

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: “A CONSTANT FIGHT WITH OUR MORALS:” EXAMINING UKRAINIAN JOURNALISTS’ NORMATIVE DEMOCRATIC BELIEFS AMID PLURALISM, PROPAGANDA, AND WAR

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This work addresses a central problem in contemporary democratic theory. John Rawls, the American political philosopher, defined the potential problem of division in plural, liberal democracy: “How is it possible that there may exist over time a stable and just society of free and equal citizens profoundly divided by reasonable though incompatible religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?” In considering the question of social division, this dissertation asked whether journalists in Ukraine – a country faced with propaganda, fake news, war, and a difficult transition to liberal democracy – believe they should play a role amid such tension.

Qualitative in-depth, semi-structured interviews of 31 Ukrainian reporters probed their normative beliefs for a journalistic pragmatism that represents the full spectrum of beliefs and positions in their society. This research also contrasts and compares the broader normative beliefs of post-Soviet Ukrainian journalists with Western normative journalism theory by analyzing interviews conducted with 41 American journalists.

This dissertation used the theoretical work of pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty, who argued that journalists could ease tension in plural society by fulfilling normative journalism theory's charge for reporters to be a voice for the voiceless. It was hypothesized that journalists in Ukraine would deprioritize journalistic pragmatism, while prioritizing war-time reporting that polarizes society, primarily because of three factors: the business needs of the press, war in Ukraine, and the legacy of Soviet culture on journalistic norms.

The findings defied expectations to a degree by showing that journalists believe the press should represent the full spectrum of positions and beliefs in Ukraine and they should uphold established western norms. Journalists said oligarchic ownership of media and a legacy of control over the press by people in power limit their independence. The findings show division on objectivity: roughly half believe reporters must remain neutral amid pro-Russian propaganda and fake news, while the second half said objectivity leads to false equivalency. Journalists said on-the-ground, factual reporting can fight propaganda and fake news. Analysis of the U.S. interviews showed more convergence of concerns between Ukrainian and American reporters than was expected, suggesting that journalistic norms can transcend country contexts to an unexpected degree.

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JOURNALISTS’ NORMATIVE DEMOCRATIC BELIEFS AMID PLURALISM,  
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## Preface

This is a work of both journalism research and political theory. It stems partly from a deep interest in and connection to the fundamental and enduring questions that define the latter discipline. These questions ask us to consider, for example, how we arrange our collective affairs, how we should live together. Political theorists ask what is the good society? And what is the good life within such a society? Answers to these questions include, at least implicitly, a view of the relationship between a community and the self: What responsibility do individuals have to society? How should a society treat individual concerns regarding justice, fairness, equality, and freedom? Moreover, in order to define the good or proper relationship between self and community, political theorists adopt positions on questions of human behavior: Why do people do what they do? Is there such a thing as human nature? These questions are fundamental not only to political theory; they constitute the core of any discipline in which human behavior plays a role. In the case of this dissertation that field is journalism. Examining the role human behavior plays in journalism helps us better understand its contemporary practice, on the one hand, and how and for what purposes democratic citizens use journalism, on the other.

While these and similar philosophical questions have long interested me – particularly the ‘why’ of human behavior – three events at different stages of my life deeply influence the direction and theme of this work. The first came a year after the Soviet Union broke apart. In 1992 I was 15, and my parents and I moved to Kyiv, Ukraine. The contrast between cultures shocked me, and hurt me deeply. I was born in the United States, but raised in a Ukrainian family and a diaspora Ukrainian

culture. My grandparents were refugees who fled their homes in western Ukraine when the Soviet Union defeated the German army late in World War II. They initially planned to return home, but life in a foreign, Western country was better than life under Soviet rule and so they eventually settled in the United States. They were resolute, however, to keep as much as they could of their culture. They were determined, too, to pass as much as they could of it – the traditions, language, and customs – on to their children and grandchildren in an effort to preserve a part of their home in a foreign land. In addition to the Ukrainian language and culture, what they passed down to me was an overwhelming sense of warmth, openness, hospitality, and community.

A naïve part of me thought I'd find this culture in Ukraine nearly half a century after my family fled. I found, instead, the legacy of Soviet Communism: a cold, bleak, harsh experience so profoundly different and alien to me that I was heartbroken by what I found there. I couldn't reconcile the Soviet culture with the traditions in which my grandparents and parents raised me. I understand now that there are nuances to this story, and that talking this way about a stark contrast between the culture in which my family raised me and the one I found in Ukraine in 1992 is overly simplistic. But this is what struck me as a 15-year-old. I began asking the types of questions I later found in political theory regarding the relationship between individuals and society. Is there something all humans share in common? Is there such a thing as a singular human nature? If so, why did people from a diaspora community in the United States – themselves émigrés from Ukraine – seem so different from those in post-Soviet Ukraine? What made these two groups of people

seem so different? I returned to the United States after a year in Ukraine, though my parents stayed for many more years. Regular trips to visit them over the summers helped keep these questions and Ukraine on my mind. As the years passed I watched Ukraine and its people navigate the transition from a Soviet society to a democratic one. It has been difficult to ignore Ukraine because of recent events there – revolution on two occasions over the past 14 years, followed by war with Russia and Russian-backed separatists, and the annexation of Crimea by Russia in early 2014.

A second significant influence on the direction of this dissertation came as a result of my experience working as a professional newspaper reporter, first at The Ukrainian Weekly, an English-language paper based in the United States, and later as a reporter covering general assignments and the education beat for two Gannett daily newspapers. Journalism for many reporters is a passion. I’ve spoken with reporters over the years regarding their attraction to journalism. Many of them talk about the ideal of a reporter’s role in democratic society. I am no different, and I was completely hooked from my first day working as a journalist. The job let me raise the “why” question of human behavior with people I interviewed. It let me interact with various people. It allowed me the opportunity to understand their actions and beliefs, and then provide voice for their justifications to my readers. It let me join a profession and do a job fundamental to democratic society. I was, and in many ways remain, an idealist regarding the role journalism can play in keeping a democratic society.

Throughout the years I spoke with my colleagues both in the United States and Ukraine about reporting and the state of journalism in both countries. We talked about the impact the Internet and new digital technologies were having on journalism,

on the types of stories we were now being asked to do. We talked about how those new technologies were creating additional responsibilities for reporters, and how new digital technologies gave journalists the means to do multiple jobs: reporting, taking photographs, recording audio, and shooting video all with a small handheld device. This led many newspapers to cut back on staff precisely when newspapers needed to decrease their costs because the Internet undercut print journalism's traditional business model. While important and remarkable journalism was, and still is, being done, despite the challenges affecting the industry, I grew disappointed with aspects of the job. The idealism with which I started in newspapers waned as I began to question whether contemporary journalism was fulfilling the role democratic society required of it. The newspaper at which I worked wanted shorter stories of a few column inches, in effect greatly simplifying the day's news. I felt there was much more I should write, and there was nuance in the news that was not being reported to the public.

