Research Article

Media and Military Perceptions of the Canadian Media Embedding Concept during the War in Afghanistan

Aimé-Jules Bizimana, Université du Québec en Outaouais

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of journalists and military personnel about the Canadian media embedding concept during the Afghanistan war. Based on their experiences with battle groups in Kabul and Kandahar between 2003 and 2011, embedded journalists, public affairs officers, and commanders describe what embedding is. The results demonstrate a multifaceted concept of embedding. Based on 93 semi-structured interviews conducted between October 2013 and November 2014, the analysis confirms that embedding is a way of managing access without prior censorship but rather through a contractual and negotiation process. Respondents also describe embedding as reporting that is primarily focused on the military perspective to accomplish communication objectives. Finally, respondents explain in this qualitative case study that embedding is a situational and experiential practice according to the specific operational or political context of each rotation.

Keywords: embedding, media, war reporting, public affairs, Canadian military, Afghanistan War

Introduction

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, Canada, as a member of NATO, found itself involved in the war against terrorism and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. While the first special troops were deployed on the ground in late 2001, regular troops took up residence at Kandahar Airport in early 2002. Several other military rotations followed in Kabul and Kandahar, primarily during a combat mission that took place between 2006 and 2011. A training mission for Afghan forces followed until 2014. In total, Canadian participation required the deployment of more than 40,000 soldiers. Casualties numbered 158 soldiers and six civilian and humanitarian personnel, including one journalist.

In September 2003, the Canadian Army experimented for the first time with embedding journalists in military operations at the beginning of Operation ATHENA in Afghanistan. A first group of journalists was formally embedded at Camp Julien in Kabul by the 3rd Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment (3 RCR) as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The public affairs officer for 3 RCR described a positive relationship with the media (Janzen, 2004, p. 45). This practice was directly inspired by the American embedding program during the Iraq war. Presented as a great novelty compared to anything that had been done in the past, the embedding program generated great enthusiasm among members of the American media, who applauded a formula that would allow a "great eyewitness accounts of what's going on" (Jurkowitz, 2003). The American military promised an open attitude: "You are going to get unprecedented access to soldiers in operations" said a military officer prior to embedding (quoted by Glasser, 2003). However, there were criticisms regarding the advantage the program would provide to the Pentagon and the fact that it was a way to control the press (Swanson, 2003).

After a successful experiment in Kabul in 2003, the Canadian military followed up with a more robust embedding program for the Afghan combat mission. Between 2006 and 2011, hundreds of Canadian and international journalists were accredited and required to sign and commit to ground rules. The ground rules are an essential component of the embedding contract, which contains all the guidelines for media coverage of the war. This contract provided the following definition: "Media embedding is the process of attaching an accredited journalist who has agreed to be assigned by the Canadian Forces (CF) to accompany a CF formation or unit during an operation for an extended period of time" (CEFCOM, 2006, p. 1). Similar ground rules, which detail the parameters to which accredited journalists must adhere, had already been used by the Canadian military in previous conflicts dating back to the First World War.

The main objective of this article is to analyze the perceptions of journalists and military personnel on the Canadian media embedding program within different rotations with the tactical groups that were deployed in Afghanistan. We will attempt to answer the following question: What are the perceptions of accredited journalists and military personnel involved in Canadian operations in Afghanistan regarding embedding?

Our analysis reveals a multidimensional concept of embedding. Journalists and military personnel view embedding as the primary means of gaining access to military operations that would otherwise be difficult to cover. Access allows for coverage of military activities and operational challenges in the soldiers' immediate environment, but this access is conditional on the preservation of operational security. Embedding is perceived as a contractual obligation with precise rules that govern journalistic accreditation and media coverage.

Perceptions also suggest a negotiation process between the military and the media. Embedding is based on a constantly negotiated interaction related to the interpretation of rules, access to sources, and conflict resolution based on the parties' divergent interests. Journalists speak of a system that is primarily focused on the military perspective through accessible sites and sources. Being embedded means being with the military, as opposed to covering the war in its entirety.

Participants also emphasized that embedding is a communications strategy aimed at promoting the military's informational objectives and government policies. While the military has a democratic obligation to accommodate the media in order to inform the public, embedding seeks to promote positive achievements while hiding areas of discomfort. Finally, embedding is an evolving and adjustable process that relies on practices and rules related to the specific context of each rotation, depending on the operational situation and risks, as well as the editorial interest of the media.

The Concept of Embedding

The emergence of embedding during the Iraq war signified a change in philosophy in terms of the control exercised over the media. Unlike the much-criticized restrictions on journalists covering war in the 1990s, the U.S. military chose a media and public relations strategy (Cottle, 2004; Lewis, 2006) "with unprecedented access given to journalists and news organizations" (Tumber and Palmer, 2004, p.161). Images and reports from the front line demonstrated "remarkable access" without erasing the grey areas of war representations or restrictions on non-embedded journalists (Keeble, 2004, pp. 49-50). Embedding is a differentiated set of negotiated interactions (Maltby, 2012; Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1989) and power relations (Bizimana, 2017) between journalists and the military in a given operational environment.

Embedding was viewed "as a means to retain control over war coverage and, ultimately, public opinion" (Cortell, Eisinger, and Althaus, 2009, p. 669). The latter authors explained that American embedding was structured around ground rules aimed at protecting the operational security and participation of both American and international media outlets. Fahmy and Johnson (2005) examined embedded journalists' perceptions of their coverage of the Iraq War and factors that influenced their framing of war. In their survey, journalists stated that embedding "provided great access to the battlefield and understanding to what was happening on the ground" (Fahmy and Johnson, 2005, pp. 310-311).

In another international study, Johnson and Fahmy (2009) examined how embedded journalists viewed freedom of the press and their perceptions of censorship on their reporting of the Iraq War. "Although embedded journalists indicated that the media should have experienced fewer controls, they believe the embed system provided them sufficient freedom to report the war" and "they were able to operate in Iraq without censorship" (Johnson and Fahmy, 2009, p. 65, p. 69).

Two content analyses of embedded coverage in Iraq concluded that the coverage was positive toward the US military both for print (Pfau et al., 2004) and television (Pfau et al., 2005). This conclusion is based on the fact that embedded journalists operate in close proximity to the soldiers in the units they cover. Both studies underlined that embedding has an effect on the nature and tone of the coverage compared to non-embedded coverage.

One of the stated goals of media embedding in Iraq was to counter enemy propaganda. Pentagon communications officials placed great emphasis on using the press to present the American point of view to counter the false messages of Saddam Hussein and Iraqi officials (Bizimana, 2017, pp. 105-106; Cortell, Eisinger, and Althaus, 2009, pp. 667-668).

