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THE PRACTICE OF “EMBEDDED JOURNALISM” IN UKRAINE

The role of journalists in satisfying citizens' right to free access to socially important information in war conditions is highlighted. The importance to inform the public about the progress of the military campaign is emphasized because it provides the civilians' emotional and volunteer support for the army and military, political, and economic decisions. The history of the emergence of “embedded journalism” and the experience of implementing this type of journalism in Ukraine are analyzed. The author focuses on the ambivalent nature of “embedded journalism” from the point of view of researchers and practitioners. The legal basis for the journalists' activities in hot spots is outlined, in particular the restrictions introduced after the full-scale offensive of the Russian Federation on Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The challenges for Ukrainian journalists regarding the implementation of the practice of “embedded journalism” and the completion of this project in Ukraine are pointed out. The author considers the specificities of the military correspondents' activities and the recommendations developed by Ukrainian journalists and media experts regarding how to behave and how to communicate with the military and how to resolve conflict situations in the combat zone.

191

Keywords: *media at war, conflict, “embedded journalism”, war correspondents.*

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Практика «прикріпленого журналізму» в Україні

Висвітлено роль журналістів у задоволенні права громадян на вільний доступ до суспільно важливої інформації в умовах війни. Наголошено на важливості інформування громадськості про хід військової кампанії, бо це забезпечує емоційну та волонтерську підтримку армії та військових, політичних, економічних рішень з боку цивільного населення. Проаналізовано історію започаткування «прикріпленої журналістики» й досвід реалізації цього виду журналізму в Україні. Акцентовано увагу на амбівалентному характері «прикріпленого журналізму» з точки зору дослідників та практиків. Окреслено правову базу діяльності журналістів у гарячих точках, зокрема обмеження, введені після повномасштабного наступу РФ на Україну 24 лютого 2022 р. Вказано на виклики для українських журналістів стосовно впровадження практики «прикріпленого журналізму» й завершення цього проєкту в Україні. Розглянуто особливості діяльності воєнних кореспондентів й рекомендації, які розробили українські журналісти та медіаексперти стосовно того, як поводитись та як спілкуватися з військовими, як вирішувати конфліктні ситуації у зоні бойових дій.

192

Ключові слова: медіа у війні, конфлікт, «прикріплений журналізм», воєнні кореспонденти.

Formulation of the problem. The history of human civilization development is a history of constant conflicts and wars, which both destroyed societies and pushed for evolutionary transformation. At their core, there is a clash of opposing interests, views, assessments, values, etc. Conflicts and wars always have a high potential for long discussion as a “story to be continued”, where there is a struggle and strong emotions (“if it bleeds, it leads”), they become top topics in the world media. A “noteworthy” story is given more airtime or more space in print, relevant experts are invited to discuss, images or visual series are selected, etc., i.e. the media set the framework for our perception of the event. So, the media are no longer just spreading the news, they are creating the news, deciding what to say. Hundreds of thousands of newspapers, websites, messengers, radio stations, and TV channels testify that people are thirsty for information; this is especially noticeable in wartime.

Ukraine has been at war since 2014 and journalists were the “voices” of the battlefield, short and vulnerable cease fire as well as suffering civilians. For these years and at the present period (since February 24, 2022)

Ukrainian media have developed some new practices and got new expertise of work in the zone of conflict, on the temporarily occupied territories and in the rear.

The research aim is to scrutinise the practice of “embedded journalism” in Ukraine.

The research period covers 2014 – present; the sites of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy (by March 23, 2020 – the Ministry of Information Policy) (<https://mkip.gov.ua/>) and the Institute of Mass Information (journalistic analytical centre) (<https://imi.org.ua/>), their official reports, as well as journalists’ comments, were analysed.

Material’s presentation. Text of the Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, i.e. freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers (Universal Declaration 1948). However, this seemingly inalienable right is not guaranteed by international humanitarian law. There is only one mention in more than 500 articles, protocols and annexes to the Geneva Conventions: “during a conflict, civilians have the right to items necessary for survival” (Article 54 of Protocol 1 (Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions, Protocol 1, 1977) and Article 14 of Protocol 2 (Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions, Protocol 2, 1977) to the Geneva Conventions).