The stories that disappointed me most, however, satisfied the business needs of their organizations: they were short in order to save costly print space, they played up sensational aspects of the news, or they focused on conflict in an effort to attract readers and generate greater Internet click rates (Many newspapers in the U.S. use Internet analytics software such as Chartbeat and Parse.ly to track click rates and the amount of time people spend reading their stories online). This type of journalism didn't seem to live up to the crucial role the press is said to play in democratic society. But who was I to say these stories were bad for democracy? I wanted to know whether this kind of journalism (brief, basic, two-sided, and often seemingly

driven to show conflict rather than nuance and depth) was hurting democratic society and public debate – a debate that, at least among the large U.S. cable news networks and their viewers, already seemed caustic and highly emotional. Was this type of journalism pouring fuel on already inflamed public beliefs and sentiments? Could journalism better serve democratic society by fulfilling other roles? I found myself pulled to look more closely at the writings of our nation’s founding fathers, whose philosophical arguments for democratic government called for an independent and active press. The founders talked about the importance of a free flow of information and a watchdog, fourth estate press that would act as an independent check against government. Indeed, they talked about the need for a vibrant – even cantankerous – press. But could journalism go too far in rousing public debate? Did the type of journalism that bothered me most pose a threat to democracy by polarizing and dividing people? I sought answers to these questions, and I wanted to know what contemporary political theory says democracy needs from the press.

My doctoral work began with these issues foremost in mind: both the broader questions of political theory, and the specific question of what contemporary liberal democratic societies need from the press. An interest in finding an answer to the latter question, and my continuing interest in the questions of political theory, led to the third significant influence on this dissertation. That influence – cognate doctoral coursework in political theory – gave me an opportunity to explore current problems in the field, read deeply into the literature of contemporary political theory, and seek an answer to the question of what democracy needs from the press. In doing this, I found considerable difference in terms of how political theory, on the one hand, and

my own academic discipline of journalism studies, on the other, theorize normatively and empirically the role of human thought in democratic society (the role of individual reason and rationality). What's more, as each discipline understands human thought (both normatively and empirically) in different ways, each therefore provides different solutions to the problem of pluralism in democratic society. Why is this a problem, and what's wrong with pluralism? I address pluralism first and then briefly discuss normative ideals of human thought at the end of this preface. By doing so, I aim to show how these two issues – normative conceptions of human thought (how we think about how we should think), and pluralism – are relevant to journalism studies and how taken together these two subjects impact the broader theme of this work.

At the heart of this dissertation is a problem defined by the American political philosopher John Rawls. It regards the stability over time of a just society of free and equal citizens deeply divided by reasonable though incompatible religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines. As Rawls notes in *Political Liberalism*, concern regarding instability and violence arises because pluralism is an inevitable outcome of free thought in such societies.

A modern democratic society is characterized not simply by a pluralism of comprehensive religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines but by a pluralism of incompatible yet reasonable comprehensive doctrines. No one of these doctrines is affirmed by citizens generally. Nor should one expect that in the foreseeable future one of them, or some other reasonable doctrine, will ever be affirmed by all, or nearly all, citizens. Political liberalism assumes that, for political purposes, a plurality of

reasonable yet incompatible comprehensive doctrines is the normal result of the exercise of human reason within the framework of the free institutions of a constitutional democratic regime (2005, p. xvi).

Rawls's *Political Liberalism* has been called "a classic ... that is rightly regarded as one of the most important works of political philosophy of the twentieth century" (Nussbaum 2015, p. 1). In *Rawls's Political Liberalism*, a book that marked the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Rawls's work with what editors called a timely critical reassessment, Martha C. Nussbaum reiterates the problem of pluralism (and addresses the question of whether individual reason and rationality can ease such tensions) by using as an example the plurality of religious belief in liberal democratic society.

Differences about religion and the ultimate meaning of life are robust, and it is implausible to think that they are the result of errors of the sort that could be dispelled by rational argument. Instead, wherever we find the freedoms of speech and of religious belief and exercise, we also find religious (and secular) diversity. It would seem, then, that the pluralism we see is something reasonable – in other words, that reasonable people, using their faculties as well as they can under conditions of freedom, come out in different places with regard to those matters (Nussbaum 2015, p. 2).

A pluralism of reasonable or even highly unreasonable doctrines is the outcome of life in a liberal democratic society.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that society may converge on its own and by pure chance on a given monistic worldview, but, given

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<sup>1</sup> Rawls defines what are reasonable and unreasonable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines, though for the time being those definitions are omitted here.

that liberal democratic societies aim to provide individuals with as much freedom of thought, speech, and belief as possible, such a scenario seems highly unlikely. What democracy gives us is pluralism. The goal of monistic thought and belief is left to authoritarian regimes. Pluralism, then, breeds the potential problem at the heart of this dissertation. Thus, the question raised by John Rawls logically follows: How might a democratic society of free and equal citizens – one characterized by pluralism and marked by deep ideological difference – pursue both justice and stability?

A brief look at the evolution of individual thought in society explains why this problem cropped up only relatively recently. Pluralism as we know it was not prevalent in pre modern society, perhaps with the exception of ancient Greek democracy. When societies shifted from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones characterized by pluralism, normative ideas regarding the role of individual thought within those societies also changed. Rawls traces a genealogy of the evolution of such thought from ancient Greece to our contemporary period. Such a genealogy explicates the development of political theories as a response to the circumstances and philosophical problems of the era in which those theories were written, and it traces the evolution of normative belief regarding individual thought (reason and rationality) in society. If we follow these developments through to the contemporary period we see that political theories have continued to adapt to and address problems of the modern era, while, I argue, journalism's normative theorizing regarding its role in democratic society has to an extent stopped at the Enlightenment (and kept the principles of that period), while largely neglecting the issues of contemporary political theory. This is problematic because, while both disciplines take up political

society as among their subjects of inquiry, their normative theories regarding how individuals think (the role of individual reason and rationality in political society) are in need of reconciliation. A very brief summary of Rawls's genealogy illustrates the differences, clarifies the points above, and supports the case for why such reconciliation is necessary.<sup>2</sup>

Rawls and others<sup>3</sup> remind us that ancient Greek religion was civic, in the sense that how one participated in social practices and recognized the good duty was much more important than what someone believed. "It was not a religion of salvation in the Christian sense and there was no class of priests who dispensed the necessary means of grace; indeed the ideas of immortality and eternal salvation did not have a central place in classical culture" (Rawls 2005, p. xxi). What mattered for ancient Greeks was that citizens were trustworthy members of society, and in particular that they were ready to serve in the military when needed. For this reason, ancient Greek philosophy was largely concerned with questions of the good: What is the good life, and what makes a good citizen (Curtis 1981, pp. 24-25)? Ancient Greek philosophy "was always the exercise of free, disciplined reason alone. It was not based on religion, much less on revelation, as civic religion was neither a guide nor a rival to it" (Rawls 2005, xxii).

