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On Professional Values Under a State of War: Exile Journalists From Ukraine in Russia

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the case of exile journalists from Ukraine who moved to Russia between 2014 and 2022. What, in terms of journalistic norms, was unacceptable to them in the Ukrainian journalistic field? What did they find problematic in this respect in Russia? These were the basic questions driving the research, in the course of which 15 exile journalists were interviewed; their answers were analysed using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. The findings presented in the paper show that, despite all the difficulties of their personal situations, exile journalist still consider professional values such as independence and truth-telling to be important, continuing to use these normative yardsticks to measure the quality of the journalistic condition. The biggest concern that most of the informants shared was that journalists in both Russia and Ukraine used the language of hatred and discrimination toward political and cultural others, that is so-called antagonistic discourse that only contribute to the spiralling of violence and can never help in reaching peace. These findings allow the suggestion that by occupying a unique position from which to witness the contingency of hegemonic orders exile journalists advocating for peace may re-affirm the values of human dignity and peaceful coexistence, two basic principles of the journalistic profession, as identified by UNESCO.

KEYWORDS

exile journalists, Ukraine, Russia, journalistic norms, critical discourse analysis, antagonistic discourse, hate speech.

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Introduction

As of March 2024, according to the United Nations, about six million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded globally (6,486,000), with more than a million of them (1,212,585) registered in Russia. The exact number of Russian-speaking journalists from Ukraine who left the country for Russia after February 24, 2022, the beginning of Russia's special military operation (SMO), is unknown, but there are numerous well-known examples. Some, like Dmitry Vasilets, run personal blogs on Russian information platforms such as RuTube[1], while others like Taras Sidorets, work in diaspora media such as Mriya[2]; many collaborate with Russian news outlets, e.g., Yuri Podolyaka, a regular contributor political talk-shows on Channel One (Russia). After moving to Russia in 2022, these and other reporters joined their fellow professionals from Ukraine who relocated to Russia several years earlier, after the Maidan revolution of 2014.

The overturning of the Ukrainian government as a result of the Maidan led to the uprising in Donbass and the creation of two republics, which declared themselves independent from Ukraine. Activists in this separatist movement were labelled "terrorists" by the new Kiev government, and an "anti-terrorist operation" (ATO) was launched against the region of the rebellion in April 2014. Journalists who presented the Donbass uprising as legitimate local protest against the unconstitutional overthrowing of power in Kiev were declared "the accomplices of terrorists," "pro-Russian propagandists," and the "enemies of the Ukrainian people" (Baysha, 2018).

In the aftermath of the Maidan, many Russian-speaking journalists left Ukraine for Russia to avoid the fate of Oles Buzina, Ruslan Kotsaba, Dmitry Vasilets, Kirill Vishinsky, Vasiliy Muravitsky, Yevgeniy Timonin, Pavel Volkov, Oleg Sagan, Elena Boiko, and other oppositional journalists who were arrested or killed after 2014 for performing their professional duties (Baysha, 2023; Cohen, 2022; Marcetic, 2023; Myrolub, 2022; Yasinsky, 2022).

The second big wave of journalists relocating from Ukraine to Russia occurred after February 24, 2022, when Russia launched the SMO. As a result, all oppositional political parties were banned in Ukraine, and a unified telethon called "United News #UARAZOM" was launched, making independent reporting impossible (Zelensky put into effect, 2022). The President of Ukraine, Vladimir Zelensky, justified these moves with the importance of a "unified information policy" under martial law (Ze!President, 2022a). According to Zelensky, anybody who linked the ongoing war with NATO expansion and the interests of the military-industrial complex of the United States would be considered a mouthpiece for Russia (Ze!President, 2022b). Numerous Ukrainian journalists and bloggers, including Dmitry Dzhangirov, Yuri Tkachev, Yan Taksyur, Dmitry Skvortsov, and Nikolai Sidorenko, were arrested on these grounds in the spring of 2022, after the SMO began (Baysha, 2023; Cohen, 2022; Marcetic, 2023; Myrolub, 2022; Yasinsky, 2022). To avoid a similar fate, many oppositional journalists left Ukraine for Russia. This paper considers their assessment of the state of journalistic fields in both states.

