous recording of sensational, terrifying, or unimaginable events, is used to express familiar scenes and compositions (Griffin, 1999, p. 129). This issue contradicted the prevailing view of the war by the institutions responsible for the war and the atmosphere of

the society of that era in Iran. According to the ruling policies of that period, the publication of images of war events and warriors with symbols such as bravery, innocence, defense, and oppression with the goals of raising the morale and attracting the maximum strength and energy of the people, rather than publishing images that carry messages such as violence, suffering, displacement, and death was preferable. For this reason, when the military and propaganda authorities came to the conclusion that the works of these photographers do not follow these standards and principles of military classification, and on the other hand, their attitude can change concepts and change the realities of war, restrictions on their presence were applied. Finally, in 1982, the presence of these photographers, in general, in limited operational areas was limited and their works were also included in the images that were prepared after the clearing of operational areas, camps, and the deployment of troops, in the calls of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the War Information Headquarters (Mohammadi Fard, interview, August 2016). This process caused that, compared to other photographers present during the war, quantitatively, significant works of these photographers were not recorded; However, because of the publication of their works in prominent international news agencies and publications, it can be said that in terms of quality, they recorded influential works with a wide reflection. «Kaveh Kazemi's» photo of a warrior next to his brother's corpse is one of these prominent works in these areas (See Figure 3). Kaveh Kazemi said about this photo: «This was among the selected photos in the «World Press Photo» contest. Later, the same photo was displayed and printed again in the exhibitions Thirty Years of News Photography, Thirty Years of World Press Photo, and Forty-Five Years of World Press Photo. It is believed that this photo belonging to the Iran-Iraq war can be one of the classic photos in the history of world war photography. The only trip where I easily went to the war front and took photos was this trip, later the War Information Headquarters was formed and it was no longer possible to be on the war front easily» (Kazemi, interview, July 2021). During this period, foreign photographers also usually entered these areas after conducting operations, strengthening Iran's positions, and establishing security in the region, with the coordination of the War Information Headquarters to prepare visual reports. There is not a single case of the presence of foreign photographers and those who worked for foreign news agencies during the operations. In fact, they could not enter, and all photographers were required to broadcast their works only through the Jomhuri-e Eslami News Agency (Fereydouni, interview, August 2016).



Figure 3. Kaveh Kazemi, place: unknown, 1980. Source: <https://soraya.news>.



Figure 4. Ali Fereydouni, «Operations of Ramazan», Basra, 1982.

Source: <https://namanews.com>.

After the presence of international media photographers and because the function of photography as media at the international level was more important than its national