Ancient Greek religion did not intend to coerce individual thought; it didn't tell people how they should think. Medieval Christianity, however, did, and it

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<sup>2</sup> Rawls uses other scholars to trace this lineage: Burkert 1985, pp. 254-60, 273-75; Irwin 1989, Chapter 2; Shklar 1984, p. 5; and Schneewind 1990, first volume, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Curtis 1981, Volume 1, p.25.

diverged from a civic religion such as that seen in ancient Greece in five characteristic ways:

It tended towards an authoritarian religion: its authority – the Church itself headed by the papacy – was institutional, central, and nearly absolute ...; it was a religion of salvation, a way to eternal life, and salvation required true belief as the Church taught it; hence, it was a doctrinal religion with a creed that was to be believed; it was a religion of priests with the sole authority to dispense means of grace, means normally essential to salvation; finally, it was an expansionist religion of conversion that recognized no territorial limits to its authority short of the world as a whole (Rawls 2005, p. xxiii).

Prior to the Enlightenment, belief in God and salvation in the afterlife meant that you also believed what religious authority told you to believe. Such an authoritarian and expansionist religion sought to prevent heretical belief and constrain individual thought.

Rawls notes that three historical developments deeply influenced the evolution of moral and political philosophy from this medieval period. First, the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century fragmented the religious unity of the Middle Age and led to religious pluralism. “This in turn fostered pluralisms of other kinds, which were a permanent feature of culture by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century” (Rawls 2005, p. xxii). These fragments, however, were also intolerant and dogmatic. They provided new avenues of belief, but one still had to conform to a hierarchy, to Luther or Calvin, for example. Next came the modern state with its central administration and monarchs, who at first held nearly absolute power, but were eventually forced to grant a share of

authority to a growing aristocracy. Such states sought centralized control over their societies, and in doing so also sought to constraint the role of individual thought among the majority of the people under their influence.

It is not until the third major development that society significantly changed its normative beliefs regarding the potential of individual reason and thought. This change, according to Rawls, began during the Reformation and the development of modern science around the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and continued during the Enlightenment, which Kant famously defined as “man’s immergence from his self-imposed nonage” (Kant 1784). By previously relying on religious leaders for moral direction and authority, man stunted his own development by not using his own individual reason and potential. Individuals could realize this potential, Kant argued, by overcoming laziness and cowardice. This state of immaturity, however, was so deeply and historically ingrained in people that Kant believed it had become a part of man’s nature.

He has even grown to like it, and is at first really incapable of using his own understanding because he has never been permitted to try it.

Dogmas and formulas, these mechanical tools designed for reasonable use – or rather abuse – of his natural gifts, are the fetters of an everlasting nonage. The man who casts them off would make an uncertain leap over the narrowest ditch, because he is not used to such free movement. That is why there are only a few men who walk firmly, and who have emerged from nonage by cultivating their own minds. It is more nearly possible, however, for the public to enlighten itself; indeed, if it is only given freedom, enlightenment is almost inevitable. ... This

enlightenment requires nothing but *freedom* – and the most innocent of all that may be called ‘freedom’: freedom to make public use of one’s reason in all matters (Kant 1784).

Such freedom provided space for advances in modern science, which in turn buoyed the evolving normative conceptions of the potential for individual thought. Rawls highlights in particular the impact of scientific advances in astronomy made by Copernicus and Kepler, in Newtonian physics, and in mathematical analysis in the form of calculus by Newton and Leibniz (Rawls 2005, p. xxiii). Various Pragmatist thinkers note as well the impact in this period of the seminal work of Charles Darwin, whom Menand notes changed how people thought from Platonic terms of types and essences, to thinking largely in terms of relations and probabilities (i.e. statistical analysis and probability theory) (Menand 2001, pp. 124-128). This change in the normative belief of the potential of individual thought helped drive further scientific, industrial, and technological advances throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. What’s more, this change greatly influenced conceptions of democratic government, a free press, and the role journalism is thought to play in a society of free, equal, and rationale citizens. As the practice of journalism evolved in western democratic societies throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and then professionalized itself during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, journalism largely retained the normative and philosophical principles of the Enlightenment, particularly its normative belief in the potential benefit of free, individual reason and rationality. Enlightenment thinkers believed reason and rationality would drive scientific and technological advances. And, what’s more, such thought could bring about more egalitarian, just, representative societies in which conflict would be resolved nonviolently.

Events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, raised serious doubts about the claims of the Enlightenment. It became difficult to explain how an era in which reason and rationality reigned also included two world wars, the murder of millions in the Holocaust, Stalin's Gulag, various genocides and humanitarian atrocities, and frequent military conflicts that claimed millions of lives. Scholars have dubbed the 20<sup>th</sup> century mankind's bloodiest. Horkheimer and Adorno wrote *Dialectic of Enlightenment* during World War II in order to "explain why humanity, instead of entering a truly human state, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, p. xiv). The passing of time did nothing to change their position; two decades after World War II ended Horkheimer and Adorno affirmed their view of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: "In a period of political division into immense blocs driven by an objective tendency to collide, horror has been prolonged. The conflicts in the third world and the renewed growth of totalitarianism are not mere historical interludes any more than, according to the *Dialectic*, fascism was at that time" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, p. xi). Further scrutiny of the Enlightenment and of its defining principle (the potential of individual human reason and rationality to improve society) gained support from the work of various critical theorists and postmodern writers (among them Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Alasdair MacIntyre, to name a few). The work of such critical studies scholars weakened notions of a singular, objective truth in the world.

This is roughly where we are today: without consensus on the question of whether anything useful remains of the Enlightenment; without consensus on how much faith to place in human reason and rationality; with deep disagreements

regarding claims to truth and how such claims ought to be resolved; and with deep division as a result of life in a plural, liberal democratic society. It is against this background that I raise and situate a broad, long-term research agenda in journalism studies, and the much narrower scope of this work. A brief account of the broader theme provides context for this dissertation and supports a claim for the significance of the research at the heart of this work.

The broader agenda involves a critical examination of the potential and practice of a standard normative ideal of journalism's role in democratic society. Such an examination would compare and contrast the ideal – one that is perhaps uniquely western, derived from philosophical literature, and unmoored from empirical observation – with actual normative journalistic belief in Ukraine, and later in other liberal democratic societies. In this ideal – which I call the ideal of journalistic rationality – reporters go out into the world to get information, they publicize that information to citizens, who in turn use it in public debate to make informed decisions and govern themselves. This ideal sees journalists on one side striving to objectively get at and publicize information and truth, and citizens on the other side objectively looking for and using information provided by the press. According to the ideal, when provided with information that conflicts with what they already know, individuals would use their reason and rationality to make informed decisions regarding matters of governance and the public interest. It is an ideal born out of Enlightenment thinking, and this telling of it is admittedly simplistic. But it reflects a general and often stated expectation of how the press and the public should operate in a democratic society. Gans (2003, p. 57) says such a view of the press and

an informed citizenry in democratic society is outdated and in need of refinement, and he is particularly critical of the ideal's expectations of citizens:

If people want to make demands on their representatives, to protest, or to protect their interests and values, they do not let inadequate information, or for that matter, the facts get in the way of what they do. They may even restrict their news intake to information supporting their positions, and at times, may create falsehoods or use rumors to justify these positions.