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[1] https://rutube.ru

[2] https://rutube.ru/channel/30465865/

Exile Journalism: Literature Review

By "exile journalists," we usually mean the producers of media content who "have been forced to relocate abroad due to issues of limited press freedom, political conflict, or persecution in their home country" (Crete-Nishihata & Tsui, 2023, p. 297). Exile journalists may or may not relocate abroad together with media organizations (Cook, 2016); they may act independently, producing their own content and making money as bloggers. Others, if their language abilities allow, may join local media organizations. These are the cases, and more specifically Russian-speaking journalists from Ukraine who have relocated to Russia, that are the focus of this study.

Our research interest was informed by academic studies suggesting that the mainstream journalistic discourse about core professional values may be considered secondary or of little concern by media workers within non-Western cultural milieus and in dangerous contexts (Bishara, 2013; Harb, 2011; Mellado, 2020; Ogunyemi, 2017; Waisbord, 2013). For journalists under constant threat, the relevance of the dominant U.S. approach to "objective" journalism may be questioned, argues Lisa Brooten (2006), for example. In her view, the definitions of the concepts "media independence" and "censorship" must be seen as "provisional and contested, given the various pressures brought to bear on journalists" (Brooten, 2006, p. 354).

Omar Al-Ghazzi (2023) agrees with the above. Questioning the relationship between journalistic roles and professional norms, he discusses the difficulties of "performing journalism when one is asked to uphold journalistic values while risking their lives, witnessing the suffering of loved ones, and sacrificing for a cause" (p. 288). Personal or family traumas may be a serious factor impacting the performance of professional principles, a "paralysing factor", as put by Lidia Peralta García and Tania Ouariachi (2023, p. 58). Having to work in the face of unrelenting risk, not only to themselves but also their loved ones, journalists may "adjust their professional roles to suit the new environment", Winston Mano maintains (2005, p. 56).

The growing recognition of the limits of truth-telling in risky, conflict-ridden situations has led to a rising awareness that normative journalistic ideologies may be questioned and problematized (Munro & Kenny, 2024). However, this critical academic discussion is unfolding in parallel with a more traditional, normative line of academic inquiry that suggests the normative professional principles of journalism should guide reporters all over the world, regardless of the circumstances (e.g., Cook, 2016; Crete-Nishihata & Tsui, 2023; Domańska, 2023; Geybulla, 2023). These normative principles are well-known to the global journalistic community. They were formulated in UNESCO's International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism (UNESCO, 1983), later adopted in different formulations in the ethical codes of various journalistic communities. Among them, are the principles of people's right to true information, the journalist's professional integrity, the journalist's social responsibility, respect for public interest, respect for universal values and diversity of cultures, elimination of war and other great evils confronting humanity, and so forth (UNESCO, 1983).

Situating our research at the crossroads of these two lines of inquiry, normative and critical, we have been interested in investigating whether these global journalistic

principles have been an important consideration in the relocation of journalists from Ukraine, and if so, whether these norms are still important for them while in Russia. What was unacceptable to the exile journalists in the Ukrainian journalistic field? What did they find problematic in this respect in Russia? These were the basic questions driving our research.

Research Design

As one of the authors of this paper, who also fled to Russia after the onset of the SMO in 2022, personally knows many Ukrainian immigrants now residing in Moscow, it was not difficult for him to contact potential interview subjects. However, of the 34 journalists invited to participate, only 15 consented. The main reason for refusal was a reluctance to disclose personal data, even under the promised condition of anonymity. Most of those who refused cited the hypothetical possibility of a leak to the intelligence services of Ukraine, which could harm their relatives and friends remaining in the country.