The mission of the media is to provide clear, concise, fast and responsible information. Their goal is to help citizens (in tandem with or in parallel with official services) to ensure their security and to calm public opinion. The way the media select tone, words, and images can not only help avoid panic but also prevent retaliation against individuals or groups who are associated in public opinion with those responsible for the attacks (Marthoz, 2017). Informing the public about the course of a military campaign is of utmost importance to gain the civilians’ emotional and volunteering support of the Army and the military, political and economic decisions. However, the coverage of military events provokes a dilemma: on the one hand, the military seeks interaction with the media that would create support for the military campaign; on the other hand, journalists are expected to make objective critical judgments. Journalists look for the truth that the military cannot always provide due to the requirements of secrecy, tactical and strategic planning, and so on. Media activities in conflict zones are often limited to government, military or corporate pressure, economic

interests and self-censorship, patriotism and professionalism (Karpchuk, 2019).

In *War, Media and Propaganda: A Global Perspective* D. Miller claims that in wartime “the “unfriendly” information should be destroyed, wherever it comes from” (Miller, 1997: 11). J. Winters and J. Giffin argue that the “ability to deny, degrade, destroy and/or effectively blind enemy capabilities” is of utmost importance (Winters, 1997). Ph. Taylor in his book *Munitions of the Mind* suggests that in a nuclear age, we need peace propagandists, not war propagandists – people whose job it is to increase communication, understanding and dialogue between different peoples with different beliefs. Consequently, we need as much truth as can and must be told. A gradual process of explanation will generate greater trust and therefore greater empathy and consensus will emerge. Fear and ignorance are the principal enemies of peace and peaceful coexistence (Taylor, 2013). Wide access to information and media forms educated opinion (Schlechter, 2004:24).

194

— The encyclopedia Britannica treats “embedded journalism” as “the practice of placing journalists within and under the control of one side’s military during an armed conflict. Embedded reporters and photographers are attached to a specific military unit and permitted to accompany troops into combat zones (Löffelholz, 2016).

“Embedded journalism” is the “invention” of the U.S. Department of Defense. It emerged during the Iraq War (2003 – 2011) as the response to criticism regarding the low level of access granted to reporters during the Persian Gulf War (1990 – 1991) and the early years of the Afghanistan War (which began in 2001). The new arrangement was formed out of meetings between the heads of news organizations and the Defense Department officials aimed at allowing journalists to report on war with the least possible danger (Pros and Cons..., 2003). Stephen Farrel argues that “embedding” is one of the words that emerged from the jargon of soldiers, diplomats, politicians and spin doctors (Farrel, 2010).

Patrick Cockburn claims that “accompanying armies in the field is usually the only way of finding out what they are doing or think they are doing. Nor is there an obvious alternative way for correspondents to operate today” (Cockburn, 2010). “In asymmetric conflicts – especially those in countries with a high risk of kidnapping and murder – embedding allows reporters, photographers and cameramen to go to areas that they could not do otherwise” (Farrel, 2010). Nevertheless, the practice has

been criticized as being part of a propaganda campaign depicting embedded journalists as cheerleaders and media relations representatives who accompany the military forces. “It is a tool of the military, allowing them to manipulate inexperienced or impressionable journalists into being useful fools” (Farrel, 2010).

The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine considers one of its main tasks to protect the citizens’ rights to receive, access and disseminate information. Article 34 of the Constitution of Ukraine states that “Everyone is guaranteed the right to freedom of thought and speech, to freely express their views and beliefs. Everyone has the right to freely collect, store, use and disseminate information orally, in writing or otherwise – at their discretion. The exercise of these rights may be restricted by law only in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public order to prevent riots or crimes, to protect public health, to safeguard the reputation or rights of others, to prevent the disclosure of confidential information or to maintain the authority and impartiality of justice” (Constitution of Ukraine). In 2015, recognising the importance of objective and impartial informing the public and the world community about the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO), seeking to provide media representatives with maximum access to information about the activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the ATO, the (then) Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine implemented a pilot project “Embedded journalism” (attaching journalists to military units) (Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, 2020).