Furthermore, Fahmy and Johnson's (2005, p. 309) study pointed out that embedding only allows for "a narrow slice of the conflict." Embedded stories were therefore fragments, whereas some journalists operating independently could get a more complete picture." (Fahmy and Johnson, 2005, p. 311). Speaking of a "professionally treacherous" environment, Pfau et al. (2004, p. 84) reiterated this widespread view of embedded journalism: "Journalists get to cover combat operations up close, which gives them access to the combat operations they want. But, in the process, they lose perspective and, thus, sacrifice the idealized standard of journalist objectivity." However, Fahmy and Johnson (2005, p. 311) argued that the fact that embedding allows for a limited view of war does not mean that the view is inaccurate or biased.

Methodology

The data for this research comes from a database of semi-structured interviews with journalists accredited to cover Canadian operations and military personnel who interacted with journalists or who were involved in managing the Canadian embedded media program during the war in Afghanistan. For participants from the media, the main selection criteria was accreditation by the Canadian military and a presence on the ground in Afghanistan during the war. For military participants, two main criteria were used: the first was having been deployed to Afghanistan in one of the many rotations of the Canadian Forces, the second was having been involved in one way or another in the setting up or the management of the embedded media program. This second criterion is particularly relevant for public affairs officers. While most of the public affairs officers we interviewed were deployed to welcome journalists in Afghanistan, some participants had administrative responsibilities related to embedded media at the Public Affairs branch at the Department of National Defence in Ottawa.

A total of 93 semi-structured interviews were conducted in person or by telephone, primarily with embedded journalists, commanders, and public affairs officers. This total sample includes 63 embedded journalists, 16 of whom were women. The large majority of the journalists interviewed were Canadian, but three were

international journalists (two Americans and one French). We sought to diversify our sample by interviewing journalists employed by major national media outlets (news agencies, major daily newspapers, and television networks) as well as those from regional and local media.

Of the 28 military participants, the vast majority were public affairs officers of various ranks (19 public affairs officers, including three women). A public affairs officer plays a crucial role in the operational management of the embedded media program and generally has a direct relationship with the accredited journalists in the field. In this regard, the public affairs branch is more represented in our sample than other branches. Our sample also includes seven respondents who held command positions in Afghanistan and a Ministry of Defense public servant. Whether at the multinational brigade or task force level, a field commander is ultimately responsible for the embedded media program and has regular and frequent contact with public affairs officers. The authority of a commander is an important factor in the nature of military-media relations at the operational level. Suggested by another participant for his knowledge of information services, only one soldier with a non-commissioned officer rank participated in our study. Generally speaking, military rank and years of experience were not a selection criteria. We sought to diversify our sample based on the varied journalistic and military experiences related to the embedded media program in the various rotations of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan. Exceptionally, we interviewed two risk management experts who work for the media. Eight participants asked to share their experience anonymously.

This research is part of a larger study on media embedding by the Canadian military in Afghanistan and the military-media relations in military operations, and the risks of war reporting. It also draws on a large body of documentary material (official documents obtained through access to information, press articles, etc.). We conducted individual, semi-structured interviews of approximately one hour each. Our questionnaire addresses different dimensions of the embedding program and military-media relations, but this article draws on specific data on perceptions of the concept of embedding. We asked our journalist and military participants to define and explain what embedding is. This article focuses on a specific aspect and therefore relies primarily on data from the semi-structured interviews we originally conducted between October 2013 and November 2014.

This funded[1] research is qualitative in nature and uses a case study approach which involves studying a contemporary phenomenon and related events in its real-world context (Yin, 2003). A case is based on an empirical "unit of analysis" which can be an individual, an event, an organization, a program, etc. (Yin, 2003, pp. 22-23). Our unit of analysis is the "Media Embed Program (MEP)" that the Canadian military instituted between 2003 and 2011 in Afghanistan. We coded the data using Atlas.ti software and conducted a qualitative thematic analysis to identify themes representative of the perceptions collected from respondents.

Despite the high theoretical representativeness of our sample, the study is limited to the perceptions of participants who were accredited journalists and military personnel from the public affairs branch and the command. We did not broaden our sample to include the views of media editors or to compare perceptions based on military rank or specific role in operations.

Findings: Embedding for Access

For journalists, embedding is essentially a matter of access. Murray Brewster of the Canadian Press (CP[2]) noted that embedding is tailored "to give the journalist a sense of the day-to-day life and the day-to-day dangers of Canadian troops.[3]" CP's Les Perreaux is one of the few journalists who covered a major offensive operation on the front: "The whole reason to do the embedding thing is to get the kind of glimpse we got on Operation Medusa[4] and it was one of the only times I think where it actually sort of worked as I think it was intended to work on both sides.[5]"

Embedding provides crucial access to military information and operations. Christie Blatchford, who covered the war for the Globe and Mail, noted that embedding allowed her to get very close to the soldiers[6]. Although he said his unembedded experience was the most rewarding in Afghanistan, an anonymous journalist noted that he had access to important information through the military and defends the positive nature of the embedding program: "It would have been impossible to cover the Canadian military mission and we would all be in the dark about what happened.[7]" David Common from CBC agreed: "It is very difficult for journalists to cover war particularly when your interest is in covering your own soldiers without embedding. It is next to impossible[8]." This vision is based on the advantage of being close to the soldiers and the accessibility of military sources in an extremely volatile environment.

From a military perspective, access is also a key element. Embedding offers a journalist "relatively unrestricted access and protection and support from the contingent[9]" described Brigadier-General[10] Jonathan Vance. Referring to a process of supply and demand, public affairs officer (PAO) and Colonel Luc Gaudet mentioned access to patrols, the commander and briefings. PAO Fraser Clark used the metaphor of the visit: "You're coming to my home as my guest you have access to everything that my house has to offer as well as my family[11]." Gaudet linked embedding to the broader framework of public policy in relation to the Canadian public: "Canadian media are valued here in our country, it was part of our legal responsibilities but also part of being transparent. To give an opportunity to these people, who were professionals in information and communication the opportunity to experience Canadian Forces operations in a multinational theater with us.[12]" The military of course insists that access is conditional on compliance with operational security and the protection of personal information.

Embedding: An Agreement Based on Rules

Embedding is a contractual model based on a formal agreement between the military and the media. "It is a trilateral contract between the journalist, the journalist's agency and the Department of Defense,[13]" said PAO Alain Blondin. The embedding contract specifies the responsibilities of each party and is a formal agreement that all embedded journalists must sign. The embedding model is based on what is commonly known as ground rules. For example, one of the ground rules stated that "embedded journalists will not report the identity of CF personnel who kill or injure anti-coalition militants without the prior approval of the Task Force Commander" (CEFCOM, 2006, p. A2/3). In general, the rules forbid the publication of information that could pose a danger to soldiers and operations. Jonathan Montpetit from the CP discussed the concept of operational security and discipline: "Covering things what came to be known as OPSEC or operation security so that if you report on matters that they considered confidential that you were liable to be removed from the program. If you violated rules like drinking or drug use those kinds of things, you were able to be removed from the program.[14]" Failure to comply with the ground rules may lead to sanctions.