All 15 journalists who agreed to participate were interviewed in face-to-face meetings in Moscow; 11 of them expressed a desire to speak under their real names, and four opted for anonymity. The basic information provided by the interviewees including the city in which they lived and worked before emigrating, the year in which they did so, and why is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Journalists Who Left Ukraine for Russia Before February 24, 2022

	Name/city of origin/ year of relocation	Reasons for emigration
1	Roman Gnatyuk Kiev 2014	Political persecution for journalistic activities. In August 2014, Gnatyuk was kidnapped by nationalists while filming an oppositional TV channel report on Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which was shot down over Donbass in March of that year. He was tortured for several days, led to believe he was being taken out to be shot, and then left without clothes near one of the villages in Donbass
2	Konstantin Kevorkyan Kharkov 2014	Pressured to leave by Ukrainian authorities, Kevorkyan was expelled from the National Union of Journalists after an article in which he criticized the Ukrainian airstrike (June 2, 2014) on the Donbass city of Lugansk that killed eight peaceful citizens and wounded 28 citizens. The Security Service of Ukraine (SSU) demanded that Kevorkyan leave the country within 24 hours
3	Olga Yarmak Kharkov 2014	Forced Ukrainization; inability to perform professional duties due to ever-increasing ideological pressure; fear that her son would be forcibly mobilized to fight against the people of Donbass in the Donbass war, which Yarmak considers a civil conflict
4	Ivan Lisan Odessa 2015	Fear for life and safety after the massacre of anti-Maidan activists on May 2, 2014, in Odessa. Realization that the radical nationalistic agenda that was dominant in Ukraine after the Maidan's victory had become established and would endure for a long time

Table 1 Continued

	Name/city of origin/ year of relocation	Reasons for emigration
5	Vasiliy Tkach Odessa 2015	Fear for life and safety amid political repression that began in Odessa after the massacre of May 2, 2014, when many anti-Maidan Ukrainians were jailed
6	Participant 8 Kiev 2018	The arrest of Kirill Vishinsky, editor-in-chief of the publication where Participant 8 worked, and the closure of the outlet; security concerns and inability to perform professional duties by reporting on oppositional outlooks
7	Vladimir Skachko Kiev 2019	Life in danger. Skachko was suspected of "encroaching on the territorial integrity of Ukraine", i.e., supporting Donbass insurgency. His apartment was subjected to a 14-hour search. Armed members of the right-wing C14 group came for him at a hospital where he was being treated for hypertension, but he managed to escape thanks to a warning
8	Pavel Kukharkin Kiev 2019	Fear for life and safety due to threats from right-wing radicals on political grounds; the normalization of radicalism and nationalism in Ukraine; opposition to the nationalistic agenda of the school curriculum

Table 2

Journalists Who Left Ukraine for Russia After February 24, 2022

	Name/ city of origin/ year of relocation	Reasons for emigration
1	Gorin (pseudonym) Kharkov 2022	Fear of arrest; lack of opportunity to express and report on oppositional views and opinions
2	Lancelot (pseudonym) Zaporozhye 2022	Threats and denunciations for oppositional views; nationalistic propaganda and lack of opportunity for children to study in their native Russian language.
3	Lihograi (pseudonym) Dnepropetrovsk 2022	Lihograi had planned to move to Russia after the Maidan, but remained in Ukraine for family reasons. Right after the SMO started, she left Ukraine as soon as she could due to fears for her life and safety.
4	Taras Sidorets Kiev 2022	Anticipation of arrest because of his oppositional stance and the detention of many of his friends and colleagues. After the SMO started, he went into hiding within Ukraine for a month and a half before he could escape
5	Elena Markosyan Kiev 2022	Expectation of arrest and reluctance to endanger people who would be willing to help in case of trouble
6	Dmitry Vasilets Kiev 2022	Fear of another arrest. Vasilets spent two years and three months in prison for journalistic activities, from November 2015 to February 2018
7	Valeria Yemelyanova Dnepropetrovsk 2022	Threats to life and safety due to Russian birth and nationality; fear of "stabilization measures" by the SSU, involving door-to-door visits to detain people with opposition views

Methodology

In order to trace what value assumptions informed the judgments of our interviewees, we employed Norman Fairclough's discourse-analytical method (Fairclough, 2003). According to Fairclough, "what is 'said' in a text is always said against the background of what is 'unsaid'—what is made explicit is always grounded in what is left implicit" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 17). This is partly a matter of "intertextuality", that is "how texts draw upon, incorporate, recontextualize and dialogue with other texts" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 17). In other words, assumptions always link texts to other texts, "the world of texts" or "what has been said or written or thought elsewhere, with the 'elsewhere' left vague" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 40). It is the previous history of a specific community, in the course of which specific norms come to be accepted as part of normalized judgment that makes some values seem "natural" as people take them as given.

