

## Authenticity during Conflict Reporting: The China-India Border Clash in the Indian Press

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**Abstract :** The India-China border clash in Galwan valley in June 2020, the first deadly skirmish between the two Asian giants in the Himalayan border area in over four decades, highlighted the need to examine the notion of 'authenticity' in journalistic practices. Information emanating from such remotely located, sparsely populated, and not well-demarcated international land borders have limited sources, restricted to official sources, which have their own narrative. Geopolitical goals and ambitions embolden narratives of nationalism in the media, and these often challenge the notion and understanding of authenticity in journalism. The Indian press, contrary to the Chinese press, which is state-owned, is diverse and also confrontational, where narratives of nationalism are differentially interpreted, embedded, and realised. This paper examines how authenticity has become a variable, rather than a constant, in conflict reporting of the Sino-Indian border clash and how authenticity is interpreted similarly or differently in conflict journalism. The paper reports qualitative textual analysis of two leading English language newspapers - The Times of India and The Hindu, and two mainstream regional language newspapers, Amar Ujala (Hindi) and Ananda Bazar Patrika (Bengali), to evaluate the ways in which representations of information function in conflict reporting and to recontextualize (and thus change or modify the meaning of) that which they represent, and with what political and cultural implications.

**Keywords :** India-China, framing, conflict, media narratives, border dispute

**Conference Title :** ICWBJ 2023 : International Conference on Web-Based Journalism

**Conference Location :** Vienna, Austria

**Conference Dates :** July 24-25, 2023