Embedding is a specific form of journalism. Manon Globensky from Radio-Canada explained: "If a journalist goes in there thinking that they will really be able to do their work as a journalist as freely as if they were outside the base, I think they are mistaken.[15]" Embedded access is a supervised access. "It is a framework in which the independent media decide to submit themselves in order to have access to firsthand information, closer to the sources. [...] It amounts to giving up certain freedoms in order to have access to certain things that otherwise you wouldn't have[16]" affirmed PAO Mathieu Dufour. "It's an exchange, really. They let us get close to their operations in exchange for a number of conditions,[17]" described Patrice Roy from Radio-Canada.

The rules also apply to the reporting of tragic incidents such as the death of soldiers. For PAO Christian Lemay, the issue is not to hide the incident but to ensure that the principles of privacy are respected and that next of kin are informed before anyone else[18]. During incidents, there were restrictions on the names and images of the deceased until the first, second or third level next of kin were informed. In this regard, Gloria Galloway from the Globe and Mail talked about respect for families: "I mean nobody wants to be listening to a radio, back home here, and find out that their loved one has been killed in Afghanistan.[19]"

Basic rules are generally well accepted by the media. Susan Ormiston at CBC explained: "The agreement is very straightforward and very fair." Contrary to many previous conflicts, embedding is not based on prior censorship[20]: "I don't recall an incident where there was any sort of active censorship. Our stories did not have to be pre-cleared, [21]" affirmed Bruce Campion Smith from CP. The absence of censorship does not mean the absence of control. The rules are contractual obligations. "If you break those rules, there are big repercussions for you and for your organization. So there was a lot of pressure to follow those,[22]" pointed out Chris Brown from CBC.

Embedding: A Negotiating Process

Beyond the written rules, embedding relies on a negotiation process between the military and journalists. Different rules relate, for example, to sensitive information about military equipment, security measures and the locations of military units and installations. An anonymous reporter at Sun Media[23] referred to the exchanges that form the basis of this negotiation:

> You know broadly what you can't talk about, but when it comes down to specific cases you do find yourself sort of negotiating with military officials. Can I say this? Can I not say this? How bad of a problem it would be if I say this?[24].

This is not a case of formal censorship where the military checks and approves what embedded journalists are allowed to say. Colin Perkel of CP stated that he thinks the rules were sometimes interpreted in an arbitrary manner without any apparent logic: "It was a constant struggle to try to stay within the rules and yet still do our jobs properly.[25]" Some rules were contested. Negotiation takes place in the news production process when the journalist establishes contact with military and civilian sources in the field. Access to sources is controlled as Piya Chattopadhyay at CBC indicated: "You didn't know if you were being turned down for a quote-unquote 'legitimate reason' or because the military wanted to control information.[26]"

It has often happened that public affairs officers have promoted certain stories related to development and reconstruction in Afghanistan to the media in a context where combat operations were hampered by increasing deaths. Referring to this type of reporting proposals for a story on a case involving a CIDA-funded school through an NGO, CP's Alexander Panetta showed, by contrast, that the journalist can benefit from the negotiation:

> I said: "Okay, I will go to that school, and I will interview these kids from the Save the Children program, but I want the statistics on the Taliban, the number of schools that we've lost that we've paid for and have been destroyed." [...] You can actually tell that story and the one they don't want. You can do both. It's not always easy but it can be done[27].

For the military, the goal of negotiation is to generate positive media coverage and to avoid any damaging reporting. For the media, the goal of negotiation is to gain the most independent access possible, based on their editorial interests. There is pressure on both sides to achieve success in the negotiation process. Journalists report feeling different kinds of pressure. There is pressure from PAOs to cover certain stories. CP's Murray Brewster noted that the journalist has a certain latitude that allows them to better negotiate what they cover: "There was a sense that: this is right, or, no this is wrong[28]." There is also the pressure to choose a side. "You feel the pressure of being patriotic, if I can put it that way. You are constantly aware [...] of you are embedded

with the Canadian Military and what that means,[29]" said Piya Chattopadhyay at CBC. Referring to the difficulty of covering the soldiers' state of mind and feelings, she pointed out that control is not necessarily a visible act: "The interesting thing about embedding is the control mechanism that you don't see." Some journalists have mentioned the difficulty of reporting on soldiers' emotions. Armies want more factual reporting on a soldier's specific professional role, not their feelings about the war. Soldiers are generally trained to avoid undesirable aspects in their interactions with the media.

Personality is also a determining factor in the negotiation process. "It is quite inconsistent and very much depended on whom the public affair officers were, who was in charge at this particular time,[30]" indicated Colin Perkel from CP. Several journalists emphasized this personality factor in relationships. On the military side, several PAOs also indicated that the personality of the reporter affects the quality of the relationship.

From a military perspective, negotiation takes place at various levels. PAO Christian Lemay explained that there is some negotiation between the media and public affairs in order to maintain a healthy relationship[31]. This negotiation often involves the intervention of the commander in the field to resolve impasses when there are conflicting interpretations. PAO Mark Peebles confirmed this point: "In the beginning, I had to go to Colonel Hope and say: 'Sir, listen. I am facing a lot of pressure. The companies really are not cooperating. Can we have a talk with these guys?' And he actually was part of that leverage to get the embeds out.[32]" During their rotation (Roto 1) in 2006, soldiers of the 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (1 PPCLI) initially expressed reluctance towards the embedded media, but the situation subsequently improved. On the other hand, when some reluctance arises and journalists are not properly briefed, the negotiation involves a chain of communication between public affairs and the command in Ottawa for interventions with commanders and public affairs officers on the field.

PAO Marc Thériault reflected on the program as a whole: "If you ask the media, they will say: 'I didn't get enough access'. They will never be satisfied.[33]" He noted that although it was a good program, the media also exert constant pressure: "The media always wants more," he said, "we always feel pushed to our limits.[34]" Negotiation allows for a balance to be reached.

The negotiation process is based on supply and demand. The media are generally in demand for reporting opportunities (outings, interviews), while the public affairs apparatus has sometimes limited offerings. Mark Peebles attested: "It was me trying to satisfy their demands while also pitching my own. Especially if I see that there was a vacuum.[35]" However, PAO Yves Desbiens noted that "just because you present an operation and then an opportunity for embedding to a journalist or journalists does not mean they will accept it. Journalists also have their own interests that influence their decisions.[36]"

Embedded journalistic access is based on a complex negotiation process between the military and accredited journalists. Responding to complaints from some journalists that they were not allowed to go out too much, one anonymous journalist compares embedding to an arena where journalists must fight like gladiators to publish their news, instead of expecting a buffet where they will be fed by public relations officers[37].