195

To participate in the competition for embedded journalism, journalists should have an insurance policy for a journalist in the combat zone, a certificate of specialised training as a military journalist and admission to work in the ATO zone from the Security Service of Ukraine; at the time of attachment, the journalist had to be in excellent physical condition. The status of embedded journalists provided for the signing of a contract between the journalist, the media and the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine on the non-disclosure of state secrets and information that could threaten the information security of Ukraine. A press officer constantly worked with the journalist. The media outlet, represented by an embedded journalist, was to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Labor Code and to classify the journalist’s stay in the ATO zone as an official business trip. The media representative should have personal protective equipment, including a bulletproof vest of at least 4 protection class, a helmet with the

appropriate words “Press”, have a first aid kit (to provide the first aid) and be able to use it. Locations included only districts of Shyrokyne, Pisky, Avdiivka, Shchastya; journalists had weekly rotation, and there were no more than two representatives of one media at one location for one week (Ministerstvo, 2015).

It should be mentioned that in 2014, journalists repeatedly stressed the need to introduce the practice of “embedded journalism” in the army of Ukraine. Realising the importance of working in this mode, domestic journalists began to “embed” themselves into individual units. At that time it mostly occurred in volunteer battalions. On May 25, 2015, the project was officially launched, and the first official embedded journalists went east. In Ukraine, the project was implemented jointly by the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Information Policy. Based on the US Army program and the US form of contract, US press officers and media outlets helped Ukrainian government officials implement such a practice in Ukraine. Representatives of the Israeli armed forces also provided consultations. Unfortunately, not every Ukrainian media was able to meet all these requirements, the most problematic was the item on compulsory insurance, the cost of which in hostilities was quite high. Therefore, the program was mainly attended by foreign journalists; only one of the domestic national TV channels, Inter, managed to provide its correspondents with everything they needed to join the project. To help journalists who had not yet had experience in the combat zone, the Defense Ministry hired experienced military reporters (Hryvins’kyy 2015). Table 1 illustrates the presence and the results of media activity of embedded journalists in Ukraine in 2015. Embedded journalism is associated with risks and restrictions, in particular, the danger that the militants, as soon as they learn about the presence of the media on a certain section of the front, will start a targeted hunt for them or resort to some provocations. Such situations were avoided due to conspiracy and operative measures of special services; specific servicemen were responsible for their lives and health throughout the period. On the other hand, embedded journalists were forced to be in one particular place almost all the time. To a large extent, they depended on the military command, which, surely, was interested in the audience seeing the Armed Forces only in a positive light. In addition, given the largely defensive nature of the actions of the Ukrainian army, no one could guarantee that during the week of stay in one or another section the journalist would get the material he needed.

Results of journalists' work on the Embedded journalism program
(Ministerstvo, 2020)

Media	Materials	Reference
France Press	Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQw8cexlWk4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOD3fJnWx1E https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkWK6EYa8cc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQJzD0qHbOs https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D38mAJp-tTA
Rdiao Svoboda	Reportage	http://www.radiosvoboda.ua/content/article/27049676.html http://www.radiosvoboda.ua/content/article/27051541.html http://www.radiosvoboda.ua/content/article/27053567.html http://www.radiosvoboda.ua/content/article/27055585.html http://www.radiosvoboda.ua/content/article/27059481.html http://www.radiosvoboda.org/media/photogallery/27125513.html
POLSAT	Video, documentary	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFY-0Tz9udU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dquQcGeVMI https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qog2nzEWu58
Daily Signal	Reportage, documentary	http://dailysignal.com/2015/06/20/ukraine-war-looks-like-8-days-front-line/ http://www.funker530.com/new-combat-footage-from-ukraine-war-june-2015/ http://dailysignal.com/2015/06/28/the-flash-the-boom-and-the-dark-8-days-on-the-front-lines-of-ukraine-war/
London Evening Standard	Reportage	http://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/letter-from-ukraine-straight-ahead-of-us-are-russian-armed-forces-10321217.html
The Independent	Reportage	http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-93rd-brigade-part-of-the-red-army-in-wwii-it-now-fights-against-russianbacked-separatists-10318530.html http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-fears-big-war-as-russia-sends-in-more-troops-10457571.html
Newsweek	Reportage	http://www.newsweek.com/putins-war-ukraine-cease-fire-never-was-345559 http://www.newsweek.com/putins-war-death-daniel-19-year-old-ukrainian-patriot-364117
CNN	Reportage	http://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/17/europe/ukraine-forgotten-war/index.html
Censor.Net	Reportage	http://censor.net.ua/resonance/342597/sanatoriyi_v_shirokino_krepost_na_peredovoyi
Novoe Vremya	Reportage	http://nv.ua/opinion/bereza/embedded-journalists-pervye-poshli-57946.html
Business Ukraine	Reportage	http://bunews.com.ua/interviews/item/interview-us-combat-veteran-embedded-with-the-ukrainian-army