Normalized assumptions that underlie any specific discourse are of great ideological significance, as power relations are significantly influenced by indisputable values that serve as a basis for legitimizing political regimes, that is a central idea of Antonio Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, to which Fairclough refers. Another theoretical legacy that Fairclough invokes is the discourse theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985), according to which a discourse forms when elements from the discursive field (signifiers) are linked, articulated to one another in an equivalential chain (p. 96). For the purposes of our analysis, before analysing the value assumptions that informed the criticisms offered by our interviewees, we found it useful to identify the equivalential chains of signifiers forming their critical discourse.

In the analytical part of the paper, we also referred to Nico Carpentier's (2017) conceptualization of antagonistic discourse, whose main features are as follows: the radical othering of political opponents ("we" are not "them", and there is nothing in common between us); the homogenization of both the self and the other ("wedom" and "theydom" are both characterized by a lack of internal contradictions); and the presentation of the self and the other in hierarchical terms ("we" are superior; "they" are inferior).

Findings

What Was Unacceptable in the Ukrainian Journalistic Field?

While answering this question, the interviewees identified two problems as the most important: first, the radicalization of the cultural agenda (its radical nationalization along ethnic lines), and second, the lack of freedom of speech, which was closely intertwined with the first point. As Vasilets put it, since 2014, when the Maidan overthrew the government in Kiev, Ukrainian media have been systematically "inciting ethnic hatred". Yemelyanova agreed. "'Drown the Donbass in blood,' 'Fry koloradi' ... Ukrainians were taught to think that people in Donbass are not entirely human, that they are marginalized and losers", she argued.

The development to which Yemelyanova referred is well-known and rather well-researched (Baysha, 2018; Ishchenko, 2020; Moen-Larsen, 2020; Myshlovska, 2023).

In pro-Maidan hegemonic discourse, anti-Maidan "others" appeared as socially and mentally "underdeveloped": They were labelled "slaves," "serfs," "sovki" (those holding the "Soviet mentality"), and so forth. In the most extreme cases, anti-Maidan Ukrainians were imagined as insects, such as "koloradi" (Colorado potato beetles) in need of extermination (e.g., Sindelar, 2014). On May 2, 2014, when a fire during street clashes between pro-Maidan and anti-Maidan forces in Odessa killed 48 anti-Maidan protesters and left more than 200 with burns and other injuries, Maidan supporters celebrated this tragedy (perceived by them as a victory) by spreading messages such as "Fry koloradi!" and "Burn koloradi!" on social networks (Baysha, 2020).

Other interviewees also invoked the Odessa tragedy as one of the most striking examples of the dehumanization of political and cultural others. For Gorin, "all these 'fried colorados', 'colorado barbecue'" comments were the "purest manifestation" of how Ukrainian Russophones came to be dehumanized. "It is too much", Kukharkin maintained, to see journalists taking part in the "Separ's Meat" jokes and openly calling for violence. What Kukharkin referred to was a line of canned food with cannibalistic labels such as "Separ's Meat," "Separ in Oil," and "Separ in Sour Cream," where "Separ" served as a generic name for Donbass people (Korzun, 2020).

Since the Maidan revolution, Lizan argued, the Ukrainian information mainstream has been increasingly characterized by "a desperate desire to impose the Ukrainian language on everyone and standardize everything according to the principle 'one nation, one Reich, one Fuhrer'". Markosyan and Lancelot agreed. Both of them maintained that after the Maidan, "the formation of a new society and a new person began—the Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainian". As a result, Gnatyuk asserted, the division of society reached a level "as it was in the case of Rwanda, into Tutsi and Hutu".

The denigration of Russophones, according to Gnatyuk, had become "increasingly brutal and acquired unprecedented proportions since the beginning of the SMO." Calls for the murder of Russians and the banning of everything Russian, even Russian songs, had become a distinctive feature of the media landscape since the SMO began, Tkach pointed out. As a result, Kevorkyan went on, the freedom of speech in Ukraine "exists in the paradigm of discussion by cannibals, whether it's tastier to eat the victim's ear or eye, but the principle of cannibalism itself is not questioned."