Embedding: A Military Perspective on the War

Embedding is a military program that is primarily designed to cover Canadian troops and operations. "It gave you what I considered to be a soda-pop straw view of the war,[38]" indicated Murray Brewster from CP. An anonymous colleague said: "We weren't necessarily there to cover the war generally; we were there to cover very specifically the Canadian role in Afghanistan and what the Canadian forces were doing.[39]" Reporters explain that they are getting one part of the story.

However, the Canadian structure was flexible to other media coverage needs. Bob Weber, who made two trips to Afghanistan in 2006 and 2008 for CP, explained the dynamics: "You wanna cover the troops, that's the main reason you're there, but you also wanna go into Kandahar, you wanna talk to Kandaharis, you wanna talk to local businessmen and you wanna talk to people if you can, and you want to give to your readers as full a picture of the place as you can, not just kind of being chained to the soldiers.[40]" His colleague Bruce Campion-Smith explained that it is the role of newsrooms to ensure that their correspondents cover both the military and civilian aspects[41]. For the major Canadian media outlets (news agencies, national daily newspapers, and television networks), their correspondents' assignment in Afghanistan generally had two aspects: an embedded stay for the military perspective and a civilian stay for the Afghan perspective.

Several of the journalists interviewed were aware of the limitations that embedding has on the overall coverage of the war. "I did try to retain a perspective of the country as a whole and of the mission as a whole, but my job sincerely was quite narrow and that was to cover the Canadians,[42]" noted Colin Perkel from the CP. Laura King of the Los Angeles Times argued that embedding offers only one side of the war and that the civilian side is a very important part: "You are just not going to get a complete picture of things when you are with the military and you'll see some very interesting things that you would not otherwise have access too.[43]" Embedding allows journalists to see the war, but their field of vision is limited to their immediate surroundings and by the access provided by the military. "You have to be conscious that you are seeing something that was placed in front of you because it obviously suits other people's purposes, some of which might be noble," explained an anonymous journalist. He specified that what is presented to journalists can have political or apolitical motivations and that journalists must be aware of this[44].

The biggest limitation was reporting from the enemy camp. Some journalists tried to establish contacts with the Taliban, but it was very difficult and risky. An anonymous journalist explained:

> In an ideal world, it is certain that we would have to be embedded on the Taliban side and then embedded on the Canadian army side, but we know that on the Taliban side we had a major problem, a survival problem, almost impossible[45].

Michelle Ouimet from La Presse noted that covering the war requires exploring its different facets (military, civilian, humanitarian, enemy) and comes back to the limit of embedding: "The problem in Afghanistan is that we could never see the Taliban's point of view, so we were captive to the army's point of view.[46]"

Embedding: A Communication Strategy

Journalists see embedding as a communication strategy for the military. "The key point in all of this is that the military has its own strategic agendas when it comes to information,[47]" said Colin Perkel of CP. His colleague Bruce Campion-Smith spoke about a dual purpose for the Canadian military: "The military is doing it, not only out of whatever sense of public duty about informing the Canadian public but, they have their own agenda in the sense that they know they're getting their story out.[48]" Several reporters noted that public affairs officers often had stories to promote.

Public affairs deal with media management on the ground and also serves strategic objectives at a political level. "The military sees the PR as being very important. The public image of the military is very, very important. It is directly related to them getting more funding for what they want to do," explained Barry Acton at Global. The strategy of embedding journalists into military operations is part of a broader information warfare approach that also includes psychological warfare activities (Miller, 2004a, 2004b; Webster, 2003; Taylor, 1997). Unlike embedding, whose primary audience is domestic opinion, psychological warfare operations aim to influence external audiences and the enemy.

Journalists are very aware of the information war in which they are unwitting participants. Freelance journalist Anne Nivat made this observation: "I realize that over time the army has adapted to accepting embedded journalists, even if this makes them uncomfortable. And that, obviously, all of this has only one goal, all of this is only in favor of the army, that by organizing and creating these programs, the army is necessarily creating a communications and marketing operation.[49]"

On the military side, media coverage has advantages in terms of providing information and communicating with different target audiences. PAO Christian Lemay explained that the embedding program allows Canadians to understand what the military does through the eyes of journalists: "From the moment the journalist covers the news, we are the news.[50]" There is a calculation here in terms of communicational gain that is linked to a certain acceptance of media independence and professionalism.

The embedding policy goes hand in hand with a great deal of awareness of the need to know how to communicate. To this end, as does the U.S. Army, the Canadian Army offers training to its officers on interaction with the media and familiarization sessions between soldiers and the media during their pre-deployment training. "A soldier must be able to talk about what he does in the field and explain what he does, it's not his role to talk about what his boss does, but his role, and his duties as a soldier, he should be able to explain and talk about openly,[51]" noted Lieutenant-Colonel Alain Gauthier, who commanded the 3rd battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment in Kandahar.

Embedding has a function of information and communication. PAO Mark Peebles noted that there were both communicational objectives to inform the public and operational objectives to communicate what the military was accomplishing in the field. The communicational strategy has several military and civilian objectives as well as domestic and international targets. Operationally, Lemay said that embedding is an information tool that also targets the enemy[52].

For Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Hope, a commander must use the media to his advantage: "I was messaging through them to the public to raise confidence levels, but never lying, never telling things that were untrue, always saying things that were true but not telling them everything.[53]" Hope defended this communicational strategy on the grounds that negative media coverage has the potential to derail a military mission: "A commander constantly goes: "What is acceptable on various levels?" and I was always conscious of the fact that we could lose the war not on one but on two peaks. We could be withdrawn from operations leaving a vacuum in Kandahar, if things went wrong in the press.[54]" He noted that some journalists have complained that commanders always use positive spin on their operations but also defends communication that should not damage troop morale: "You can't command soldiers in combat and tell the truth. I mean the truth of your fears; you can't express fears because it is poisonous and has an immediate and negative impact on your command.[55]" It certainly cannot be said that all commanders seized the opportunity of embedding. Some remained reluctant and kept their distance.

Embedding: A Contextual Experience

Embedding is based on differentiated practices according to several contextual parameters. Several reporters noted that the program has changed over time. In general, the perceived changes are related to the specific context of each rotation and the military response to the incidents. The embedding contract has indeed been modified several times in response to incidents that have occurred in the field. Stephanie Levitz from CP gave the example of casualty coverage. While previously it was easier to interview friends of a soldier who had been killed, she said she has noticed a change and that these sources were no longer accessible[56]. From one trip to the next, CP's Bob Weber also said he felt the difference in the accessibility of military sources: "I would say it was easier in 2006 to get interviews that you wanted to get

than it was in 2008. By 2008, access to officials was slower and more restricted, and there were a number of public affairs officers who were kind of frustrated with that.[57]" Echoes of these readjustments have spread throughout the journalism community.