I noted above that a broader research agenda involves a critical examination of the ideal of journalistic rationality. The scope of this dissertation is narrowed to focus on only one side of that ideal: the role of the press. I narrow the scope further by setting aside the press in practice and instead examine journalists' stated beliefs regarding the roles they believe they should play in liberal democratic society. It is narrowed further to examine journalistic norms in Ukraine – a society transitioning from and still deeply influenced by the history and culture of Soviet Communism. The following work compares empirical data gathered from journalists in a divided Ukraine against a theoretical solution to the problem at the heart of this dissertation. In proposing a solution to the problem, the philosopher Richard Rorty theorized that a journalistic pragmatism could ease the tension and polarization found in a society of equal, though deeply divided individuals. This research is the first to investigate an element of Rorty's philosophical argument that journalism, among other disciplines, could ease the tension inherent in plural democratic society. It does so at an admittedly extreme time for journalism in Ukraine and for the country itself. It is a time when division in eastern Ukraine has turned to war. Examining journalism –

particularly the normative beliefs of journalists themselves – in such an extreme situation presents an opportunity to study the discipline in a rare moment, and it allows us to compare and contrast Western journalism theory’s normative ideals against the actual beliefs expressed by reporters whose country has endured war and annexation by Russia. This dissertation then presents findings from interviews conducted with journalists in the United States, and subsequently compares and contrasts those findings with the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists.

## Dedication

For my parents and grandparents.

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I would like to thank all of the different people who supported me throughout this process. I specifically want to thank the members of my dissertation committee – my chair and advisor Sarah Oates, Maurine Beasley, Ira Chinoy, Kalyani Chadha, and Fred Alford – for their interest in this work and for their guidance in making it stronger. Each has shown me what it means to be both an exemplary scholar, on the one hand, and a caring, thoughtful teacher, on the other. I am grateful for their friendship and encouragement.

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This work could not have been done without the Ukrainian journalists who took the time to speak with me. They continue to work in difficult circumstances and with the belief that they are building a more just, democratic country. I thank each of them.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Questions

## The Problem of Political Liberalism

A central problem in contemporary political theory involves the tension inherent in any vibrant pluralist democratic society. John Rawls, the American political philosopher, put the issue this way: "... the problem of political liberalism is: How is it possible that there may exist over time a stable and just society of free and equal citizens profoundly divided by reasonable though incompatible religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?" (Rawls 2005, p. xviii) The concern regarding justice, violence, and stability arises because the inevitable outcome of free thought in a liberal democratic society is deep – at times irreconcilable – ideological difference.

A modern democratic society is characterized not simply by a pluralism of comprehensive religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines but by a pluralism of incompatible yet reasonable comprehensive doctrines. No one of these doctrines is affirmed by citizens generally. Nor should one expect that in the foreseeable future one of them, or some other reasonable doctrine, will ever be affirmed by all, or nearly all, citizens. Political liberalism assumes that, for political purposes, a plurality of reasonable yet incompatible comprehensive doctrines is the normal result of the exercise of human reason within the framework of the free institutions of a constitutional democratic regime (Rawls 2005, p. xvi).

How, then, might we encourage intense, heated, and passionate public debate – which normative theories of journalism and democracy say is critical – in a plural society marked by deep ideological differences, while keeping such discourse from

becoming violent? Are there instruments that can be used to help ease this tension?  
Are there instruments that can inflame it?

### Journalists, Political Liberalism, and Democratic Theory

This work approaches this idea by considering the role journalism might play in inflaming or moderating deeply incompatible religious, philosophical, or moral beliefs. It further focuses on the question of what role journalists believe they should play in a liberal democratic society characterized by deep religious, philosophical, and moral differences. More specifically, it begins by examining whether and to what extent journalists themselves are aware of the problem raised by Rawls, examining journalists' conceptions of their role in moderating or inflaming the tensions within plural society. These questions are raised while bearing in mind the normative and philosophical arguments that journalism is vital to democracy. McNair notes, for example, that in 21<sup>st</sup> century transitional societies "the establishment of genuine, lasting democracy was recognized to be inseparable from the establishment of free political media, a functioning public sphere and a pluralistic civil society" (McNair 2009, p. 248).

If the problem of pluralism in democratic society articulated by Rawls is a core problem in contemporary political theory, and we accept the premise that journalism is vital to democracy, then journalists' conceptions of their role in democratic society should at the very least acknowledge the tension within any plural society. If journalism is as vital to democracy as the philosophical and normative literature on journalism make it out to be, then journalists themselves should be aware of what is a large, potential problem within contemporary democratic society. It is

therefore hypothesized that journalists would acknowledge a normative goal of working to alleviate the tension articulated by Rawls above. This raises the following broad research questions:

Are journalists aware of the tension inherent in a vibrant, plural, liberal democratic society?

How do journalists describe the role they believe they should play amid this tension?

Ukraine has long been a crossroads where different powers have met and clashed. The word Ukraine means borderland (Subtelny 2009, p. 3). It is in Ukraine that the western edge of the great Eurasian steppe meets the relative safety of the Carpathian Mountains. This steppe “gave rise to the Cossacks, the frontier warriors who became archetypal figures in Ukrainian history and culture” (Subtelny 2009, p. 5). The land, rich in natural resources, once sat along the main trade routes between Europe and Asia. As much as two-thirds of the country is covered in the rich, black earth known as chornozem, “a resource that has made Ukraine one of the most fertile regions in the world and famous as the ‘breadbasket’ of those states which in the past ruled the country, whether the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, or the Soviet Union” (Magocsi 2010, p. 6). Writing a history of atrocities committed between 1933-1945 by Hitler and Stalin, from Berlin to Moscow, acclaimed historian Timothy Snyder called the region the bloodlands (Snyder 2010).

Orest Subtelny (2009, p. 5), perhaps the preeminent contemporary historian of Ukraine who wrote the landmark *Ukraine: A History*, said that, “if nature has been generous to Ukraine, history has not. Because of its natural riches and accessibility from ancient past to most recent times, Ukraine, perhaps more than any other country

in Europe, has experienced devastating foreign invasions and conquests. Consequently, foreign domination and the struggle against it is a paramount theme in its history.” Moreover, its resources and geographic location have made the country distinctive even from its closest neighbors, and the effect its fertile soil has had on its history is difficult to overstate. “In the Russian north, the barren, sandy soil, the harsh climate, and the shorter growing season – by at least a month compared to Ukraine – forced Russian peasants to pool their resources and to work the land communally. In Ukraine, however, individual farming was much more widespread. Such divergences helped to create important distinctions between the mentalities, cultures, and socioeconomic organization of these two related peoples” (Subtelny 2009, p. 5).