function, this task was assigned to photographers who worked for news agencies and national press or worked independently; of course, with the conditions set for them by the War Information Headquarters. These conditions were usually announced to the photographers as briefing sessions, or a specific range was considered for their activity through written permits to travel in certain areas. Also, their works should be sent to other news agencies with the permission of institutions such as the War Information Headquarters, for publication in the international level, by some channels, such as the state news agency IRNA. Photographers like «Dariush Gouderzikia», «Ali Fereydouni», «Bahram Mohammadi Fard», «Mehdi Rezvan», «Saeid Sadeghi», «Hamidreza Moghimi», «Hamidreza Najafzadeh Shahri» are among those who, until the end of the war, could be in the war operation areas (Fereydouni, interview, August 2016). Besides photography in war areas (before, during, and after operations), their scope of activity included from the deployment of troops to the return of warriors to the cities, the burial of martyrs, and the general reaction of the people to various war issues (such as the liberation of Khorramshahr); through these photos, one can get a lot of information about the lifestyle and culture of the Iranian society in those years. Being influenced by the religious and revolutionary ideology on the one hand and the atmosphere governing the people of war on the other hand, had a significant effect on their attitude, thinking, and working style, and in terms of content and even form, a lot of similarity was seen between their works. «Iranian photographers were concerned with the sadness, pain, and suffering of the warriors in the embankment, and let us be the language of their expressive and visual communication» (Sadeghi, interview, August 2020). The look in Iran's photography was very simple, most of the works of our photographers were static, and the dynamism in their photos was less visible. The weapon was in the second plan and was less visible in the photos. The peace of the warriors was such that the audience did not feel that they were in the war. The people of Iran's war conveyed the feeling that they came to war to find each other and to reach the greater understanding they were looking for, and to achieve this goal they had to go through a danger called war. These were the differences between Iranian and foreign war photographers (Rastani interview, August 2016). There were restrictions on the publication of some works of these photographers having national functions, because of some considerations and psychological effects that it could have on public opinion. It was enough to familiarize people with the war atmosphere, using signs such as the spirit of warriors with the presence of different classes and ages, with more emphasis on teenagers as a large part of the force present in operational areas, providing aid and relief in order to create a sense of empathy and resistance in public opinion. Before publishing on any platform, all photos had to receive the security permits from institutions such as the War Information Headquarters, and few photos featuring the sufferings and violence of war were published in the national public media during that period. Ali Fereydouni, one of the first photographers who entered the region after the second phase of the Ramadan operation (14 July 1982), says: «I recorded photos of the martyrs and wounded who were scattered in the operation area, which were very special because of being in that historical space, but they were never shown at that time and only thirteen years after the war, in the press exhibition, two frames of them were displayed under the name «Karbala desert»» (Fereydouni, interview, August 2016) (See Figure 4). Another similar case is the photos related to the chemical bombing of Halabja, the first moments of which were recorded by photographers such as «Ahmad Nateghi», «Saeid Janbozorgi», «Saeid Sadeghi» and «Sasan Moayed». However, the security and military reactions regarding the publication of the photo pushed

the works of Iranian photographers to the sidelines. In this regard, «Nateghi» says: «The restrictions imposed on my photos from Halabja caused the works of a Turkish photographer named «Ramazan Öztürk» to be reflected in news agencies before the works of Iranian photographers, and we could not have a deep and necessary impact on the tragedy of Halabja» (Nateghi, interview, August 2015). Along with the publication of war photos in the press and news agencies, the development of war photography and the production of a large volume of photos, in terms of quantity and quality, provided the basis for printing photo books and exhibitions. In this regard, two policies were followed: 1. The works that had a national function and sought to build culture in relation to the category of defense and resistance, such as holding a photo exhibition and printing a photo book in Persian, with topics such as showing the aggression of the Iraqi army on Iranian land¹, people's resistance in cities near war zones², showing the face of Iranian cities during the war³, and referring to the religious beliefs of the Iranian people against the aggression of the enemy⁴. 2. The works that had an international function, because the political officials realized that the language of photography is highly effective and they can direct the world's attention to the Iran-Iraq war through photographs. These works were published in English and sometimes in Arabic, and the most important of them is the collection of books entitled «Imposed War». The books on the imposed war were published in a five-volume issue during the war, and after the war, another three volumes were also published by the Association of Revolutionary and Holy Defense Photographers and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Works and Publication of the Values of Holy Defense. These books are still among the most complete collections of war photos (Heydari, interview, August 2020). In general, photographers active in international news agencies considered themselves more obliged to comply with the technical principles, aesthetics and conventional stereotypes of war, and news photography, and their works have the standards of war photography because of the medium of publication and reflection, and because of the observance of these rules, it is possible to connect these works with other works of war photography, in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, etc., in terms of form and content (violence, suffering, war destruction). On the opposite side, there were Iranian photographers, for whom the principles of aesthetics were of secondary importance, and their photographs are more similar to the ideological, religious content, and the atmosphere governing the views of the Iranian people in that historical period. This type of attention, many times, was formed because of the photographer's association with this trend or basically the growth of his professional personality and his look in this trend, and sometimes works were produced and offered on the order of governing institutions.