Embedding is a situational program linked to operational parameters. Media coverage of the first Canadian military engagement of a defensive nature between 2002 and 2005 was very different from that of the combat mission between 2006 and 2011. The first period focused mainly on non-offensive peacekeeping operations. The second period coincided with the implementation of a new embedding program by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM), which was accompanied by a significant media influx. Referring to his stays in 2007 and 2011, Alec Castonguay from Le Devoir and L'actualité explained that the combat mission was intense and that everything was geared towards winning the hearts of the Afghans[58]. Journalists who had covered the first period felt a more rigid formalization compared to the flexibility of the early years.

Moreover, the operational environment of the combat mission created a new risk context that affected the functioning of the embedding program. Hugo Meunier from La Presse, who arrived in Kandahar just after a Radio-Canada crew was injured by an improvised explosive device in August 2007, recalled the travel restrictions that followed the incident: "There was a kind of panic movement by the media and the army regarding the transportation of journalists. So movements became rarer [...], there was talk of leaving people at the base, the army was hesitant, so we had to raise our voices to be able to move around.[59]"

Some media outlets have themselves imposed restrictions on their journalists going outside of the wire because of the perceived risks. While at the beginning of the war it was easier to cover the war independently, the security situation deteriorated significantly around 2007-2008. There was a high risk of being taken hostage or killed, said Colin Perkel of the CP[60]. Calgary Herald reporter Michelle Lang was killed by an explosive device in 2009. The increased risks of the environment affected both non-embedded and embedded journalism.

Access to locations and sources also depends on the political situation. "It got worse under this government,[61]" said CP's Stephen Thorne. During the war in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's office, preparing for the 2007 election, asked the Canadian military to do a better job of promoting development and reconstruction news to get more positive media coverage of the conflict (Chase, 2008). David Common from CBC explained that commanders and public affairs officials had to comply with the Prime Minister's office to tighten the media grip in Afghanistan[62]. Several journalists interviewed sensed this promotional campaign.

The embedded journalists also discussed the operational context of the end of the Canadian mission with the Americans taking command. Gloria Galloway at the Globe and Mail sensed the change: "The Americans came in [...] and started imposing their own kinds of laws and rules on us and the situation became very different, there were places on the base you couldn't go, and it became a far less friendly place.[63]"

While several journalists have reported instances where their work has been affected by certain restrictions at the American-controlled base in Kandahar, the overall impact on the Canadian program has been very limited.

The situational dimension also relates to how the media perceives the progression of the war and the value they place on it. While at the beginning of the mission, the media interest was very high, the end of the mission experienced a slight decline. Embedded in 2010, CBC's Cameron MacIntosh discussed the inherent difficulties in covering the end of the mission: "By the time I was there, we had been in Afghanistan for quite a long time. So, the stories had to be pretty good to make cut on the shows like [The] National.[64]" Several journalists mentioned that newsrooms felt that they had exhausted their stories, and this made it difficult for embedded journalists to "sell" their stories. This decline in media attention was not reassuring to the Canadian military, and the public affairs branch attempted to increase media participation by inviting regional and international media outlets and opinion leaders.

By the time the Afghan army training mission began in 2011, the media was less inclined to send journalists to the field, and the army had a program with very limited resources. The mission was somewhat fading into oblivion with less urgency to bring projects to the forefront, Alec Castonguay from Le Devoir said, adding that fewer military flights were available to journalists by 2013.[65]

In military perceptions, there are several types of circumstantial factors. The operational environment has some impact on the acceptability of the embedding program. Referring to his first deployment in 2004, PAO Brian Martin talked about a more collaborative environment: "The embed program was so new that it was still a collaborative environment with the reporters, the editors, producers, and Ottawa, and the Public Affairs Officers on the ground in Afghanistan to meet everyone's needs.[66]" As we have seen, the combat mission meant more risk for soldiers with a significant increase in the number of deaths. In this context, Martin put the acceptance of media risk into perspective:

> Leadership back home in Canada understood that there was a risk embedding media with us, that they would see everything, whatever dirty laundry there may be or may come up. […] They were willing to accept that 95% of all the stories would have a positive light to things or neutral light to things, and would be more accurate and reflective of what was actually going on, and we're willing to take that 5% risk […] about stuff that doesn't make the Force look so good, so the risk tolerance I think back in 2004, could have been more acceptable than later on[67].

However, the Canadian military never abandoned the program despite the challenges faced in the field. But certainly, the context of increased operational risk had subtle implications in terms of reporting and field opportunities for embedded media.

Military interviewees reported that a certain media fatigue emerged over time. PAO Marc Thériault explained: "The interest in the novelty obviously declined after Medusa, about the end of 2006, and then in the last few years there was a real fatigue, Canadians didn't want to hear more about it. There was a fatigue that set in because our program was very, very robust among the troops.[68]" This fatigue could be seen over several rotations, but it could also be felt within a single rotation. PAO Roland Lavoie alluded to this: "I felt that for the troops, having the media constantly watching you eat, brush your teeth, over time, at least for some of them, creates a certain amount of exhaustion [...]. I had to make them understand that this was a Canadian mission and that it was part of their job to accommodate the media as much as possible.[69]"

The military also raised concerns about the impact of security risks on embedded coverage. PAO Marc Thériault testified: "The parent companies were more and more reluctant to let our journalist colleagues leave the outskirts of camp Kandahar. Because of insurance issues, they [...] had to pay a special premium when the journalists were outside the wire, operating with the battle group, or with the PRT[70], outside the protection of Kandahar.[71]" PAO and Lieutenant-Colonel Rita Lepage added: "We found that reporters didn't want to leave the camp anymore to go out on patrol with their guys because they were afraid they'd be out somewhere for 3 days and a soldier would be killed so we started calling it the death watch.[72]" This was a major concern for the public affairs branch. Beyond the risks, it should be noted that the creation of a pool in November 2007 between CBC/Radio-Canada, CTV and Global in order to reduce the costs of their coverage also contributed to the decline of media coverage during the war.

Finally, embedding is a public affairs policy that takes place within a national framework and not all embedding programs are identical. There is a similar principle of accreditation for journalists in military operations, but national differences are sometimes apparent in the operationalization of programs. "The Canadian embedding program is literally recognized as the best in all NATO Countries. The Americans have a program but theirs is a little bit stricter. I know the Dutch have their own but theirs is very strict, [73]" claimed PAO André Salloum. Several journalists interviewed shared the same opinion.

Journalists highlighted openness as a characteristic of the Canadian embedding program. "I felt the Canadians had the best program of any other NATO troops that I covered in Afghanistan,[74]" declared Drew Brown from the American military newspaper Stars & Stripes. "Canadians were open and helpful and also they were welcoming of non-Canadian nationals working for news organizations that were not Canadian,[75]" added Laura King from the Los Angeles Times. French journalist Anne Nivat noted: "The Canadian embedded program is a model of liberalism compared to other embedded programs, such as the American army and the French army.[76]" Senior PAO Marc Thériault said the Americans only allowed very limited stays in the field units, while the Canadians offered a constantly replenished all-you-can-eat buffet[77].