Inter	Video	http://podrobnosti.ua/2039692-na-luganschin-budvelniki-z-lvova-zvodjat-vjskovim-ukrplennja.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2039787-u-stanits-luganskj-snajperistrljajut-po-mirnih-meshkantsjah.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2039958-na-kordon-luganschini-pomtilivinishchuvach-ros.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2039989-na-luganschine-boevikizaminirovali-proezd-na-okkupirovannuju-territoriju.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2040041-na-luganschin-bjts-zahopilizbroju-virobnitstva-ros.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2040274-na-29-blokpostu-pogib-voennyjchetvero-raneny.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2040623-v-rezultate-obstrela-v-stanitse-luganskij-pogib-voennyj.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2040912-na-luganschine-snajpery-ohotjatsja-na-ukrainskih-ofitserov-video.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2040891-na-luganschin-pd-obstrl-gradvpopali-zhurnalsti-podrobits.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2040529-v-schaste-pytajutsja-sbit-bespilotniki-vraga.html http://podrobnosti.ua/2040473-pd-schastjam-vorog-posilju-obstrli-vnoch.html
The Telegraph	Reportage	http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11807274/Civilians-killed-as-separatists-warn-of-return-to-full-scale-war-in-Ukraine.html
The Washington Post	Reportage	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/at-point-18-in-eastern-ukraine-the-war-grinds-on-night-after-night/2015/08/15/ffcf2c0-405f-11e5-9561-4b3dc93e3b9a_story.html
The World Post	Reportage	http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ioana-moldovan-/ukraine-war-front-lines-photos_b_8079828.html?utm_hp_ref=world
POLSAT NEWS 2015	Documentary about the Ukrainian war	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUBlmp0qsE
Times News Europe	Reportage	http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/europe/article4610520.ece
The Daily Signal News	Reportage	https://www.facebook.com/TheDailySignalNews/videos/616406458525310/

Mykhailo Shtekel, a Radio Svoboda journalist, who was one of the first to take part in the program, emphasises that the experience of being close to Ukrainian army soldiers is necessary to create quality reports. This is the only way to truly understand the essence of the phenomena that are reported daily in the form of dry statistics by the ATO spokespersons (for example, the “two or three shellings” mentioned in the reports could last for several hours) (Hryvins’kyy, 2015).

After the “embedded journalism” experiment was over, the informative function is performed by war correspondents of different media channels.

To provide information support for Ukraine’s defence measures in the context of full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation on February 24, 2022, to give prompt, truthful and comprehensive information on Russia’s war crimes, the Armed Forces of Ukraine accredit representatives of national and foreign media. After verification of all data, media workers are provided with an electronic version of the press card for presentation at the request of the military and law enforcement agencies. In the conditions of the enemy’s use of weapons prohibited by international conventions, the Armed Forces of Ukraine are not responsible for the life and health of media representatives in the area of hostilities (Zbroyni Syly Ukrayiny, 2022).

Since February 24, 2022, the working conditions of journalists have changed compared to those during the Joint Forces Operation (former – the ATO) in Donbas, as the front line has become much closer to the capital and it has become more difficult to understand exactly where it passes. The journalists working in Ukraine may use the Internet, other means of communication, and social networks. However, there is a danger the information, that is disseminated in the network and is on the air, can be used by the enemy. With the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, both journalists and civilians have learned to be more responsible about how and when to report on shelling and military alarms. In the first days of the war, this information was widely disseminated on social networks, websites and live TV channels. In the second month of the large-scale war, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, the Ministry of Defense and the Union of Journalists of Ukraine finally developed rules on how and when to write about shelling, explosions, etc., for example, a reporter can go to work at the scene, but can speak about it publicly in 3 hours; if he/she gets to a military facility, he/she can only report in 12 hours; until the air alarm is over, he/she must not say where the shelling has taken place (Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, 2022b).

The military acknowledges that journalists create powerful information weapon to help Ukraine win, and call for patriotism, including good stories, specifically about aid, exposing speculators and looters, and helping families in need whose relatives are at the front. Even in the rare moments of rest that soldiers and officers have, they watch the news and social networks. They need to know that everything is fine on their home street (NSJU.org., 2022).