During the Soviet era, the Communist Party leadership on numerous occasions sought to destroy any notion of Ukrainian identity. The state-sponsored, man-made famine of 1932-1933, known as Holodomor (death by starvation), targeted Ukrainian peasants, and mass resettlements of ethnic Ukrainians to Russia and ethnic Russians to Ukraine, blurred notions of a national Ukrainian identity. The most recent state census in Ukraine put the country’s total population at 48.5 million people in 2001, of which roughly 17 percent, or a little more than 8 million people, were ethnic Russians.<sup>4</sup> Such resettlement of ethnic Russians into Ukraine, in effect, further diversified what had already been a culturally heterogeneous society of different religious faiths and ethnicities. In raising a question that is incredibly relevant to the core research questions at the heart of this work, Serhii Plokhy (2015, p. 353), a Harvard historian of Ukraine, said that it is precisely because the country is a

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<sup>4</sup> Accessed online on April 23, 2018, at <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/>.

borderland that its people have historically had to find ways to live together. “This location on the border of several cultural spaces helped make Ukraine a contact zone in which Ukrainians of different persuasions could learn to coexist. It also helped create regional divisions, which participants in the current conflict [the war in eastern Ukraine] have exploited. Ukraine has always been known, and lately it has been much praised, for the cultural hybridity of its society, but how much hybridity a nation can bear and still remain united in the face of a ‘hybrid war’ is one of the important questions now being decided in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine” (Plokhly 2015, p. 353). It is precisely this question of division, and the role journalists believe they should play in mitigating this tension, that is at the heart of this work.

### Euromaidan, Revolution, and War in Ukraine

Ukraine presents a case study of a contemporary democratic society in which deep ideological difference among citizens turned violent on a large scale. What began in Ukraine as peaceful street protests in late 2013 over the question of integration with the European Union escalated to fighting, bloodshed, and the ouster of Ukraine’s president in February 2014, then to Russia’s annexation of Crimea in southern Ukraine the following month, and finally to war in eastern Ukraine that began in 2014 and continues to this day. The war has been fought between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine who want to remain closely connected with Russia. According to a recent United Nations report, the fighting has left more than 30,000 casualties from April 2014 to February 2016, including 9,167 killed and 21,044 wounded (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2016, pp. 6-7). As of 2016, the

Ukrainian government had registered 1.6 million internally displaced persons, with more than 1 million Ukrainians seeking asylum or protection in neighboring and European Union countries (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2016, p. 7). An initial ceasefire, called the Minsk Protocol, collapsed in January 2015 after heavy fighting resumed across the conflict zone. The warring parties and peace negotiators signed a second unconditional ceasefire, called Minsk II, on February 12, 2015. Representatives of the Ukrainian, Russian, and Swiss governments, as well as representatives of the Office of Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Donetsk People's Republic, and the Luhansk People's Republic signed the agreement. Almost immediately after the agreement was signed separatist forces attacked the Ukrainian town of Debaltseve, forcing Ukrainian troops to withdraw. Since that offensive, minor skirmishes have continued along the front but both sides have held their territory. Reuters called the war a "frozen conflict" in which the days are largely peaceful but shooting and heavy artillery fire breakout almost every evening and last throughout the night (Tsvetkova 2015).

While a host of factors led to the war, the conflict appears essentially to be the result of an ideological split among Ukrainians who want to see their country integrated with Europe and those who want to remain closely connected with Russia. Since the Orange Revolution shook the country a decade ago in 2004-2005, Ukraine conducted a muddled foreign policy of neither firmly committing to integration with Europe, nor completely turning toward Russia, leaving most Ukrainians disgruntled with the pace of progress but content that their side had not lost out completely. While Ukraine had previously made minor moves to join the European Union, a

decisive moment came on November 21, 2013, when the Ukrainian government failed to pass legislation required in order to sign an Association Agreement with the E.U. (Herszenhorn 2013a). Signing the agreement, which was scheduled to take place the following week, would have brought Ukraine significantly closer toward membership in the E.U., a move Russia strongly opposed. The response from the public was quick. Demonstrations over the government's failure to sign the agreement began later that night in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. Police clashed with peaceful citizens three days into the protests on November 24, 2013. Following a larger crackdown by police in the early morning of November 30, 2013, thousands of Ukrainians flocked to Kyiv's Independence Square (Herszenhorn 2013b). The protest movement, called Euromaidan, grew in response to further police brutality and government repression, which ultimately led to violence from both sides of the conflict. On February 20, 2014, Ukrainian government special police opened fire on protesters, killing dozens (Kramer and Higgins 2014). The news agency Interfax-Ukraine reported that, according to volunteer doctors who worked at Independence Square, approximately 780 people were killed throughout the revolution, among them some 20 police, Berkut and other special forces officers. The Ukrainian Ministry of Health, however, has officially reported that 104 people died between November 2013 and February 2014, many during the bloodiest part of the revolution on February 18-20 (Interfax-Ukraine 2014).

In the aftermath of the worst violence, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich fled to eastern Ukraine after members of his political party deserted him and police and interior ministry troops abandoned their posts throughout the capital

(Karmanau and Charlton 2014). Yanukovych eventually fled Ukraine altogether and ended up in Russia. In the days, weeks, and months that followed, Ukraine swung from one extreme to another, seemingly exacerbating the divide between those citizens who wanted to see the country move closer to Europe and those who wanted it to move closer to Russia. In response to pro-western developments in Kyiv following Euromaidan, pro-Russian protests erupted in eastern Ukraine. Russian troops moved into and annexed the Crimean peninsula in southern Ukraine in late February 2014 ostensibly to protect Russians living in the region, and Russian-backed separatists took over government buildings in Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine (Sullivan and Isachenkov 2014). War between Ukrainian troops and separatists backed by members of the Russian military broke out soon after.

### Ukrainian Journalists

Questions regarding the role of the press in the tension described by Rawls can and should be addressed to journalists in any plural, democratic society, but this work directs its questions to journalists in Ukraine. This is done for a number of reasons. First, and perhaps foremost, Ukraine is a country recently pushed to violent conflict and war, and we can therefore ask journalists to consider what role they believe they should play, if any, amid such violence. Second, journalism scholars have called for work that examines the role the press plays in emerging (particularly post-Soviet) democracies and in other often overlooked non-Western democratic states. Research conducted on the media in Ukraine addresses both of these needs. Third, when journalists discuss their role in democratic society, it is not unusual for them to restate the philosophical, theoretical, and normative arguments of prominent

western intellectuals (Thomas Jefferson or Thomas Paine, for example). But journalists in an Eastern European, post-Soviet society making the difficult transition to democracy may have different normative beliefs, and these beliefs may derive in part from Ukraine's particular cultural, social, and historical contexts. It is important to note that, nearly throughout the period of Western journalism's professionalization – beginning with the first journalism school in 1908 at the University of Missouri – the practice and culture of journalism in Ukraine developed almost entirely under the yoke of Soviet Communism, beginning with the October Revolution in 1917. For more than 70 years, journalism in Ukraine was not practiced under democratic conditions until the country's independence in 1991. In the Soviet era, journalism was regarded as an 'organ' of the state and its function was to support the goals of the Communist Party rather than attempt to provide any 'news' to citizens. Because of this, Ukraine presents a unique opportunity to study the culture and norms of journalism in a transitional, post-Soviet democratic society that is both non-Western, not Russian, and influential on a global scale because of its geography, population, and, in particular, its continuing role as a borderland between Europe and Asia.

