

**NATIONAL SCHOOL OF POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES
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Summary

Analysis of war as media performance

**Perspectives and interpretations on
the experiences of war journalists**

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Analysis of war as media performance
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– *summary* –

"We live in a world shaped by war," says historian Margaret MacMillan (2020, p. 13), who believes that humanity is both fearful and fascinated by it. War as a fact of life, with all its attendant violence, atrocities and human drama, transcends the battlefield and continues into the imaginary, brought into our homes by news and images transmitted by war correspondents. This initial data, itself relative, partial, fragmentary, is then subjected to 'processing' and 'staging' in the laboratories of the media system to reconstruct a spectacular version of war for the general public. Sometimes, in this type of situation, the quality of information loses out to emotion. "If the emotion you feel when you watch the TV news is genuine, the information is true" (Ramonet, 2000, p. 23). Ramonet believes that in many cases the information transmitted is primarily intended to trigger an emotional reaction in the audience.

In order to achieve this goal, information is often associated with elements of media drama (special effects, images that arouse psychological tension, suspense, a certain set design, props, script), so that the media coverage of scenes and aspects of war becomes an attractive spectacle for viewers, ensuring large audiences for media institutions. Faced with this media spectacle, the public remains permanently interested, tuned in, emotionally involved, thus benefiting from a protective distance vis-à-vis the physical reality of war. There is a difference of ontological planes between war as fact and war as media representation.

The central focus of the PhD thesis is an analysis of how war is portrayed in the media establishment, with a particular investigation on the professional and human experiences of war journalists, in an attempt to understand how they decipher the reality of conflict zones and encode it in news, images, reports, documentary or art films and deliver it to the public. The research aims to better understand how spectacular representations present reality, how they distort reality and, more importantly, how they have led to a type of media performance in which emotion is more important than the reporting of information, according to the journalists interviewed.

The rationale for the choice of this topic stems from the need to know the mechanisms and techniques through which the media image of war is reconstructed, as well as from the need felt by the general public to resort to critical thinking, to caution when knowledge of an event depends exclusively on the media establishment, which, in certain situations, operates according to the logic of rating, sometimes ready to distort the truth in favour of political, strategic or even financial interests.

The usefulness of this scientific approach - which invites critical thinking and a greater dose of scepticism towards media reports - is particularly timely in the current social context, when the Covid 19 pandemic has shown the vulnerability of the public to waves of misinformation. These vulnerabilities have been strongly supported by the fact that even researchers worldwide have at times hesitated or provided contradictory information, facilitating the imposition of unjustified or disproportionate measures. After two years of pandemic, we are witnessing a conflict close to our borders in Ukraine, where a democratic and sovereign country is under attack. The uniqueness of this conflict lies in the favourable technological environment, experienced during the pandemic, which supports the wave of disinformation, of information flooding in, contradicting each other and causing uncertainty, chaos and polarisation of society.

The aim of the PhD thesis is to analyse war as a media spectacle, following the model of news and TV news dramatization. To this end I used a multidisciplinary approach to the topic, drawing on theories from the fields of communication sciences, sociology, social psychology and neuroscience, as well as elements of scientific research methodology, such as semi-structured interviews and participatory observation, as a first-hand witness in theatres of operations in Afghanistan and Libya.

The concept of war as a media performance indicates that in the portrayal of conflicts in the media we can observe elements of the dramatic sphere, such as set design (buildings destroyed by bombing, apocalyptic sets), props (uniforms, ballistic equipment, assault

weapons, combat vehicles), one or more scriptwriters (staff officers who plan the combat actions and their deployment), a performance space, which is the battlefield or theatre of operations itself - extending globally through the media environment -, audience impact and, of course, the viewers, who are always connected to the information sources and protected from the event by distance.

Often *the presentation of war in a spectacular manner* in the audio-visual borrows techniques specific to cinematic fiction such as the insertion of visual and sound effects (slow-motion explosions, the insistent presentation of certain details, close-ups, the "live" camera - fast-moving, fast-paced editing, the operator's breathing caught in a direct shot, different types of framing of characters, types of lighting, etc.) that give the impression of excitement, of greater danger than is actually the case.