"This is totalitarianism incarnate. Everything is completely regulated with the same brush, there is no alternative opinion at all", Gnatyuk said, recalling how in 2014 he was required by his editors "not to call the LPR and DPR fighters 'militias'", but to use the word "militants" instead. There was a "cult of lies" in Ukraine, Sidorets continued. "The number of lies has increased greatly, it is overflowing", Gorin echoed. "Lies permeate the entire cultural agenda erasing the entire common [Russian–Ukrainian] history, both distant and modern", he claimed. "In such a world, it is impossible to do anything important and interesting, because in such a society the cultural flow is interrupted", Markosyan contended. "The media in Ukraine does not have freedom of speech," Skachko summarized, adding that "unfortunately this process is emerging everywhere, and in Russia, too". According to Skachko, media in both Ukraine and Russia "are ceasing to be the support of democracy and the so-called fourth estate. The media are returning, not even to informing, but to serving." This observation

regarding the lack of media freedom both in Ukraine and in Russia by a Ukrainian political refugee may serve as a good transition to our second research question, discussed in the next section.

What Is Unacceptable Within the Journalistic Field of Russia?

In general terms, Skachko's criticism with respect to both the Ukrainian and Russian journalistic field was shared by some other interviewees. However, although all the interviewees agreed that propaganda existed both in Russia and Ukraine—"It is clear that in any war the corpse of the enemy smells good", as Kevorkyan put it—not all of them agreed that the scale of Russia's problems concerning freedom of speech was commensurate with that of Ukraine. "Propaganda exists on both sides", Lancelot argued. "But if in Ukraine there is an outright lie, then in Russia it is more likely an embellishment of reality and silence", he said, noting he did not approve of Russia's style of manipulating information either. "We need to talk to the people, conduct a dialogue", he maintained.

A noticeable point of disagreement among interviewees occurred with respect to the issue of hate speech and dehumanization of the enemy. In Kevorkyan's opinion, for example, there was no dehumanization of the enemy in the Russian media. "If Ukrainian propaganda says that all Russians are pigs, which concerns almost all racial and ethnic origins, Russian propaganda avoids this", he claimed. Yarmak agreed, "I constantly hear in the Russian media that it is necessary to separate the Ukrainian state and Ukrainian society, that Ukrainians are the same people as Russians, we are the same." But other interviewees, although not necessarily denying what Yarmak said, admitted that the dehumanization of Ukrainians does exist in the Russian media sphere, albeit on the margins. "I don't understand the general narrative of dehumanization that sometimes pops up, especially in Telegram[3] channels–*svinosobaki* or *nahruk* [derogatory terms to denote Ukrainians]," Lizan commented on the issue.

Most journalists also emphasized the inadequacy of lumping together all Ukrainians and denigrating them. "Where there are generalizations, there are no human beings," Lihograi claimed. In her view, the terms "nationalists," "neo-Nazis," and "militants" were inappropriate with respect to all Ukrainian troops, at least because "the total forced mobilization in Ukraine" made it impossible for Ukrainian men to avoid being drafted into the army. Expressing a dehumanizing view like "all hohli [a derogatory term to denote Ukrainians] must be cut out" was unacceptable in mainstream Russian media, Sidorets went on, arguing that "some inadequate individuals who run their own channels" may be engaged in this, "but not at the level of state media."

As a result of such denigrating generalizations, "the rhetoric begins to be no different from everything that we have been witnessing in Ukraine in relation to Donetsk and Lugansk—Downbass, Lugandon [derogatory terms to denote Donbass cities] and everything else," Gorin argued, adding that he "constantly hear[s] on talk shows that there are no normal people there [in Ukraine] anymore". Pointing to the contradiction inherent in Russia's state narrative regarding the necessity of liberating

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[3] Telegram™ is a trademark of Telegram Group Inc., its operational center is based in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

Ukrainians from the yoke of a neo-Nazi regime, Gorin inquired: "If there are no normal people there, then whom did you go to liberate?"