Independent Photographers

«Beaumont Newhall» says: «In the genre of documentary photography, the photographer seeks to do more than convey information...His aim is to persuade and convince». This transfer of information is received and interpreted by the audience with extensive qualification provided by the socio-cultural environment and according to their unique beliefs (Vitaljic, 2013, p. 13). In this direction, independent photographers had more influence in conveying the concepts of the war to the general audience in Iranian society because they emerged from the context of the socio-cultural environment of Iran at that time. The audience's acceptance of their photo exhibitions and books confirms this claim. At the beginning of the imposed war, except for the few mentioned earlier, photographers covered the war in an unorganized manner. The works of these photographers were

published in various formats such as news agencies, publications, photo exhibitions and book printing and were divided into two major groups: 1. People like «Bahman Jalali», «Sasan Moayedi» and «Jasem Ghazabanpour» who had experience and backgrounds in documentary photography and revolution events. 2. Those who engaged in war photography unintentionally and due to war conditions, such as living in war-torn cities or job conditions. Most of these photographers had entered the war as warriors or specialist forces in other fields, who turned to war photography either unwillingly or out of curiosity. This group of photographers mostly focused on activities such as taking memento photos of warriors, military exercises in camps, commanders' speeches, dispatching warriors, and the conditions of troops before and after operations (Mir Hashemi, interview, July 2016). An important part of the war photos was recorded by these photographers, and some of these photographers, such as «Kazem Akhavan», «Sadegh Mosleh» and «Saeid Janbozorgi», after a while, went beyond the amateur level and were placed in a position of war photography and produced works with the necessary standards of war photography. In the first group of independent photographers, there are people like «Bahman Jalali», «Mohsen Rastani» and «Jasem Ghazabanpour» who started their photography activities before the revolution and after experiencing photography trials during the revolution, they engaged in war photography level and at least until the end of the war, they only worked on war photography. Bahman Jalali, with a more professional background, who became a well-known photographer during the revolution, was one of the first independent photographers who seriously engaged in war photography area. Jalali experienced continuous presence during the war and recorded many photos of various operations and cities such as Abadan and Khorramshahr. The first experience of printing a war photo book entitled «Abadan that is fighting» was also done by Bahman Jalali in 1981 (See Figure 5). The effects of war on civilians and its consequences on the daily life of people in regions far from the operational areas, such as the tension and anxiety of air attacks on residential areas, the moments of seeking protection in shelters and safe centers before the air attack, the destructions and the moving of bodies and the wounded people are among other themes and subjects that were taken into consideration by independent photographers. The works of «Jasem Ghazabanpour» and «Sasan Moayedi» of Iraqi air and missile attacks on big cities like Tehran are among the most important of these photos. Since the targets of these attacks were civilians and caused many casualties, the photographers tried to include human issues in their works while recording the incidents in a timely and accurate manner in order to have the maximum impact on public opinion, especially international (Ghazabanpour, interview, June 2020) (See Figure 6). As mentioned earlier, besides independent photographers who had experience and position in photography, some independent photographers engaged in war photography at the start of the war with no background. These photographers turned to amateur photography unintentionally and because of the conditions of the war, and after some time, their works were noticed by some news agencies and media. The works of these photographers differed from other war photographers because they were not familiar with the standards or conventional stereotypes in news and war photography, and this original and localized view formed a type of war photography in Iran, which showed a special way of life during the war. People like «Kazem Akhavan», «Alireza Jalilifar», «Mansour Atshani», «Mahmoud Zahiradini», «Gholamreza Masoudi» and «Mehdi Janipour», after being present in the region as warriors and some like «Saeid Janbozorgi» who was present in the region for activities such as wall painting, are among them (Heydari, interview, March 2020).



Figure 5. Bahman Jalali, «Abadan» 1981.

Source:

<https://dastan.ourmag.ir>



Figure 6. Jasem Ghazabanpour, «Tehran City Bombing», 1987.