When audiences watch a film or theatre performance, they accept a priori certain conventions: that sets are mere settings, that actors don't really cry, that musical accents are meant to heighten emotion, that no one really dies but just follows a script faithfully. The audience escapes into theatrical or cinematic art, decoding it in a manner specific to the director's intention. In the case of war as a media performance the audience has the impression that it is objectively informed, that it has access to insight into a social environment without being warned that the production it is watching on television may sometimes contain less truth than cinematic fiction. This PhD thesis is therefore a necessary wake-up call about the key way in which the public decodes media representations of war. By highlighting the fact that the war presented by the media borrows elements from the sphere of drama, the research I have conducted is a warning to the public about the consumption of spectacle-like media products that target the emotional but claim to be faithful reflections of harsh realities.

Conflicts lead to population migration from certain areas, cultural clashes, social and territorial reorganisation and even the disappearance of peoples. It can be considered one of the most organised of human activities, if we take into account that the war training of modern armies is continuous in peacetime. There is an ongoing concern for research in armaments and military strategy, and there is significant investment in these areas by modern states. MacMillan analyses war as a social phenomenon with powerful influences on everyday life, which go so far as to inspire writers, poets, painters, film-makers and journalists. It is also found in traditional children's games such as "Fortress", "We want soldiers!", etc. One of the most popular video games in the USA, for example, is also about war, "Call of Duty", and features combat action and tactics inspired by World War II. Even the most important football matches are presented as battles, for which supporters make up different strategies, establish hierarchies

and make battle plans, sometimes interested in defeating their opponents physically rather than through gameplay. As a result, the author points out, public opinion is always involved, has a stance on the war and often has an important say in the fate of the conflict.

Media organisations quickly realised the public's appetite for entertainment and the importance of conflict coverage in increasing newspaper circulation, so that during the Franco-Prussian War the circulation of the Daily News tripled. At the end of the 19th century, Churchill became famous and wealthy as a result of the Boer War reports. War correspondents such as Ernest Hemingway, Edward R. Murrow, Robert Capa, Michael Herr, Marie Colvin became heroes of their era. The public's ability to watch the horrors of war from the comfort of their own homes often influenced the very duration of the conflict. Such was the case with the Vietnam War, said to have been won on the battlefield but lost in front of the television, where people watched reports that portrayed an unjust, shameful, pointless conflict in which US soldiers died without society fully understanding the reasons for these sacrifices. The public outcry put pressure on politicians who supported the war, and they, aware of the importance of public support in election campaigns, complied.

Some researchers (Karmasin et al., 2013, pp. xi-xiii) point out that the ways in which wars are conveyed contribute substantially to their image among the public. Ever since the advent of the telegraph, which in 1914 managed to connect the entire world, the public has benefited from information about various international crises and wars almost in real time even if the events took place on another continent. In fact, half a century earlier, telegrams sent from the Crimean War (1853-1856) to The Times by William Howard Russel, considered the first war correspondent, had shocked the British public by confronting them with the stark reality of the battlefield, with soldiers treated badly in a dysfunctional army. This information both enthralled and horrified readers, and had immediate effects, such as implementing much-needed changes in the army and improving the care of the wounded in field hospitals.

The Vietnam conflict proved the major role of the media establishment in the success of war in general. It was a war that was an integral part of American society, the effects of which were visible in mainstream culture, a source of inspiration for music, social movements, art. A war said to have been won on the front and lost at home in front to the public. From the perspective of the US military, this conflict marked the end of propaganda and the beginning of military public relations. Professional PR structures were born, no more lies were told, but fragments of truth, no more censorship imposed from outside, but one induced in the consciousness of embedded journalists, who self-censored in order not to endanger their own troops. "After Vietnam, the media in general, electronic media in particular, became part of

military strategies. Robert M. Entman made the point very clearly: from now on, war will be sold to the public - even at the cost of not including any trace of realism." (Karmasin et al., 2013, p. viii).

Most of the time information is presented in such a way as to induce moods, generate emotions or seduce the audience. This danger is frequently reported in the media environment, by various European organisations, on websites specialising in tackling false information, rumours and misinformation. Romanian educational systems is also beginning to show concern about the development of critical thinking skills among pupils, as early as secondary school. Pupils are taught to research information from several sources, to check the author, the source that generated the information and to keep a dose of scepticism. However, *the elements of showmanship added to the transmission of information continue to be used and to reconstruct a credible reality with a semblance of authenticity but often running parallel to the situation on the ground.*

The analysis of war as a media performance contains elements of originality in the sphere of communication in conflict situations and underlines the fact that the journalist is not a researcher who respects methodological rules in probing states of fact, thus distortions of facts, events, information may appear in his broadcasts, some without intention, others with a definite purpose. This aspect adds originality to the present work, as this research was carried out through the 'lens' of a career journalist, familiar with reporting from the core of armed conflicts, allowing him to have a more realistic perspective on the media phenomena studied and even on the way in which his own work has an impact on society.