While other participants of the study also criticized their Russian colleagues for resorting to the language of hatred with respect to Ukrainians, there were two interviewees who suggested that even harsher rhetoric toward Ukraine (although not necessarily toward all Ukrainians) would be more fitting. "In some cases, there is a lack of tougher rhetoric, the rhetoric of justice—a crime should lead to punishment," Gnatyuk argued. But he immediately corrected himself, "Sometimes they [editors] ask me to be more restrained in my statements, to avoid excessiveness. Putting myself in the editor's shoes, I agree, because too much harm is just as bad as being too soft." Kukharkin supported Gnatyuk's argument that "the rhetoric of my TV channel is too soft." "There is no need to consider them [Ukrainians] brothers and think that they are just victims," Kukharkin argued. "So, in my workplace, the most radical person is me, for one simple reason—I looked the enemy in the face while living there."

Analysis

Universal Journalistic Values

As is evident from this brief account of the critical remarks made by the study participants, the chain of equivalence holding together their critical discourse with respect to Ukraine was made up of the following key signifiers: nationalism, radicalism, intolerance to cultural others, cultural homogenization, Russophobia, ethnic hatred, hate speech, dehumanization of opponents, calls for violence, lack of freedom, lies, ideological totalization, intolerance to alternative opinions, and failure to fulfil the role of the fourth estate.

This chain of equivalence allows the discerning of several value assumptions that informed the criticisms made by the interviewees. First, their concern about Ukrainian journalism's ideological servility, lies, and lack of freedom was voiced against the background of an unspoken normative assumption that journalism should be independent and truthful. Second, their condemnation of intolerance to alternative opinions, ideological totalizations, and failure to fulfil the role of the fourth estate was informed by taken-for-granted beliefs about the central role that journalism plays in a democratic society. Finally, their criticisms of Ukrainian journalists for endorsing intolerance toward cultural others, ethnic hatred, and cultural homogenization drew on the assumption that journalism should be unbiased, inclusive, and attentive to the opinions of underprivileged and marginalized minority groups.

The chain of equivalence characterizing the critical discourse of Ukrainian exile journalists with respect to Russia looks quite similar: propaganda, servility, silence, dehumanization of cultural others, their homogenization and denigration through hate speech, and the promotion of violence. The value assumptions that informed the interviewees' criticisms of their Russian colleagues were similar to those they implicitly made while speaking about Ukraine: journalism should be free, independent, inclusive, attentive to alternative opinions, respectful of cultural others, and do no harm. As when discussing Ukrainian media, they placed the problems of Russian

media's dependence on the state and lack of freedom on a par with intolerance toward cultural others as closely interrelated issues.

According to Fairclough (2003), unspoken assumptions that inform texts always link them to a variety of other texts related to the issue under consideration. The unspoken assumptions about journalistic principles that guided our interviewees in their criticisms of both the Ukrainian and Russian journalistic fields were briefly presented in the Literature Review section of the paper (UNESCO, 1983). Although none was referenced specifically, each of the principles mentioned earlier clearly informed the criticisms made by our interviewees. The invocation of the principles of people's right to true information, the journalist's professional integrity and social responsibility, respect for diversity of cultures, and elimination of war were evident in the journalists' criticisms of media distributing propaganda, dehumanizing cultural others, being intolerant to alternative opinions, and so forth. By appealing to these principles, taken by many as universal, the exile journalists under study implicitly presented themselves as members of the international journalistic community who shared similar assumptions regarding professional principles and duties.

This finding does not support the perspective of scholars arguing that core professional values may be considered secondary or of little concern by journalists within non-Western cultural milieus, especially in dangerous contexts (Al-Ghazzi, 2023; Bishara, 2013; Brooten, 2006; Harb, 2011; Mellado, 2020; Ogunyemi, 2017; Waisbord, 2013). As is clear from the analysis presented in this paper, for the exile journalists from Ukraine now residing in Russia, truth-telling standards of impartial reporting still serve as a normative yardstick for evaluating how journalists perform their professional duties, a traditional outlook within journalism studies, which has been endorsed by our findings (e.g., Cook, 2016; Crete-Nishihata & Tsui, 2023; Geybulla, 2023). What has also been supported are the observations of scholars who argue that exile journalists often perform their journalistic duties "in the name of unity correlating with peaceful coexistence and avoidance of confrontation" (Brooten, 2006, p. 366). As our informants devoted the lion's share of their criticisms to the potential of journalists to instigate hatred, animosity, and intolerance toward cultural others, thereby contributing to the spiralling of wars and conflicts, we decided to discuss this aspect in more detail.