Drew Brown of Stars & Stripes raised another argument regarding coverage of deaths, which was much more open in the Canadian program:

When a Canadian soldier was killed, they would regroup all the reporters and say hey you know something happened you guys can come in. And once all the facts are gathered and they notified the family, they would actually give a briefing and it wouldn't matter if it was 8 o'clock at night or 3 in the morning, it doesn't matter, they were always waking up the reporters that were assigned to them, that were embedded with them and they would come out there and give the facts and I felt that Canadians had very professional manners[78].

The Canadian media covered the farewell ceremonies for the fallen soldiers and featured powerful images of the repatriation of the caskets from Afghanistan to Canada.

Nevertheless, journalists raised negative points about the Canadian embedding program compared to other programs. CP's Murray Brewster acknowledged that the American program was the opposite of the Canadian program in terms of accreditation with the troops, but noted that the Americans provided more briefings with an overall perspective[79]. Journalists also noted that their wiggle room depended on how comfortable the military was with the risks and indicated a low tolerance of risk on the part of the Canadian military.

Discussion

In journalistic and military perceptions, a multidimensional embedding concept emerges. The Canadian model of embedding is very different from the American model. In the American model, "the perspective of the embedded journalist corresponds to the immediate field of action of his unit" (Bizimana, 2017, p. 27). Embedded reporters with the U.S. military in Iraq were required to remain with their unit at all times. The Canadian model is embedding into an operational headquarters with differentiated tactical outings for a limited time. In both cases, there is a differentiation in principle between embedded and non-embedded journalists, even if in the Canadian case the practice is more flexible, with a permissive alternation between the two statuses. From a military institutional point of view, there is a distinction between embedded and non-embedded journalists, and this has implications for military responsibility for protection in the event of danger, but from a professional journalistic point of view, the two statuses are two sides of the same coin. Embedding is an access apparatus to the operational theatre.

In the descriptions collected, embedding allows journalists to cover soldiers' working conditions and their daily lives and offers the opportunity to get to know them. Without embedding, some even claim that it is impossible to cover the military side of a conflict. For journalists, this arrangement is crucial to being able to cover a war where

there is significant public interest. For the military, the implementation of the embedding system is both a recognition of the role of the media, whose work must be facilitated and protected in a hostile environment, but also a means of managing access to their operations in order to preserve tactical intelligence. This finding is consistent with other studies (Lewis, 2006; Tumber and Palmer, 2004). However, embedding is based on a multiform access. There is planned access where the journalist presents a wish list prior to arrival. There is spontaneous access that defines impromptu outing offers. Access varies depending on the comfort level of commanders and PAOs.

Embedding is based on a signed contract between two consenting parties. This contract establishes specific rules that frame war reporting. Similar to a study of embedded journalists in Iraq (Johnson and Fahmy, 2009), our journalist and military participants indicated that there was no prior censorship. As with the Americans in Iraq, the formalization of the Canadian embedding program abandons the "security review, principle and instead relies on the "security at the source" principle where "service members," from officers to privates, are responsible for discerning classified from unclassified information, and to make sure that only the latter is passed on" (Brandenburg, 2007, p. 955).

However, censorship is not the only form of media control in times of war. "States exercise power over media through multiple forms of persuasion, cooptation and coercion" (Carruthers, 2011, p. 15). Access is a complex process that involves negotiation. While rules exist and broadly frame embedded reporting, their interpretation is sometimes subject to negotiation. Our participants indicated that embedding reflects negotiated access between journalists and the military. Negotiation is particularly prevalent on sensitive subjects such as deaths, casualties and prisoners of war. In these zones of discomfort (Bizimana, 2017, p. 127), some rules are written but power relations are usually at play to avoid negative publicity (military) and to ensure reasonable access (embedded journalists). The military can also negotiate for positive publicity. This has often been the case with development and reconstruction news. As sources, the Canadian military and other government entities have interests to promote to embedded journalists. It can be said that sources have a head start in the negotiation process because they offer a large amount of filtered coverage to the media. Depending on the news cycle and the experience of the journalist, sources may have more control over journalistic selection. However, journalists, especially those who specialize in defense and those with extensive experience, have some leeway to counterbalance official coverage opportunities with their own coverage interests. For David Common at the CBC, negotiation generally takes place in grey areas, in "some of the more unwritten rules, the 'at the commander's discretion' and some of the stuff that just happens.[80]" Negotiation between embedded journalists and military personnel alternates between cooperative and conflicting attitudes (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1989; Berkowitz, 2009). The metaphor of conflict refers here to the tug of war (Gans, 1979) while the cooperative

buffet refers to co-optation in military frames of reference (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 131).

War is a highly complex social phenomenon involving several military, political and social actors. Embedding is seen as a military entry to a very broad conflict that requires multi-centred editorial coverage from both the military and civilian perspectives. In the Canadian case, military embedding also offered a civilian government perspective, albeit to a very limited extent, because the Canadian military was one of the partners in the "whole of government approach" along with diplomatic agents, development assistance, and correctional services. Despite its advantages, embedding offers a tunnel vision with certain blind spots. This finding was raised by Fahmy and Johnson (2005) and Pfau et al. (2004). The blind spots refer to the difference between micro-reporting, which relates to what the reporter sees on the ground from a tactical perspective, and macro-reporting, which offers a broad view which is based on the higher levels of command from a strategic perspective (Bizimana, 2017, pp. 27-29). This study adds a dimension (imposed tunnel vision) that describes the limitations resulting from the filtered military informational offerings. These offerings are part of the complex negotiation game between the embedded journalist and their sources (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1989). The limited perspective also affects the way in which the enemy and local civilian populations are covered.

Both journalists and military participants refer to embedding as a communication strategy. This strategy is implemented through the public affairs service, which develops communication policies and manages embedding in its operational area. The communication strategy seeks to maximize positive publicity through promotional activities and spin, and to minimize negative publicity through tactics that limit and modulate access. Embedding is an "informational apparatus" that falls under the umbrella of public affairs (Bizimana, 2017, pp. 99-112) within a broader information war that aims to dominate the communication environment, which includes psychological warfare activities (Miller, 2004; Webster, 2003; Taylor, 1997).

One might think of embedding as a uniform entity, but it is a constantly fluctuating program with temporal and contextual variations. The contractual agreement of embedding itself is constantly changing with a renewal of rules based on incidents in the field. Embedding is based on a contextual and experiential dimension depending on the specific circumstances of an operation and the nature of the mission. Journalistic experiences differ within and across rotations based on several relational and situational factors. Contextual variations may be related to perceived risks by commanders and newsrooms, which impact operational output and thus access. Risks were perceived differently depending on the type of operation (peacekeeping versus combat) or the operational areas or conditions (civilian territory, enemy territory, presence of explosive devices, etc.).