The work is made up of four chapters corresponding to as many *research lines*, namely three mainly theoretical ones in which I analysed and described media theories and their effects in the social understanding of everyday life, while chapter four is dedicated to the practical application of the reference theory - a research stage materialised in two distinct sub-steps: the design and sampling of interviews and the analysis and interpretation of the data resulting from them.

The first chapter addresses a first path of scientific research, namely the analysis of public opinion from the perspective of the influences and effects of the media system on society in times of armed conflict.

During armed conflicts, the media can directly influence the course of military operations. *The first chapter* examines from this perspective the aura of fiction and elements of the spectacular inserted by war journalists in their reporting, which at some point lead to uncertainty among the receivers of information. Moreover, Baudrillard (2008) analyses how

the quotidian is intensely dramatized and passed through the filters of journalists until the public comes to confuse reality with fiction. War is no exception, all the more so because the concept of 'theatre of operations' refers, in Baudrillard's view, to an area where armed confrontations take place, but also suggests the dramaturgical nature of war. Starting from the idea that the reality of the battlefield is in fact constructed by inserting elements of spectacle, Jean Baudrillard metaphorically wonders whether the "Gulf War really existed" (i.e. the Desert Storm operation of 1990-1991) with reference to Jean Giraudoux's play "La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu"/"The Trojan War will not take place". (Allain & Harvie, 2012, p. 201).

The second chapter of the paper, i.e. the second scientific research direction of this paper, aims to analyse how reality is "constructed" in our minds and the influence of the media establishment on the subjective perception of the social environment.

Television gave the viewers the opportunity to watch live the first night of bombing in Iraq, an occasion that earned CNN a name equivalent to live coverage of the war. George H.W. Bush, the US president at the time, was to declare, fascinated, that he had learned more from CNN broadcasts than from CIA reports. (Bahador, 2007) The concept of the 'CNN Effect' also emerged at the time, which refers to the fact that the media system can change the destiny of a conflict, accelerate, shorten or prolong it, and influence decisions on further combat action through its effects on diplomacy, defence policy and public opinion.

The third chapter of the paper, with its research orientation, is dedicated to the analysis of the phenomenon of fake news and its role in creating a biased information environment, which can influence both the perception of the journalist documenting in conflict zones and the way the public receives/decodes the information received.

In order to argue the research, some examples of scientific fake news are presented, whose construction contain false information, set on the skeleton of a scientific article, and published in prestigious academic publications. These are then used as sources of documentation by certain researchers, taken up and spread in good faith. Even if over time the falsehood is discovered and retracted, it has an effect, simply because it inspires other points of view. Some false media constructions are easy to dismantle. Simple documentation or checking of sources is enough and the results can be immediately apparent. But others are so cleverly constructed that even specialists sometimes find it impossible to tackle them.

Chapter four of the thesis, which is devoted to the last research direction of the PhD thesis, is dedicated to qualitative research that I conducted based on interviews with experienced war journalists. By referring to the specialised literature, which records how conflicts are covered in the media, how human dramas are used for the purpose of television

ratings, the amplification of some or the relegation of others to the background, a parallel is drawn between the famous cases of spectacular portrayal of war in the media and the way in which the Romanian journalists interviewed reported on the wars to which they participated.

The analysis of the interviews with war correspondents is the central element of the work, where the link between the concepts analysed and the actual ways of working in war journalism is made. This analysis aims to confirm/refute in whole or in part the answers given in the specialised literature regarding the objectivity/subjectivity of war reporting, the presentation of war as a performance and the framing of the conflict within the patterns of the official voice of the state involved in the conflict.

In the previous mainly theoretical chapters I have analysed some of the mechanisms through which war journalists probe the social environment, select information, codify it and then transfer it to the public. The focus of the analysis was on reporting in situations of crisis, armed conflict, sometimes in an information environment tainted by *fake news*.

In this chapter I set out to research based on a semi-structured interview guide:

- why the interviewees chose to be war correspondents;
- whether conflict zones had a strong emotional impact on them;
- how difficult it was for them to remain neutral in their reporting and whether they succeeded;
- whether they became fond of particular soldiers they subsequently reported on;
- how emotionally involved they were in the stories;
- what might be the reasons why some journalists distort reality;
- whether they consciously distorted the information they obtained on the ground in order to highlight the danger.