The media professionals are the eyes of the world to the atrocities of the RF in Ukraine. However, both journalists' reports and posts on social networks can endanger civilians, the military, and infrastructure, so on March 24, 2022, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a bill criminalising photo and video recordings of the movements of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Izvoschchykova, 2022). On March 3, 2022, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine issued an Order regulating the work of journalists during martial law (Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, 2022a). It is sent to journalists together with the accreditation and they are warned: if they violate the requirements, they will lose the press card. The Order explained how the military should work with journalists, what journalists should not do and what they should not write or film (for example, information about the attachment of any objects to the area; the success of air or artillery strikes; the results of strikes and the state infrastructure (aftermath); emotional expressions of people who get on camera; people who can be identified). Annex No. 2 to the Order contains a list of information, the disclosure of which may lead to the enemy's awareness of the actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other components of the Defense Forces, and may adversely affect the implementation of assigned tasks during martial law (Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, 2022a).

200

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On March 28, 2022, Ukrainian and foreign journalists appealed to the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky, the Office of the President, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, the Security Service, the General Staff and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on cases of harassment of journalists due to unfounded accusations of “adjusting the fire” of the enemy (the problem was provoked by the work of foreign journalists who filmed prohibited objects, in particular, a missile strike on Lviv, which led to another “more accurate” strike). As a result, journalists are a priori treated as hostile agents, even though they are only doing their job (Zolotukhin, 2022). The Order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine has remained binding.

Considering eight years of work in hot spots, Ukrainian journalists and media experts have developed recommendations (Ryaboshtan 2022) on how to behave and how to communicate with the military, how to resolve conflict situations, what to carry and without which it is better not to get a camera:

1. Speak calmly and do not conflict with the military.
2. Do not be nervous when communicating with the military.

3. Listen to what the military and law enforcement have to say and do as they say.

4. Carry all the accreditations of various bodies and departments - from the press card of the Verkhovna Rada to the work permit in the war zone.

5. Carry as many documents as possible: Ukrainian and foreign passports, registration data (for card holders), birth certificates, ID cards, etc.

6. Do not work without army accreditation.

7. Do not publish news of shelling or deaths unless officially reported.

8. As you pass the checkpoint, slow down, turn off the headlights, keep your hands in sight, and answer questions clearly. Do not make sudden movements, do not get out of the car without permission and do not start abruptly.

9. Do not survey positions and locations of fire in such a way that geolocation can be identified. Leave the military only with their permission. If the military asks you to delete a photo, obey.

10. Do not go to dangerous areas without training in-home care and work in wartime.

11. Keep your editors informed of your routes.

12. Always be in a bulletproof vest and helmet with the inscription "Press".

13. If you can, do not work alone - it is better to be in a team of two or three people.

14. Speak Ukrainian - this distinguishes you from the enemy.

15. Do not start work as a fixer if you do not have special training. Fixer is not only an interpreter; he/she is responsible for his/her wards.

Conclusions. Hence, we may conclude the following: in peacetime, freedom of expression, variety of opinions and free access to socially important information make up the main focus of media activities. However, in wartime, such activity requires great effort and coherence to provide objective information to citizens and to mobilise foreign partners.

Realising how important it is to present "first hand" information, i.e., from the defenders of Ukraine, the journalists called for the introduction of the practice of "embedded journalism" in Ukraine. The pilot project started in 2015, but security requirements (compulsory insurance for work in hostilities) proved to be too expensive for Ukrainian journalists. During the year of the project implementation, 17 foreign media and only one Ukrainian channel took part; the results of their work were 41 reports and videos and 2 documentaries.

However, most of the work was done by ordinary reporters of media outlets; during the eight years of the war, they even developed advice on how to communicate with the military and how to behave in a combat zone. However, their activities underwent additional changes with the beginning of a full-scale war. Specifically, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine issued an Order regulating the work of journalists during martial law which specifies the information, the disclosure of which may lead to the enemy's awareness of the actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, or may negatively affect the implementation of tasks during martial law. Verkhovna Rada adopted a bill criminalising photo and video recordings of the movements of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Certainly, media activity is only a separate aspect of engaging with the public in wartime and further research can focus on the communication activity of the President of Ukraine and the ruling elite, the information activity of special communication structures and NGOs and technological innovations that help support communication in wartime.

202

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203

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