The journalistic experience can also be affected by various circumstances (multinational, political...) that impact access to sources and sites. Media interests in terms of coverage (editorial decisions, financial resources...) also vary over time and affect embedding. The CBC/Radio-Canada, CTV and Global pool at the end of 2007, for example, had a limiting effect on television coverage compared to the previous period. Journalists and military personnel expressed that the pool was a challenge with only one team on the ground and very limited mobility. In the case of Canada in Afghanistan, it should nevertheless be noted that changes in military-media relations between different battle group rotations were not always apparent to new journalists. Rather, we can talk about situational readjustments that affected the practices of all involved. In Iraq, differences in coverage were observed between the invasion phase and the occupation phase because of the high risks and costs for the media (Brandenburg, 2007, p. 958). Embedding is not a one-size-fits-all program. Each country has a program or several programs with its own operational parameters. The Canadian program was seen as the most open in NATO even though some negative points were noted.

Conclusion

Media coverage of war through correspondents who have received accreditation by an army has existed since the 19th century. From the First World War to the conflicts of the 1950s, such as the Korean conflict, western armies allowed journalists to cover military operations by imposing rules to follow, mainly the prior censorship of information. The Vietnam War (1954-1975) was characterized by great freedom of movement for correspondents who were certainly subject to security directives but without prior censorship. Following Vietnam, the conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s were mainly marked by very difficult military-media relations with the implementation of severe restrictions of movement and the return of prior censorship, particularly during the Gulf War (1990-1991).

It was during the Iraq war in 2003 that embedding emerged as a model for access to military operations. Various militaries have instituted embedding programs to manage media coverage of their large-scale operations. For the Canadian Army, the implementation of such a program in Afghanistan was a first compared to the model that had prevailed in the 1990s. From the outset, the embedding model raises the question of journalistic access, and several research studies have suggested that access has improved compared to the restrictive models of other post-Vietnam conflicts (Carruthers, 2011; Lewis, 2006; Cottle, 2006; Tumber and Palmer, 2004; Keeble, 2004). But beyond access, embedding is a set of complex relationships between military personnel and journalists (Maltby, 2012) and the power dynamics that play out between them through various apparatuses (Bizimana, 2017).

This study sought to analyze the perceptions of journalists and the military on embedding in a Canadian context. The results show that embedding is multifaceted. Our analysis confirms the operational and communicational dimensions of embedding through a public affairs policy aimed at managing journalistic accreditation and

preserving operational security. Embedding is based on contractual access with specific ground rules but without prior censorship. While the establishment of rules that govern media coverage is a very old practice, the absence of prior censorship is part of an attempt to improve relations that were very tense in the 1990s. The Canadian Army in Afghanistan adopted a flexible configuration that extends the model initiated by the American Army in Iraq. It is a strategy that aims to achieve information and communication objectives with various internal and external audiences while mitigating the harmful effects of media presence in the operational area. Military communication has evolved here considering the importance of media in a multi-channel international environment relayed live, and the importance of public relations in managing public information. In this respect, the Canadian experience with embedding reflects a communications trend observed among several other NATO members. This observation is in line with existing literature on the rise of communication and public relations in the military sphere (Charron and Mercier, 2004; Hiebert, 2003) and on the media as actors in information wars (Carruthers, 2011; Maltby and Keeble, 2007; Cottle, 2006; Allan and Zelizer, 2004).

This study also confirms that embedded reporting is primarily focused on tactical operational aspects and on the military perspective of conflicts. Embedded media have access to military sites and sources, but their coverage of civilian issues and the enemy side remains very limited. However, the embedded soda straw view of war can also be staged to influence war coverage. The influence and other pressures experienced by embedded journalists reflect complex and constantly negotiated relationships between militaries and the media (Maltby, 2012). A journalist's experience differs depending on which military they are embedded with (Canadian, American, other, etc.), on the one hand, and from one military rotation to another, on the other. While the American and Canadian systems are similar in their general parameters, several participants emphasized that the Canadian program was more flexible and permissive.

In the future, the Canadian military will certainly have an interest in adopting a dialogue-based approach with the media in implementing future embedding programs to enable journalists to cover military operations. The military has its own interests to promote, particularly the issue of operational security, but embedding is also a public policy that requires a democratic approach. A bitter contract negotiation with the media can have a damaging impact on the military institution and public confidence.

Further research could certainly focus on the practice of embedding in national programs or offer points of comparison between different international models and operational contexts. Another avenue of research would be, for example, operational security, which has received little attention despite representing a crucial issue in military-media relations. Finally, future research could also focus on public perceptions of military communication apparatuses and media coverage of wars.

References

Allan, S. and Zelizer, B. (2004). *Reporting War. Journalism in Wartime.* Londres/New York: Routledge.

Berkowitz, D. (2009). Reporters and Their Sources. In: Wahl-Jorgensen K and Hanitzsch, T (eds.). *The Handbook of Journalism Studies* (pp. 102-115). New-York/Londres: Routledge.

Bizimana, A.-J. (2017). *The Embedding Apparatus: Media Surveillance during the War in Iraq.* New York: Peter Lang.

Brandenburg, H. (2007). "SECURITY AT THE SOURCE", *Journalism Studies, 8*(6), 948-963.

Carruthers, S. (2011). *The Media at War* (second edition). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

CEFCOM (2006, March). *Op Archer - Media Embed Program (MEP) Instructions*.

Charon, J.-M. and Mercier, A. (2004). *Armes de communication massive : informations de guerre en Irak : 1991-2003*. CNRS Ed.

CHASE, S. (2008, 4 june). PM's office sought 'a positive spin from reporters. *The Globe and Mail*, A10.

Cortell, A. P., Eisinger R. M. and Althaus S. L. (2009). Why Embed? Explaining the Bush Administration's Decision to Embed Reporters in the 2003 Invasion of Iraq. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *52*(5), 657-677.

Cottle, S. (2006). *Mediatized Conflict*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Ericson, R. V., Baranek P. M. and Chan J. B.L. (1989). *Negotiating Control: A Study of News Sources*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Fahmy, S. and Johnson T. J. (2005). "How We Performed": Embedded Journalists' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Covering the Iraq War. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *82*(2), 301-317.

Gans, H. J (1979). *Deciding what's News: a Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time.* New York: Pantheon.

Glasser, S. B. (2003, 7 March). Media and Military Try Experiment in Openness. *The Washington Post*, p. A14.

Hiebert, R. E. (2003). Public relations and propaganda in framing the Iraq war: a preliminary review. *Public Relations Review*, *29*(3), 243–255.

Janzen, J. (2004). Op Athena Roto 0-Embedded Media. *Canadian Army Journal*, *7*(3)/*7*(4), Fall/Winter, 44-51.