Source: <https://yjc.ir>

Another group of amateur photographers engaged in war photography by living in war zones, such as «Mehrzad Arshadi», «Hossein Latifi», «Mohammad Sadeghian», «Ahmad Alizadeh» (local residents of Abadan) who work as a team under the supervision of Mehrzad Arshadi. «Mehrzad Arshadi», who worked in Jihad organization before engaging in photography, says: «After the invasion of Abadan by the Iraqi army, I was inspired to record these moments, and from that date, I engaged seriously in war photography from jihadi activities» (Arshadi, interview, May 2016). The main location of their works was the city of Abadan and the events related to it and because of their familiarity and constant presence in the city, at least to a small extent, in a wider circle, it included various parts such as the siege of the city, war refugees, the daily life of the people during the siege and the relieving of the siege until the end of the war (See Figure 7). The most important event in the city from the beginning to the end of the war was the operation of relieving the siege of Abadan, which despite its importance, due to the short duration of the operation and the destruction of many negatives of this operation in the plane crash in the Kahrizak region, few photos of it is available (Arshadi, interview, August 2016). The result of the activity of independent photographers shows their works were the result of integration and close connection between them and their subjects from the stage of deployment to the battle, and during this process they tried to convey the concepts and messages that were conveyed to them through life in Iranian society and its dominant thoughts. For many of them, especially those who turned to photography because of the outbreak of war, attachment to their environment and reflecting the related events had priority over the concept of war photography and this issue has manifested itself in abandoning photography after the war. On the opposite side, the photographers who engaged in war photography with previous experience, according to the experience they gained in the war, continued photography in other genres after the war and could form a part of the Iranian photography trend.

Military Photographers

The performance of military photographers differed from other photographers present during the war and their works in form and content usually followed the policies of the institution for which they served. During the imposed war, all military institutions used various media, including photography, to record activities and carry out propaganda, and

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Volume 12 Issue 31 Spring 2023 Pages 56-71

67

for this purpose, they organized various groups as videographers and photographers. Many of these photographers (especially in institutions such as Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Basij (mobilization forces) were volunteers who engaged in war photography through propaganda units. Initially, they were organized intending to image archives and documenting the process of operations, but gradually with the increase in the quality of the works and the understanding of the propaganda and media effect of photography by these institutions, these works were also used for broadcasting in the press and holding exhibitions. These photographers included a collection of both types of photographers (experienced and amateur) who worked in military institutions such as the Iranian Army, Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and the War Information Headquarters. «Hamidreza Vali», «Behzad Parvin Quds», «Nasser Afrasiabi», «Mohammad Hossein Heydari», «Seyyed Abbas Mirhashemi», and «Mahmoud Badrfar» were among those who started their activities from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) photography unit (Mirhashemi, interview, July 2015) (See Figure 8).



Figure 7. Mehrzad Arshadi, «Abadan», 1980. Source: Arshadi, August 2016.



Figure 8. Mahmoud Badrfar, «Tanker War-Persian Gulf», 1987. Source: <https://mehrnews.com>

They usually operated with the army and were present with the military forces in all stages of the operations. Also, due to security issues, it is left to these photographers to record many issues and events of the imposed war that were not possible for civilian photographers. According to «Mahmoud Badrfar», «In the discussion of the IRGC's first missile tests, as well as during the war of oil tankers, we were sent by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to various areas, including the Persian Gulf and areas where there were missile sites, for video coverage. Most of these photos were not published because of security reasons, but some of them were given to the mass media for publication» (Badrfar, interview, July 2020). Along with changing the public relations structure in 1982, the Iranian Army started forming active photography units in its three military forces. «Ismaeil Davari» handled the photography unit in the ground force, «Abdullah Bagheri» supervised the air force and «Mohammed Hossein Maghsoudi» handled the naval force (Davari, interview, July 2016). Army photographers were mostly obliged to cover martial units of the Army during operations, identification, and operational work, especially in the Air Force. They would accompany the troops for a few days after the start of the operation and cover the activities of the troops intending to archive or publishing in the official army publications; However, they did not have permission to take pictures during the operation.