As McNair points out, democracies emerging from some form of authoritarian rule differ in their form, as does the journalism that is meant to support such societies. "Democratic political cultures will vary widely, and will always be rooted in specific histories and circumstances" (McNair 2009, p. 248). Calls to de-Westernize journalism research were behind efforts to examine how the different values and ethics of Asian societies affected Asian normative theories of the press, for example (Xiaoge 2009, pp. 360-363). This work has much the same goal. By addressing the

research questions in this study to Ukrainian journalists, this dissertation broadens our understanding of the normative beliefs of journalists in non-Western society. It sheds light on the context for those normative beliefs, and it examines the role journalists believe they should play both in a country torn recently by violent conflict and in fostering an emerging, liberal democratic, post-Soviet society. It aims to do this by asking the following questions:

What are the stated norms of Ukrainian journalists?

Do Western normative theories of the press's role in democratic society reflect the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists?

### Journalistic Pragmatism as Normative Journalism Theory: Exploring a Theoretical Solution to the Problem of Political Liberalism

Journalism has long been regarded as an essential component of democratic society. "The benefit stemmed from the flow of information about public events to all citizens and the exposure of politicians and governments to the public gaze and critique," McQuail writes (2005, p. 150). According to McNair, the normative expectations of political journalism in a democracy include four core functions: the press should provide information, it should act as a watchdog or fourth estate, it should act as a representative of the citizenry, and it should engage in public debate by taking up positions and persuading people to adopt its view (McNair 2009, pp. 238-240). This work leaves aside the normative functions in which the press provides information, acts as a watchdog, and takes editorial stances on various ideological positions. It focuses instead on the third function listed above: the press's normative role as a representative of the different positions in a plural, liberal democracy. The

Society of Professional Journalists notes in its code of ethics that, “journalists should ... boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear” (Society of Professional Journalists 2014). Or, as a common normative expression among journalists puts it, the press should be a voice for the voiceless.

It is this well-established and oft-voiced goal within normative journalism theory of providing a voice for the voiceless that overlaps near seamlessly with a theoretical solution to the problem described by Rawls above. It is a solution presented by the political theorist and pragmatist Richard Rorty in his *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, a book that marks the culmination of Rorty’s political philosophy and in which the author notes the difficulty political theorists and philosophers have had formulating a single theory that coherently unifies the goal of individual freedom of belief and creative self expression, on the one hand, with social solidarity, on the other. It was, Rorty argued, an unattainable goal of bringing together private and public aspirations, which previously both religion and moral philosophy tried unsuccessfully to accomplish. “This book tries to show how things look if we drop the demand for a theory which unifies the public and the private, and are content to treat the demands of self-creation and of human solidarity as equally valid, yet forever incommensurable” (Rorty 1989, p. xv).

We can read this demand as another way of phrasing Rawls’ initial formulation of the problem of political liberalism above. How might a society that provides space for self-creation – space for reasonable though incompatible religious, philosophical, and moral beliefs – achieve this goal while simultaneously looking out

for justice, stability, and solidarity? Rorty argued that no single political or philosophical theory could coherently unify both the demand for private self-expression and belief within a plural, liberal democratic society with the public goal of social solidarity and cohesion.

There is no way in which philosophy, or any other theoretical discipline, will ever let us do that. The closest we will come to joining these two quests is to see the aim of a just and free society as letting its citizens be as privatistic, 'irrationalist,' and aestheticist as they please so long as they do it on their own time – causing no harm to others and using no resources needed by those less advantaged. There are practical measures to be taken to accomplish this practical goal. But there is no way to bring self-creation together with justice at the level of theory. The vocabulary of self-creation is necessarily private, unshared, unsuited to argument. The vocabulary of justice is necessarily public and shared, a medium for argumentative exchange (Rorty 1989, p. xiv).

There have been, according to Rorty, those writers for whom the desire for self-creation and private autonomy dominate (for example, Heidegger, Foucault, and Nietzsche), and those writers for whom the goal of a more just and free human community predominates (for example, Dewey and Habermas).

I urge that we not try to choose between them but, rather, give them equal weight and then use them for different purposes. ... If we could bring ourselves to accept the fact that no theory about the nature of Man or Society or Rationality, or anything else, is going to synthesize Nietzsche with Marx or Heidegger with Habermas, we could begin to think of the relation between writers on autonomy and writers on justice

as being like the relation between two kinds of tools – as little in need of synthesis as are paintbrushes and crowbars (Rorty 1989, p. xiv).

The first group of writers helps individuals realize their private ambitions and goals, but their work does not address the problem of social solidarity. For Rorty, the answer to the question of what binds society together is not a matter of discovery. The key to the question of social solidarity is not out there waiting to be found. Rather, Rorty argues, social solidarity is developed by society.

It is created by increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of other, unfamiliar sorts of people. Such increased sensitivity makes it more difficult to marginalize people different from ourselves by thinking, ‘They do not feel it as *we* would,’ or ‘There must always be suffering, so why not let *them* suffer?’ (Rorty 1989, p. xvi)

Increasing our sensitivity to people unlike us strengthens human solidarity by developing a sense of empathy for previously marginalized members of society. This is a task best fulfilled not by theory or philosophy, Rorty argues, but by disciplines capable of and actually tasked with illuminating the plight and suffering of “others,” on the one hand, and, on the other, of describing how cruel we ourselves can be to people unlike us. A body of literature in political science supports a claim that deep ideological differences are softened when people first learn about the non-ideological details of other peoples’ lives. According to Mutz, “the best sequence of events for purposes of promoting beneficial effects is one in which people first get to know one another as individuals, then only later recognize each other as representatives of disliked groups. People’s political views are seldom obvious upon first meeting, and conversations about politics do not occur with sufficient regularity so that people

always know when they are in the company of people holding cross-cutting views. Thus a person may easily develop a liking for another person long before discovering their differences of political opinion” (Mutz 2002, p. 113). For Rorty, this work of developing a deeper understanding of our own capabilities for cruelty and of greater empathy for the “other” is best done by disciplines versed in deep immersion into and thick description of the details of people’s lives.

This process of coming to see other human beings as ‘one of us’ rather than as ‘them’ is a matter of detailed description of what unfamiliar people are like and of redescription of what we ourselves are like. This is a task not for theory but for genres such as ethnography, the journalist’s report, the comic book, the docudrama, and, especially, the novel (Rorty 1989, p. xvi).