Thus, I started from three research questions:

Q1. To what extent do war correspondents engage emotionally/subjectively with the stories they report?

Q2. How is the 'reality' of theatres of operations reconstructed in journalists' accounts?

Q3. What is the role of spectacular elements and to what extent are these elements present in the construction of the media 'reality' of war?

Each interview lasted at least 60 minutes, totalling 8-10 pages of text, in Word, Times New Roman, font 12, 1.5 lines. As the interviews were relatively long the answers were extensive, the respondents' ideas were developed in depth, and the dialogue extended beyond the initial questions each time. The combination of directive and non-directive interviewing led, on the one hand, to a clear structure of the interview guide, complemented, however, by

spontaneity, centred on the interviewed journalist, without being under time pressure, which also allowed the recording of spontaneously expressed feelings and attitudes, later recorded in a complex analysis of the interviews, from which emerged both elements common to all interviewees and different points of view, which outlined the complexity of the issues addressed.

The 11 journalists were selected from the pool of war correspondents with experience in several media genres who have a good reputation among their colleagues and have participated in at least one mission in theatres of operations (former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Angola, Albania), where Romania has also had troops. Three of the journalists interviewed reported from theatres of operations both as freelance journalists and under the protection of their own troops. All the journalists have a broad range of experience in a variety of media, including television, print and radio.

The data coded in the research was integrated into several main themes such as:

- factors influencing journalists' reporting;
- the emotional impact of the conflict zone on journalists;
- attachments influencing reporting;
- 'embedded' vs. 'freelance' journalists;
- assuming one's own subjectivity in reporting;
- use of elements of the spectacular;
- reporting influenced by the pressure of public expectations;
- narcissism in journalism;
- emphasis on the emotional dimension in conflict reporting;
- the media framing of war;
- the ownership of overly spectacular representations;
- changing public perception of the conflict with the help of war correspondents;

In analysing the responses, I used theories such as agenda setting, media framing, cultivation theory, third person effect, Thomas' theorem.

I also tried to find out if they felt, in their own accounts:

- the pressure of the audience expecting something different, spectacular;
- certain conditioning of their media institution;
- censorship by the specialised structures of the army;
- the conditioning of their own stereotypes.

Sometimes, following a traditional model of constructing news content, or depending on one's experience, education and deontology, journalists can fall into the trap of inheriting

certain patterns, certain models of reporting, which end up, at some point, recreating reality or being the mouthpiece of the public agenda built around a particular subject.

I used a qualitative research method, such as semi-structured interviews, because they allow to probe subjects' private experiences, beliefs, attitudes and ideologies, about which there are no other sources of information, and also participatory observation, during my time as a war correspondent in the Libyan and Afghan theatres of operations.

The usefulness of the chosen research method was also reflected in the fact that it allowed me to follow the human, psychological and social interaction with the interviewed journalists throughout the research. The advantages of using this technique also consisted in obtaining specific, particular, developed answers to each question. The interviews also allowed me to observe non-verbal behaviours, to have full control over the sequence of questions, to obtain spontaneous answers, to obtain answers other than those initially foreseen in the interview guide, suggested by the interlocutors, to probe the practical and theoretical experiences of the interviewees on the issue under analysis, as well as their opinions about other colleagues. (Chelcea, 2001, p. 270).

For the area of military operations (the battlefield), I have used the established military term "theatre of operations".

Of the journalists selected for the interview, three had the opportunity to participate in various conflicts after 1990 without being under the protection of troops. For those assignments, I called them "freelance journalists". The term "embedded journalist" refers in this research to journalists who, while reporting from theatres of operations, were with the troops under their protection.

As stated above, the overall aim of this research was to understand and explain some of the factors that contribute to the creation of images and representations of war in the media, and to urge readers to be more cautious when consuming media products for information rather than as entertainment.

I believe that this goal has been achieved since the interviews showed that there are several factors that lead journalists to see things from several perspectives, to cut out pieces of reality and present them as a whole. Among these factors, I would list the level of education, the influence of the journalist's background, previous experiences, moral values, the financial interests of the media trust, the politics of the newsroom, the public agenda of the state, the needs of a certain type of audience. When discussing subjective reporting from theatres of operation journalists prefer to refer to what they have observed in their colleagues in certain situations rather than to their own subjectivity. However, most of them admit that it is

impossible not to be on one side or the other of the fence and not to get attached to the military with whom they have spent a lot of time, who have provided them with protection and access to information.