PAYKAREH

Journal of Art Faculty, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

Historical Review of Iran War Photography during (1980-1988) with an Emphasis on Professional, Independent, and Military Photographers

Volume 12 Issue 31 Spring 2023 Pages 56-71

68

Because of the classical view that existed in the army, the commanders believed such activities would harm the order of the forces; For this reason, there are a few photos of the Iranian Army during the operations. In the army, they did not have a special news and documentary view of the war and they believed that informing and advertising is the responsibility of media such as television and the press. For this reason, most of the war documentary works of Iranian Army photographers are from the Basij (mobilization forces) and IRGC forces (Davari, interview, July 2016) (See Figure 9).



Figure 9. Ismail Davari, «Operational Areas of the South», 1984.

Source: Davari, July 2016.



Figure 10. Vahid Khoshnevis Ansari, «Operations of Karbala 5», 24.12.1986.

Source: Masoudi, 2009, p.122.

Another part of military photographers engaged in war photography through the organization of the War Information Headquarters. The War Information Headquarters, in cooperation with military institutions, formed a group of amateur photographers and videographers to accompany the Iranian forces in various stages of operations, regardless of their professional viewpoint. The foundation of the Forty Witnesses group was established in this way, and as it is clear from the name of this group, the purpose of its formation was to organize people who can act as documented witnesses by recording the events that happened in the battlefield's heart. Forty witnesses were formed in March 1982 and on the eve of the Fatah-ol-Mobin operation, and one of their tasks at the beginning of their activity was to photograph the warriors before the operation began, so that the photographs could identify the bodies of the martyrs or provide the photographs to their families (Mirhashemi, interview, July 2015). However, activity of Forty Witnesses, as a media group, expanded from the same operation of Fath-ol-Mobin, and the content production policy was changed by them. «Mohammad Haddad», one of the first members of Forty Witnesses, says: «From the very first days, our task policy differed from news work. We recorded the history of the war, life before the deployment, the behavior of the warriors in the trenches, the defense line, the advances, retreats and...» (Haddad, 2013, p. 6). The continuous presence of the members of this group among the Iranian forces from the beginning of an operation to its end and the complete video coverage they provided of the operations was the advantage of the Forty Witnesses group in documenting the war (See Figure 10). They were asked to record the events quickly, concisely, functionally operationally, and according to the photographers, this group did not discuss professional issues, aesthetics, framing and knowing different angles, and they only had been said to photograph and film whatever is in front of them and make only the recording of the history (Masoudi, 2009, p. 72). Due to the fact that the members of the group were all active warrior

forces in the war, the ideological view aligned with the atmosphere of that period can be seen in the members of this group more than other war photographers. Khoshnevis, a member of Forty Witnesses group, says: «When we put down the gun and replaced the camera, we looked at the gun through the lens differently. In fact, we used our cameras to target the guns and capture them» (Masoudi, 2009, p. 50). Forty witnesses took part in over 40 operations, including: Fath-ol-Mobin (22 /3/1982), Beit-ol-Moghadas (30/4/1982), Ramazan (14/7/1982), Kheybar (22/2/1984), Badr (8/2/1985), Walfajr (10/1/1986), Karbala 4 (1/10/1986), Karbala 5 (9/1/1987) and Mersad (26/7/1988). During the war, the number of members of the group increased and slowly reached a hundred people, but in the middle of the war, Devotion Witnesses group branched off from it and most of the members of Forty witnesses were attracted to it, and this was the beginning of the dissolution of the Forty witnesses group. After each operation, exhibitions are held from the works of military photographers in military centers such as garrisons, camps, and stations. They also held exhibitions for people to visit in public places, such as the periodical exhibitions of the army photography group of troops, tools and equipment, which were held in places such as Mellat Park and Shahr Park (Davari, interview, July 2016). Compared to other photographers in the war, the works of military photographers are of a lower level in terms of visual quality and content, but because of the constant companionship of the troops and continuous presence in operational areas, at least in quantitative terms, they have significant works compared to news and professional photographers. The works of these photographers comprised two parts: the part that was completely reportable and included the organization of forces, equipment and security-intelligence topics related to the war and was prepared for the archive at the headquarters of the military forces, and the second part. In the second part, in the photos, the documentary aspect was more colorful and most of the human issues were the focus of the photographers.