Such detailed description of what unfamiliar people are like is analogous, I argue, to journalism’s normative goal of giving voice to the voiceless, of representing all of the different voices in a plural society. Among its other necessary democratic functions, journalism would strive to tell stories representative of “others” in society in order to foster a level of empathy in ourselves for people unlike us, or with whom we have deep political or moral disagreements. In this way, we might still pursue the goal of increasing political activity and political passion, but do so while dissuading calls to violence by advocating for what Rorty called a society with a “we consciousness,” and, more importantly, a society with “we-intentions” (Rorty 1989, pp. 189-198),<sup>5</sup> a society that chooses to highlight those individual characteristics that

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<sup>5</sup> Rorty’s use of we consciousness is taken from Wilfrid Sellars. See Sellars, W. (1968) *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes*. Routledge, London: p. 222: “It is a conceptual fact that

bind us, not those which divide us. This kind of journalism would strive to tell stories that do not use sensationalism, stereotypes, or gross generalizations, and that do not portray the world in simple binary terms. A journalistic pragmatism would instead strive to represent a broader range of the moral, philosophical or religious beliefs and justifications found in a plural society.

With this normative goal in mind as a possible solution to the problem of political liberalism, this work examines the normative beliefs of journalists in Ukraine – a country currently divided by deep political, moral, and philosophical beliefs – and it asks whether journalists in Ukraine, in discussing the roles they believe journalism should play in a divided democratic society, acknowledge a normative goal of representing the spectrum of different voices found in Ukraine. This presents the following questions:

When Ukrainian journalists talk about their normative roles in democratic society, do they include talk of a journalism that does not paint the world in sensational or absolutist terms? Do Ukrainian journalists believe they should try to tell stories that develop Rorty’s “we consciousness”?

When talking about different normative roles of the press, how do Ukrainian journalists discuss giving a voice to the voiceless or other minority members of their society? How do they view doing

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people constitute a community, a *we*, by virtue of thinking of each other as *one of us*, and by willing the common good *not* under the species of benevolence – but by willing it as one of us, or from a moral point of view.” I address this point in greater depth in the section on Rortian pragmatism in the theory section of the literature review chapter that follows.

news stories that represent different (particularly overlooked) aspects of society? What value do Ukrainian journalists place on these types of stories?

The broad hypothesis – based on literature from normative journalism theory, political theory, and voting behavior – is that a journalism which gives voice to the different positions found in society could encourage a more tolerant, empathetic citizenry. However, because the business of journalism requires organizations to sell and generate a bigger audience, journalism that strives to represent the different positions within society (particularly as it is practiced in big news organizations) is likely to be deprioritized, while a sensational journalism that inflames and splits society into simple dichotomies would be prioritized. This raises the following questions:

Do Ukrainian journalists think journalism that strives to represent the different positions within society might ease the tension and conflict in their country? Do they believe the practice of a journalistic pragmatism is deprioritized in Ukraine? What factors do Ukrainian journalists say limit them from performing this function?

## The Need for Research

### On Journalism in Non-Western Societies

This study takes up the call for research conducted on journalism in non-Western societies. James Curran and Myung-Jin Park (2000) devote a book to the call

for “de-Westernizing media studies,” while Wasserman and de Beer have a chapter on the topic, pointing out how scholars might move forward in their attempts to de-Westernize journalism studies (2009, pp. 428-438). Though the book by Curran and Park devotes a chapter to media after the fall of European Communism, that chapter nonetheless focuses much of its attention on work conducted in Russia, overlooking other post-Soviet, European countries, such as Moldova, Belarus, and Ukraine (Sparks 2000, pp. 35-49). What’s more, Dyczok notes that “studies on media in Russia are also of limited comparative value for understanding Ukraine, since developments in the two states have been so different” (2006, p. 218). And, yet, not all scholars of the region agree that developments in Russia and Ukraine have been so different; comparisons between the media in both countries can of course be made.

Not only are there calls for scholarship on the press in non-Western countries, but McNair also points out a need for research on the role journalism plays in transitional democracies (2009, p. 248).<sup>6</sup> Additionally, as this work addresses conceptions of the normative role of the press, it also acknowledges the connection between normative journalism and journalism ethics. With this in mind, it is important to point out that Ward calls for a de-Westernization of our understanding of journalism ethics, and he argues that journalism scholarship should develop a broader

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<sup>6</sup> Not everyone agrees that research conducted on such democracies has yielded anything new in terms of theoretical frameworks in communication studies. See, for example, Coman, M. (2000) Developments in Journalism Theory About Media ‘Transition’ in Central and Eastern Europe 1990-99. *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1: pp. 53-54: “After 10 years of research, study and debates, I think we have to recognize that *nothing essentially has happened in media theory*: No new theory, no new concepts, no new patterns arose from the media’s evolution in these countries. . . . Post-Communist media did not create a new ‘model’ – they represent a mixture of the already known ‘models,’ combined in proportions which vary in accordance with the historical, geographical and cultural characteristics of each country in the region under discussion.”

understanding of journalism ethics in non-Western societies (2009, p. 303). Ukraine's unique historical context allows an examination of journalism from two little-researched perspectives: from the perspective of its function in an emerging democratic country, and its function in an Eastern European, post-Soviet country.

### On Media Theory and Democracy

With regard to the broader field of media studies, Dyczok points out that there is a lack of connection between the work of media scholars in general and political scientists, with neither group adequately addressing or explaining the relationship between mass media and democracy (2006, p. 217). Or, put another way, "democratic theory takes for granted an over-simple and outdated model of the media, while media studies take for granted an outdated model of democracy" (Scammell and Semetko 2000, p. xii). There is, in short, a need for work that brings these two fields closer together. This study attempts to bridge a portion of that gap by applying what is a developed philosophical position within contemporary political theory regarding the role of beliefs, values and "truth" to an apparently contradictory perspective of the same in normative journalism theory.

Christians et al. (2009, p. 235) note that normative theory on this topic must not unthinkingly adopt the same values and standards that were used more than half a century ago when the Commission on Freedom of the Press examined the role of the mass media in the U.S. (Commission on Freedom of the Press 1947), or more than a decade later when Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm wrote *Four Theories of the Press* (1963). This was an earlier era of press history, and Christians et al. note that

normative theories evolve to suit a particular cultural and sociopolitical environment (Christians et al. 2009, p. 63).

### On Ukrainian Journalists' Normative Conceptions of the Press

There is a significant body of literature in which researchers have talked with journalists about their various conceptions of journalistic work, or their professional and occupational ideologies, or perceptions of power dynamics within different newsroom cultures, etc. And, as the literature review chapter of this work will demonstrate, there is also a body of work that has repeatedly examined the normative conceptions of American journalists (Weaver and Wilhoit 1986, Weaver and Wilhoit 1996, Weaver et al. 2007, Willnat et al. 2017), and there is research that compared the “media role perceptions” of journalists in China, Taiwan, and the United States (Zhu et al. 1997). And there is work that examined differences in professional role conceptions between male and female newspaper journalists in the United States (Cassidy 2008). Indeed, as Hellmueller and Mellado point out, “studies on professional roles have become a fundamental stream of research within journalism studies” (2015, p. 1). But this vein of research also needs de-Westernization. Focusing on the specific norm of objectivity, Maras (2013, pp. 227-229) says that “there is a growing awareness of the need for a different approach: one that studies objectivity in journalism as a culturally and textually negotiated *performance* ...” While there is certainly a need for more research on journalists in often overlooked post-Soviet republics, there is a particular need for research that explores the different roles that journalists in Ukraine believe the press should play in their transitional, post-Soviet democratic society.