The unprecedented flow of information transmitted and amplified by new technological means of communication, makes it impossible for mankind to discern between true, well-documented, scientifically validated information and false, deceptive information designed to mislead the public. Information is often presented in such a way as to induce moods, generate emotions or seduce the public. This danger is frequently reported in the media system, by various European organisations, on websites specialised in tackling false information, rumours and misinformation. Romanian education is also beginning to show concern about developing critical thinking skills in pupils, as early as secondary school. Pupils are taught to research information from several sources, to check the author, the source that generated the information and to keep a dose of scepticism. However, the analysis carried out in the first chapter of this paper shows that the *elements of performance added to the dissemination of information continue to be used and to reconstruct a credible reality, with the appearance of truthfulness, but often running parallel to the situation on the ground.*

The multitude of messages, videos, films, sources of information, some professionally constructed, whose veracity or good intentions are difficult to prove, produce either a misinformation that is difficult to manage, or a kind of mass anxiety of a society overwhelmed by the spectacle, the negative, the sensational. All the more so in crisis situations, during armed conflicts, the analysis of information reaching the public becomes more complicated because of the dynamics of events, misinformation, rumours, information that is difficult to verify and the way the conflict is framed in the media. While in some situations the public has access to direct, on-the-spot verification of the event in order to convince itself whether or not a fire has been devastating to a particular area or an accident has such serious consequences as the media portrays, when it comes to war, information about the conduct of military operations comes from open sources such as the media and from official sources of communication of the armies or governments conducting combat actions. Official sources of information are in line with the communication policy of the states involved in the conflict, and the reporting of war journalists depends on a number of factors, including the ideological orientation of the press trusts to which the journalists belong, their professional ethics, the culture from which they come, the level of education of journalists, their subjectivity and the specific audience for which they are reporting.

When the understanding of a phenomenon such as war is mediated by the media, the

way the public deciphers the message depends directly on the way it has been encoded, the angle the journalists have chosen to look at the event, the pieces of truth presented as a whole.

From the analysis carried out in the second chapter, I found that the reality reflected in the media, which often generates attitudes, reactions and beliefs among the public, is in many cases a construction of journalists, which has as its starting point their own subjectivity. By following a traditional model of constructing news material, journalists can fall prey to the legacy of certain patterns and models of reporting. Regardless of which side of the fence they are on, television uses the same emotionally charged techniques of television drama such as slow-motion shots of explosions wreaking havoc, teary-eyed details, slow or alert music, moderators announcing in a grim tone that there could be another tragedy every second. Information that is intended not just to bring news from the front, but to induce moods, reactions, attitudes. Information with elements of the spectacular, which creates impressions, amplifies certainties and seems to reflect in a faithful way a reality that, for the moment, we cannot prove.

Regarding the analysis of the fake news phenomenon, I deduced from Chapter 3 that, as a rule, analyses of misinformation in crisis situations and the effects they have on the public are carried out effectively after the information has settled down and can be verified on the ground, as was the case with the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, about which numerous studies have been written on how certain media trusts framed the conflict.

Interviews with war journalists revealed to me that it is difficult to get a full picture of the conflict, especially when accompanying troops. I also learned that there is a fair degree of emotional involvement, that you get attached to the subject, to the cause it is fighting for, and that it is difficult, almost impossible, to see the "reality" of the side that is turning its guns on your own people.

On the other hand, military journalists are more tempted to admit their subjectivity in reporting because it is about the institution they work for, where they received their training, and the subjects they report on are often the stories of their fellow soldiers.

Journalists often set out with already formed opinions about the conflict, but also with a predetermined way of reporting, depending on their style and preferred genre of reporting. Artificially created theatrics occur when the newsroom asks for emotion-provoking information and nothing is happening in the area from which the journalist is reporting at any given time. Then they resort to tricks such as crawlers announcing disaster, introducing the audience to the spectacular theme to be presented 'from war', or to technical tricks such as a moving camera, a saccadic pace of speech, choosing a background as warlike as possible, with battle vehicles,

explosions, complemented by the journalist's outfit, with a vest, helmet, even when this is not the need. The journalists I spoke to said that they had encountered such practices in their careers, but that they did not like them and did not use them.