Conclusion

During the years discussed in this research, photography was rooted in the Islamic Revolution's belief and ideology, which, with the start of the war, engaged in the field of military and war discourse from the revolutionary and social discourse. This issue can be seen at least in the works of photographers who could take part in war photography until the end of the war. In this approach, Iranian photographers abandoned the conventional stereotypes of war photography, such as showing violence, death and life in the way we witnessed in other wars, and recorded photos with a religious and ideological approach that would become cultural and national symbols. In Iranian war photography, images were recorded as common symbols of places, events, and cultures, and lost their importance as aesthetic forms (especially in the works of independent and military photographers) and assumed a symbolic function as a sign of cultural belief, which was easily understood by the audience. There is no visible violence in the works of Iranian photographers, and for them, human relations and people involved in war were important and because of the dominant view of the society of that time, Iran, who looked at war as a defense against aggression, traces of what was not seen in the photography of other wars, such as showing the bare violence of war and dealing with aesthetic issues in the photos, were not seen in their works. Besides the dominating atmosphere of that period, this attention results from the original and native look of many of these photographers, especially independent (experienced and amateur) photographers. Although amateur photographers had less knowledge and experience in war photography than professional photographers, they have

recorded significant and different works in terms of form and content. The works of these photographers, which were published in the national press or displayed in the exhibition, influenced the national public opinion and appeared among the masses of people. On the opposite side, there were professional photographers active in the international media, whose works were devoid of the prevailing ideological and religious foundations. Although their presence is significant from various aspects such as social, political, and the reflection of the international outcome of the war, and it has provided a better reflection of the realities of the war, due to the publication platform of their works, in terms of form and content, they followed standards contrary to the view of institutions such as the War Information Headquarters and the Iranian society in the early years of the war. For this reason and some security reasons raised by the military institutions, they did not find the possibility of ongoing participation in Iran's war photography. The works of military photographers also have a lower level than the works of other photographers in terms of quality and even content; However, quantitatively, they have recorded various photos, many of which, due to not meeting the standards of war and news photography, remained as video reports to be archived in military centers. Also, despite the extent, long duration, and importance of the Iran-Iraq war in the social, political, and cultural history of the contemporary era, the visual history of the war was not recorded by photographers as it should be, and the role of photography did not go beyond a limited medium. With all these elaborations, although war photos are important in their time in terms of influence and change, the works of Iranian photographers of the Iran-Iraq war, if they are seriously studied, examined, and classified, can impact the progress of Iranian society in political, cultural, and social terms.

Appendix

1. In this regard, it is possible to refer to the book entitled "War in the Narrative of Images" (Selected Photographs) as a result of the work of a group of photographers, which was published by Soroush Publications in 1981.
2. In this regard, it is possible to refer to the book entitled "Life, War", by Kamran Jabreili, which was published in 1982 by the publications of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Organization of Cultural Heritage.
3. In this regard, it is possible to refer to the book entitled "Abadan that fights", by Bahman Jalali, which was published in 1981 by the publishing house.
4. In this regard, it is possible to refer to the book entitled «Defense Against Aggression» (Selected Photos) as a result of the group work of photographers, which was published in 1985 by the War Information Headquarters.

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PAYKAREH

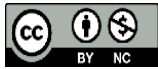
Journal of Art Faculty, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

Historical Review of Iran War Photography during (1980-1988) with an Emphasis on Professional, Independent, and Military Photographers

Volume 12 Issue 31 Spring 2023 Pages 56-71

71

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