

**RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF
INTERNATIONAL PHOTOJOURNALISTS:
PERCEPTION AND EXPERIENCE**

The Russian-Ukrainian War has not only been a significant geopolitical event but also a profound humanitarian crisis that has garnered international attention. Among the chaos and conflict, the role of photojournalists has been pivotal in documenting the realities on the ground. This article delves into a series of oral history interviews with professional journalists and photojournalists, providing a nuanced exploration of their perceptions and experiences during the first year of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Through journalistic reconnaissance and academic research, this article aims to systematically organize information regarding the mediatization of oral testimonies in the context of wartime. The article was conceived with the intention of documenting the memories and experiences of professional journalists who found themselves on the frontlines and in regions engulfed by war. Additionally, it seeks to elucidate the role of journalists in conflict zones, their capabilities, and the constraints they face in their professional endeavours. Interviews with journalists may encompass discussions about their experiences and impressions of the events unfolding, the conditions of their work, methods of information gathering, as well as the challenges they encountered. The article's research objectives include characterising the fundamental principles of oral history interview technology and memory mediatization, developing questions, conducting in-depth interviews, gathering and systematizing the experiences of war journalism, the coverage of Ukrainian events by foreign media outlets, and issues related to ethical, security, and journalistic standards during wartime, particularly in Ukraine.

There are a number of fundamental differences between an in-depth oral history interview and a conventional journalistic interview, which should be noted separately. The difference lies in their goals, approaches to implementation, volume and nature of the information received. "The term 'oral history' refers to a qualitative research process based on personal interviews that allows us to understand meanings, interpretations of connections and subjective experiences, as well as

a product (audio or video recording) that is a genuine historical document, a new primary source for further research”[3, p. 10–15]. An in-depth oral history interview is aimed at collecting detailed personal testimonies and experiences of people regarding specific events, period or phenomenon, in our context this is the Russian-Ukrainian full-scale war. The main goal is to record testimony from the primary source, to preserve information that may be lost or underestimated. It is usually used in scientific research, ethnography, archival work, where it is important to preserve and transmit authentic evidence about the past. A typical journalistic interview focuses on obtaining information for mass media publication. The focus is on issues related to current events or surrounding public discourse. This type of interview often has a more formalized approach with shorter interview time. Highlights a mostly one-way process in which the journalist asks questions, and the interviewee answers them. Usually, short questions and answers aimed at a wide readership or listening audience.

Vudi Xhymshiti, Christopher Parker, Wolfgang Schwan, Patrick Patterson have already joined the project. Vudi Xhymshiti, a famous Kosovar-Albanian photojournalist living in London, during the interview talked about his own experience of wartime journalism, his vision of the war in Ukraine in the Balkans, how it affects European countries, whether this war can change international institutions, and whether it will affect the future of collective security. With over sixteen years of experience covering armed conflicts and political unrest, the photojournalist’s work has been published in such respected publications as *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *Der Spiegel*, *The New York Times* and *TIME Magazine*. Christopher Parker is an independent journalist and photographer from the USA. He is a graduate of the Craig Newmark School of Journalism at the City University of New York, where he studied documentary filmmaking and international reporting. Now he reports on Ukraine. His works were published in *The Nation*, *openDemocracy*, *Euromaidan Press*, *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*. In the interview, they talked about the reporter’s experience during the war in Ukraine, as well as freedom of speech, the role of journalism in times of crisis, the politics of the Republicans in the USA, social transformations in Ukraine and the future of Ukrainians. Wolfgang Schwan is an American documentary photographer who lives in Philadelphia. Member of the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) and The Curious Society. He works as a photojournalist for ‘Anadolu Agency’. The photograph of

Olena Kurylo, injured as a result of Russian shelling, which was taken by Wolfgang Schwan on February 24, 2022 in the city of Chuhuiv, Kharkiv oblast, became one of the symbols of the Russian-Ukrainian war and was on the front pages of the world media. Therefore, from this photo, the American portrait artist Yevgenia Hershman painted a portrait, which was later sold at an American auction for 100 thousand dollars. The proceeds were used to help the Armed Forces and the National Guard of Ukraine. The photos were published by *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Telegraph*, *New York Times*, *LA Times*, *The Economist*, *1843 Mag*, *New Yorker*, *National Geographic*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Atlantic*, *Time*, *The Times*, *The Literary Supplement*, *The Irish Examiner*, *The Saturday Paper*, *The Arab Times*, *Bloomberg*, *The Guardian*, *Al Jazeera*, *BBC*, *CNN*, *Die Zeit*, *People*, *Il Foglio*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Axios*, *VICE*, *Business Insider*, *The Week* and *Grid Magazine*.

In conclusion, the research project focuses on documenting the memories and experiences of journalists who worked during the Russian-Ukrainian War, aiming to preserve valuable historical information for future generations. By conducting in-depth oral history interviews with journalists such as Vudi Xhymshiti, Kristopher Parker, and Wolfgang Schwan, the project sheds light on the challenges faced by reporters on the frontlines and their contributions to shaping public understanding of conflict. Through these interviews and scholarly research, the article seeks to explore the differences between journalistic interviews and oral history interviews, while also examining the impact of mediatization on the perception and preservation of wartime memory.

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