The wars reported by the journalists who agreed to participate in this research were always presented from the country's official perspective and their legitimacy was never questioned. However, in trying to discover together, on the basis of an interview guide, the degree of the reporter's subjective involvement in the reporting, the theory known as the "Third Person Effect" proved very useful in the results obtained. The journalists interviewed found it much easier, for example, to refer to the actions of fellow journalists, their subjective involvement or their appetite for showmanship, than to their own actions, although many of them acknowledged their own subjectivity in some instances.

Having arrived in a conflict zone, the journalist tries to understand the phenomenon, to get to know the reality on the ground. The next step is to convey relevant information to the public in some form. To do this, the journalist constructs the message, assigns symbolic values to it, organises it according to different patterns and delivers it. Ideally, there should be a symmetry between the way the journalist constructs the message and the way it is interpreted, read, decoded.

One of the constant concerns throughout this scholarly endeavour has been to identify the role of the spectacular in the accounts of war correspondents, which is emphasised in the way the interviews with journalists included in the fourth chapter of the paper are structured and applied. From this concern, the following emerged:

- *Most journalists I spoke to claimed to have witnessed distortions of reality by fellow journalists, who resorted to various methods to amplify the emotions of their reporting.* The reasons identified for these practices of exaggerating events by appealing to the spectacular are generated by the economic reasons of the media institution, by the desire of the journalist to stand out by bringing to the forefront his own courage of being in a war zone where people are dying or because there is the idea, often verified in practice, that the public's desire is to receive violence, drama, emotion.

- *Each of the journalists interviewed, with small exceptions, relates to a person who inspired them or to a particular story that sparked their attraction to the job of war correspondent.* The first questions in the interview guide probe the reasons that led to such a career. Also, for most journalists, conflict zones have had quite an impact, due to the uniqueness of the area, the culture of the population, the infrastructure of military bases, the harsh living conditions of the locals as well as of the military, the danger, the drama of those at war. A world

that impressed them and which they tried to portray as faithfully as possible. Sometimes, in order to convey the emotion they experienced on the ground, some journalists have confessed that they have resorted to the spectacular without distorting reality. The areas of ongoing military operations that they saw and reported from had an influence on the way they saw the war, the way they saw the soldiers, but also on the style of reporting, which in some cases was personal, with subjective implications.

- In probing the subjective involvement in their own correspondence, *each journalist I spoke to confessed to having stories or people to whom they felt attached, emotionally connected. Most also admitted that they could not remain perfectly neutral in their accounts, especially when they empathised with the military, the victims of war, the horrors of conflict.* Consequently, these attachments to areas, ideas or people often led to subjective approaches to specific war issues, sometimes without awareness. As for favouring spectacular representations, the journalists interviewed confessed that they did not do so, or not blatantly. However, they mentioned that there are colleagues in the press who put themselves in the spotlight, emphasising their importance and role in the conflict, the uniqueness of their reporting and the power of the press trust that sent them.

- *The subjectivity of journalists, in varying degrees, the way they filter reality, the structures according to which they construct their message, plus an information environment tainted by constructions such as fake news can lead in many situations to a misperception of reality in a particular place, especially since it is a theatre of operations, to which the public has no other access than through the media.*

Theoretical contributions and practical implications

This study is a start in the analysis of ongoing conflicts from the perspective of media representations of war. For example, the method applied in the present study, that of media framing, may be an optimal one for the analysis of the way the ongoing war in Ukraine is reported in the media, all the more so as we have information coming from two dissonant voices, one official, that of Russia, as opposed to that of the European democratic states with which Ukraine aligns itself in this situation.

I believe that this research can be useful both to war correspondents - who are sometimes unaware of their own subjectivity in cutting out certain pieces of reality and delivering them as a whole, and of the effects their actions can have on the public or even on the fate of the conflict - and also to public relations specialists, staff officers, combatants, but especially to the general public, sometimes insufficiently warned about the sensational

presentations of war in the media. From a practical and theoretical point of view, this study is a contribution to the literature on how conflicts are framed in the media, with a focus on war correspondents in Romania.

The study is also original in that it probes the perspectives, feelings, beliefs and strategies of war correspondents in Romania on how they bring conflict into people's homes through the media establishment.

The limitations of the research

A limitation of the research relates to it being conducted in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic, which made it difficult to meet face-to-face with journalists, some of whom I had to engage via digital platforms, which reduced the level of human interaction. However, the fact that we belong to the same trade has led to overcoming the barriers imposed by technological means and has led to consistent dialogues, useful on both sides.

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