Journalism for Peace

Although some respondents believed that in Russia the radical othering of Ukrainians was a marginal phenomenon while in Ukraine the radical othering of Russians was commonplace, they nevertheless agreed that it was unacceptable for media to dehumanize cultural others and cultivate intolerance. By making this claim explicitly, the respondents (all but one) shared an unspoken assumption that the media should foster an inclusive sociocultural environment and promote peace.

Traces of the UNESCO (1983) principles mentioned earlier were clearly discernible in this criticism. According to the principle "respect for universal values and diversity of cultures," the journalist "contributes through dialogue to a climate of confidence in international relations conducive to peace and justice everywhere." The

goal is "to eliminate ignorance and misunderstanding among peoples, make nationals of a country sensitive to the needs and desires of others, ensure the respect for the rights and dignity of all nations, all peoples and all individuals" (UNESCO, 1983). All of the critical remarks made by our interviewees with respect to hate speech in both the Russian and Ukrainian journalistic fields were clearly informed by these normative standards, adopted as background normative judgments by journalistic communities all over the world. Gnatyuk's reference to the Tutsi and Hutu peoples explicitly illustrated this point, as the story of the Rwandan genocide has become a classic example discussed in educational literature on journalism regarding the detrimental role that journalists can play in provoking conflict, mutual hatred, and genocide (e.g., Thompson, 2007).

To translate this point into the conceptual language of discourse studies, by highlighting the importance of responsible reporting that does not promote violence, our interviewees criticized what discourse analysts call "antagonistic discourse" as presented in the methodological section. This is exactly what our informants highlighted in their discursive constructions such as:

- "Where there are generalizations, there are no human beings" (criticism of the homogenization of otherness).
- "I constantly hear on talk shows that there are no normal people there" (criticism of radical othering).
- "Ukrainians were taught to think that people in Donbass are not entirely human, that they are marginalized and losers" (criticism of the inferior positioning of "them" vis-à-vis "us").

According to Carpenter (2017), to transform antagonism into agonism, that is a state that involves relating as "adversaries" rather than as "enemies," it is necessary to re-articulate the nodal points of antagonistic discourse, re-create a common symbolic space, and re-establish "conflictual togetherness." This is what our informants actually suggested by arguing that not all Ukrainians are neo-Nazis, that "normal" people exist in any community, and so forth. Instead of drawing solid dividing frontiers between "us" and "them," deepening existing antagonisms and provoking new ones, the agonistic discourse propagated by the interviewees aimed to restore a common symbolic space necessary for communication, negotiating differences and reaching compromise.

Conclusion

In this paper, we discussed the case of exile journalists from Ukraine who moved to Russia between 2014 and 2022. After interviewing 15 such journalists, we came to the conclusion that, despite all the difficulties of their personal situations, they still considered professional values such as independence and truth-telling to be important, continuing to use these normative yardsticks to measure the quality of the journalistic condition. The biggest concern that most of the informants shared was that journalists in both Russia and Ukraine used the language of hatred and discrimination toward political and cultural others, so-called antagonistic discourse that only contributed to the spiralling of violence and could never help in reaching peace.

This finding allows the suggestion that by occupying "a unique position from which to witness the contingency of the prevailing social order" because "exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience" (Said, 1994, p. 147) exile journalists advocating for peace may re-affirm the values of human dignity and peaceful coexistence, two basic principles of the journalistic profession as identified by UNESCO (1983). Rather than sacrificing professional principles under the hardship of immigration and the necessity of adapting to new ideological pressures, at least some of the exiles may insist on telling the truth and defending the humanistic principles of peaceful coexistence.

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