Johnson, T. J. and Fahmy, S (2009). 'Embeds' Perceptions of Censorship: Can You Criticize a Soldier Then Have Breakfast With Him in the Morning?'. *Mass Communication and Society*, *12*(1), 52-77.

Keeble, R. (2004). Information warfare in an age of hyper-militarism. In: Stuart A and Zelizer B (eds.). *Reporting the War: Journalism in Wartime* (pp. 43-58). Routledge: New-York.

Lemay, C. (2009). The "Operationalization" of Canadian Public Diplomacy in the 21 Century. The Importance of Properly Understanding the Communication Strategy. *The Canadian Army Journal*, *12*(1), Spring, 30-43.

Lewis, J. et al. (2006). *Shoot First and Ask Questions Later*: *Media Coverage of the 2003 Iraq War*. London: Peter Lang.

Maltby, S. (2012). *Military Media Management*. *Negotiating the 'Front' Line in Mediatized War*. New York: Routledge.

Maltby, S. and Keeble, R. (2007). *Communicating War : Memory, Media and Military*. Arima Publishing.

Jurkowitz, M. (2003, 12 March). The Media. Headlines Would Come from the Front Lines. *The Boston Globe*, p. D1.

Miller, D. (ed.) (2004a). *Tell me lies. Propaganda and Media Distorsions in the Attack on Iraq*, London: Pluto Press.

Miller, D. (2004b). Information Dominance: The Philosophy of Total Propaganda Control. In: Kamalipour, Y. R. and Snow, N. (eds.). *War, Media, and Propaganda: a Global Perspective* (pp. 7-16). Lanham, Maryland; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Pfau, M. et al. (2004). Embedding journalists in military combat units: Impact on newspaper story frames and tone. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *81*, 74-88.

Pfau, M. et al. (2005). Embedded Reporting During the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq: How the Embedding of Journalists Affects Television News Reports. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *49*(4), 468-487.

Shoemaker, P. J. and Reese, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*, second edition, White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.

Stoecker, R. (1991). Evaluating and Rethinking the Case Study. *Sociological Review*, *39*(1), 88-112.

Swanson, Doug J. (2003). Critics question embedding of journalists in Iraq war. *The Dallas Morning News*, 23 March 2003.

Taylor, P. M. (1997). *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media since 1945*. London: Routledge.

Tumber, H. and Palmer, J. (2004). *Media at War. The Iraq Crisis*. London: Sage Publications.

Webster, F. (2003). Information Warfare in an Age of Globalization. In. Thussu, Daya Kishan and Des Freedman (eds.). *War and the Media. Reporting Conflict 24/7* (pp. 57-69). London: Sage Publications.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Notes

[1] The interviews are from two research projects on the same case that were funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the *Fonds de recherche du Québec-Société et culture.*

[2] The affiliations used in this paper are those stated from the time of our interviews. They may have changed over the years.

[3] Interview with the author, October 15, 2013.

[4] Operation Medusa was a Canadian-led major offensive launched by NATO in September 2006 in the Panjwayi region.

[5] Interview with the author, October 23.

[6] Interview with the author, January 28, 2014.

[7] Interview with the author, April 28, 2014.

[8] Interview with the author, January 27, 2014.

[9] Interview with the author, May 06, 2014.

[10] The ranks used in this paper are those stated from the time of our interviews. They may have changed over the years.

[11] Interview with the author, April 07, 2014.

[12] Interview with the author, April 09, 2014.

[13] Interview with the author, April 10, 2014.

[14] Interview with the author, October 22, 2013.

[15] Interview with the author, November 25, 2013.

[16] Interview with the author, May 08 and 12, 2014.

[17] Interview with the author, November 05, 2013.

[18] Interview with the author, December 12, 2014.

[19] Interview with the author, October 15, 2013.

[20] Prior censorship is a form of censorship that occurs before the publication of media content like in World War Two. In Iraq (Americans) and Afghanistan (Canadians), ground rules allowed the use of prior censorship for exceptional cases.

[21] Interview with the author, January 04, 2013.

[22] Interview with the author, March 31, 2014.

[23] Sun Media is a former division of Quebecor Media and later absorbed by Postmedia.

[24] Interview with the author, November 22, 2013.

[25] Interview with the author, February 27, 2014.

[26] Interview with the author, January 28, 2014.

[27] Interview with the author, October 21, 2013.

[28] Interview with the author, October 15, 2013.

[29] Interview with the author, January 28, 2014.

[30] Interview with the author, February 27, 2014.

[31] Interview with the author, December 12, 2014.

[32] Interview with the author, February 13, 2014.

[33] Interview with the author, December 09, 2013.

[34] Interview with the author, December 09, 2013.

[35] Interview with the author, February 13, 2014.

[36] Interview with the author, March 19, 2014.

[37] Interview with the author, April 28, 2014.

[38] Interview with the author, October 15, 2013.

[39] Interview with the author, 02, April 2014.

[40] Interview with the author, February 26, 2014.

[41] Interview with the author, January 04, 2013.
[42] Interview with the author, February 27, 2014.
[43] Interview with the author, April 22, 2014.
[44] Interview with the author, October 21, 2013.
[45] Interview with the author, October 24, 2013.
[46] Interview with the author, October 25, 2013.
[47] Interview with the author, February 27, 2014.
[48] Interview with the author, January 04, 2013.
[49] Interview with the author, April 15, 2014.
[50] Interview with the author, December 12, 2014.
[51] Interview with the author, October 17, 2014.
[52] Interview with the author, December 12, 2014.
[53] Interview with the author, May 30, 2014.
[54] Interview with the author, May 30, 2014.
[55] Interview with the author, May 30, 2014.
[56] Interview with the author, October 15, 2013.
[57] Interview with the author, February 26, 2014.
[58] Interview with the author October 22, 2013.
[59] Interview with the author, October 21, 2013.
[60] Interview with the author, February 26, 2014.
[61] Interview with the author, April 14, 2014. Reference to Stephen Harper's Conservative government.
[62] Interview with the author, January 27, 2014.
[63] Interview with the author, October 15, 2013.
[64] Interview with the author, March 10, 2014.
[65] Interview with the author, October 22, 2013.
[66] Interview with the author, April 03, 2014.
[67] Interview with the author, April 03, 2014.
[68] Interview with the author, December 09, 2013.
[69] Interview with the author, February 03, 2014.
[70] PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team).
[71] Interview with the author, December 09, 2013.
[72] Interview with the author, May 15, 2014.
[73] Interview with the author, December 1, 2013.
[74] Interview with the author, April 28, 2014.
[75] Interview with the author, April 22, 2014.
[76] Interview with the author, April 15, 2014.
[77] Interview with the author, December 09, 2013.
[78] Interview with the author, April 28, 2014.
[79] Interview with the author, October 15, 2013.
[80] Interview with the author, January 27, 2014.