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**Media ethics in professional journalism:**

**Ethics and war reporting**

***Real time reporting and racio***

Common characteristic of the modern armed conflicts and media is their dependance on communication technologies. Media technologies made posible real time reporting from different places in the war zone, and that has, as consenquences, lack of time for rational thinking and judgment. Journalist, through their reporting, have a crucial inflence on the shaping of the public opinion. Perception of the public depends a lot on what media have chosen, dropped down, shaped and interpreted.

Professional ethics of the journalist is in question by the reservation and silence or accentuation, interpretation of the events within the goal of propaganda and similar.

Military makes a huge effort to limit approach to the battlefield, and very often brings professional journalists within the position to just take over the material which has been designated to them. So, to the public can come censored information and photos from the field which does not reflect real status within the war zone. When dilemma happens about war intervention than we have media news about prosecution, loot, arson, civil victims, refugee convoys and similar. That kind of pictures will, for sure, have positive influence for getting support by the side of public – for war intervention.

***Appearance of CNN effect***

Appearance of CNN effect, or 24 hours (around the clock) TV reporting about war events during the Gulf War back in 1991 bring new difficulties for the authenticity of war reporting because journalists, very often, do not have time to check information from other sources.

During the war and crises public is more oriented on television as the media which reports in real time. Because of that approach, it happens that the news about starting of the armed conflict somewhere in the world appears on TV without explanation what has caused a conflict. With appearances of [new media](https://www.amazon.com/dictatorship-democracy-democratic-new-media/dp/3659537071/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=9783659537073&qid=1563972489&s=gateway&sr=8-1), it has been mitigated this problem because on Internet news portals and Social media publish news and commentaries and establish two-way communication. Approach to the place of the event is the key factor because there is no objective and neutral reporting if journalists work is limited. By limiting the approach to the battlefield is justified with the need for secrecy of conducting of the combative activities and protection of soldiers and with vulnerability of the life of journalists insofar as they would go on their own (alone) at the field.

Example for that is the media coverage of the war in Afghanistan who was primarily targeting a combat against terrorism. Approach is limited and publishing of the information from the battlefield and it is present beauty shaping of the picture of the status to be able to ensure public support. According to colleague Professor [Howard Tumber](https://www.bookdepository.com/Journalism-End-Objectivity-Howard-Tumber/9781849665094), world media is not giving complete picture about the war against terrorism.

***Censorship as “security check”***

Within the conditions of modern way of warfare, censorship is called „security check“ in the function of the protection of information important for the execution of the military operations.

Through the limitation of the access of battlefield, military conducts supervision over unwanted pictures from the war zone, and that directly has an influence on objective and impartial reporting. By doing this military strategy focused on manipulation of the media is, within its foundation, opposite to the media mission, which goal is not just to report objectively and impartially, but the media mission is also to be area for the public discussion and confrontation of the opinions. When there is a dilemma about war intervention than it happened when we see media reporting about prosecution, loot, arson, civil victims, refugee convoys and similar. Those pictures will, for sure, in positive way, make influence on getting public support for the war intervention.

***Professional standards vs. war propaganda (Embedded journalism?)***

Journalists, through their reporting, especially during the war and crisis, critically make influence on shaping of the public opinion and that is their primary duty towards the public.

It is obligation of every journalist to comply with media ethics because Ethics is the foundation of reliable reporting. According to colleague Professor [Dennis McQuail](http://www.euromediagroup.org/professor-denis-mcquail-university-of-amsterdam/) importance of media ethics is reflected within the baselines: truth and accuracy; impartiality and honesty; respect of the personality and privacy; independence from interest groups; responsibility towards the society and society goods; respect of the laws and morality, decency and good taste. However, reality that is based on responsible reporting can have as consequences passivity and failure to conduct adequate steps on the plan of the reporting. Journalistic feeling for the civil rights, even for patriotism, can put in question his perception about the issue how to behave in best way as journalist. Very often, journalists meet those who request to know if they are with them or against them.

Through silencing or accentuation, and drastic description of the events or making beauty out of it, or interpretation of the events with propaganda goal or similar things, again brings into the question professional, but also personal ethics of every journalist. Every war reporter should again and again re-question his/her acting and on every example again and again establish his/her ethical criterions.

I have traveled to war zones with BH Army during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina back in 1993. I've spent weeks at a time visiting BH Army units in the field. As a result, I have seen more of combats in Bosnia and Herzegovina I possibly could have otherwise, and I think the way I represented on local TV my spectators have benefits.

But embedding comes at a price. We are observing these wars from just one perspective, not seeing them whole. When you see my reports from certain areas, you should not think that I am out among ordinary people, asking questions of all sides. I am usually inside an BH Army military bubble. That vantage point has value, but it is hardly a full picture.

I fear that an embedded media is becoming the norm, and not just when it comes to war. The chroniclers of political and cultural debates increasingly move in a caravan with one side or another, as well. This nonmilitary embedding may have a different rationale, but there's a similar effect that comes with traveling under the canopy of a particular candidate, party or community. Journalists gain access to information and talkative sources, but also inherit the distortions and biases that come with being "on the bus" or "on the plane."

The larger troubles of the news business are complicated, but this problem is simple: We can't understand what we don't see; we can't explain a conflict if we hear from only one side.

Embedding arose because journalists requested it-goes easy way down the river and the sea of information, avoiding scilase and haribdas. During the Persian Gulf War, many reporters were stuck covering the action from the rear in Dhahran or Riyadh. A few managed to travel with U.S. units into the battle zone, producing vivid reports, such as Molly Moore's Washington Post dispatches from the forward outpost of the Marine commander. But many of the embedded reports were delayed or clumsily vetted by the military.

After the war, U.S. media outlets pleaded that this sort of access be expanded. And the next time, it was. The Pentagon realized that having journalists witness war from the limited but exhilarating perspective of a Humvee racing toward Baghdad was very much in its interest. So as USA prepared to cover the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, journalists rushed to make arrangements to be embedded with the commands that would see the most action.

Embedded journalism refers to the practice of placing a journalist with a military unit in order to allow that journalist to provide media coverage of military action in the midst of areas of conflict or directly inside a war zone.

One of the major criticisms of embedded reporting is the increased risk of inherent bias that naturally develops when the journalists are spending day and night with a particular military unit. Although it appears that journalists can safely cover news events from deep within the battle theater, they are actually operating from within an umbrella of safety provided by the military unit with whom they are traveling. Feelings of camaraderie naturally flow from risking one's life on a daily basis with one's comrades, and this is the same with embedded journalists. There also is the danger of loss of objectivity, as the embedded journalists are witnessing the combat zone from only one side of the military engagement.

Finally, the military can use the media for propaganda purposes. The embedded journalists are restricted to seeing what the military wants them to see: in other words, they may be given access to particular events the military wants to receive media coverage.

Question to think about:

Does journalist presents real truth during the war crisis or?

Next: Media ethics in professional journalism: Human rights & Terorism and War reporting