## The Organization of Chapters

This work is organized into the following chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study and the associated research questions. Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant to this work, beginning with the literature of the two theoretical frameworks used in this work. First, it presents the literature on normative journalism theory, particularly the normative theory of journalism's role in democratic society. Second, the chapter reviews the relevant literature from the pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty, whose work offered a potential solution to the problem at the heart of this work. Chapter 2 then reviews the relevant literature on journalists' normative conceptions of their roles in democratic society, from both historical and contemporary perspectives. It highlights recent challenges raised in the literature to the normative notion of journalistic objectivity. And it then discusses the literature on journalism in transitional and post-Soviet societies, on journalism and journalistic culture in Ukraine, and on the current situation in that country.

Chapter 3 discusses the methods used to conduct this research in which the researcher conducted interviews with 31 Ukrainian journalists, and the findings of this work are presented in Chapters 4-6. Chapter 4 answers the core research questions posed at the beginning of this work by examining journalists' normative beliefs regarding a pragmatic journalism that provides voice for various perspectives in Ukrainian society. Chapter 5 explores Ukrainian journalists' normative beliefs regarding the roles they believe they should play in their emerging, post Soviet transitional democratic society. In focusing on what Ukrainian journalists say are the norms of journalism in Ukraine, this chapter also addresses the research questions

that asked whether the norms of journalism in Ukraine differ from those found in western democracies. Chapter 6 presents a core theme that emerged during this research on Ukrainian journalists' normative beliefs, namely their view of journalistic objectivity as a norm in a society engaged in not only a physical war with Russia, but what many journalists themselves called a hybrid information war in which strong pro-Russian propaganda, misinformation, and fake news has dominated in the occupied territories of Ukraine and Crimea.

Chapter 7 examines the normative beliefs of journalists in the United States using interviews conducted and published in 2016. Forty-one media professionals were interviewed on the topic of what the press in the United States was doing wrong and what roles they thought the press should play in American democracy. The findings of this chapter provide a contextual contrast and comparison of western journalists' stated norms with the core research of this work: an examination of the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists. Chapter 8 offers a discussion of the findings and a conclusion to the work.

## Chapter 2: Theory and Review of the Literature

This chapter begins by exploring the two theoretical frameworks that were used to guide this dissertation research. The first section reviews the literature on normative journalism theory and democracy. It identifies the different roles that the press should play in a democratic society, and it then focuses on journalism's normative role of being a voice for the different perspectives and beliefs that exist in a plural democracy. The literature review then explores recent challenges to the normative notion of journalistic objectivity, as this concept occupies a significant position in both of the theories that guide this dissertation, and in its findings. The chapter then moves to the second theoretical work used in the research. As the previous chapter identified a potential problem that exists in any plural, liberal democratic society, the literature review presents the theoretical work of pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty, who offered a possible solution to the problem of political liberalism. It then contends that normative journalism theory's call for the press to give voice to the different perspectives found in a plural society is analogous to Rorty's philosophical argument that journalism could help ease the tension of plural society by providing detailed descriptions of the lives of people seen as ideologically "other."

If we accept the argument by John Rawls that deep ideological difference presents a potentially serious problem for plural democratic societies, and we accept the position that journalism does play a critical role in democracy, then it can be argued that journalists should at least be aware that the press can play a role in either stoking or easing this division. Therefore, following an exploration of the two

theoretical frameworks used in this work, the chapter then examines the literature on journalists' conceptions of their normative roles in democratic society, both from historical and contemporary perspectives. It explores research conducted on journalism in transitional and post-Soviet societies, on journalism and journalistic culture in Ukraine, and on the current situation in that country. The core theme throughout this chapter is the exploration of theoretical and empirical literature that addresses the roles journalists believe the press should play in a democracy, and, more specifically, the role journalists believe they should play in representing the spectrum of voices and beliefs in a plural society.

### Normative Journalism Theory

Democracy, according to a common sentiment, cannot survive without a free and vibrant press. Theorists, political philosophers, and various intellectuals have voiced this belief throughout the years. Thomas Jefferson famously said that “were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter” (Jefferson 1787). Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart argued in the Pentagon Papers case of 1971 that without an informed and free press, there couldn't be an enlightened people, and the only effective restraint upon executive power is an enlightened citizenry; an informed and critical public opinion alone can protect the values of democratic government (New York Times V. U.S. 1971).

According to McNair, the normative expectations of political journalism in a democracy had already been defined by the beginning of the 18th century (McNair 2009, p. 238-240), well before Jefferson famously stressed his belief in the need for a

free press. McQuail locates the origins of a normative theory of journalism and its role in democracy in the 18th century, and he links this normative theory with liberal thinkers such as Thomas Paine, John Stuart Mill, Alexis de Tocqueville and others (McQuail 2005, p. 169). In this view, freedom of the press was closely linked to liberal and utilitarian political philosophy in which the freedom of the individual was paramount – this included not only the freedom to think for oneself, but also an understanding that individuals had the capability to think for themselves and not rely on a higher authority – kings or priests – to tell them how they should think.<sup>7</sup> These same principles were used as the basis for establishing a free press in the United States. “The doctrine of freedom of speech and press embodied in the First Amendment was the product of the classical liberal political philosophy that emerged late in the seventeenth century. In defense of these freedoms, the classical liberals drew on various strands of political experience” (Kelley and Donway 1990, p. 68).

Christians et al. (2009, p. 37-64) criticize this view as ignoring the historical origins of Western normative theory in classical thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle. Zelizer (2004, p. 146) agrees, noting that that “expectations of political behavior go back to the days of Plato and Aristotle, though the academic discipline of political science primarily emerged half a century ago in the United States.” Such ancient normative expectations of political behavior, of course, did not include consideration of the role that journalism should play in democratic society, at least not the kind of journalism that developed after the invention of the printing press. And, while “the link between journalism and democracy is not a recent supposition” (Zelizer 2017, p.

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<sup>7</sup> For more on 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century philosophical arguments in defense of press freedom, see Keane 1991, pp. 10-20.

64), Schudson and Tift (2005, p.18) point out that “the primary institutional and cultural features of contemporary news have a relatively brief – four hundred years at the outside – history. The occupation in which people get paid to write true stories about current events and publish them on a regular basis is about 250 years old and in many places only 150 years old.” Thus, normative theorizing about the role journalism – the kind of journalism that developed only after the invention of the printing press – should play in democratic society is itself a relatively new branch of normative theory. As Schudson and Tift (2005, p. 18) note, “the normative commitment of this occupational group to writing political news in order to inform the citizens of a democracy is of course no older than contemporary democracies, a history of roughly two centuries. The idea that this same group of people, journalists, should try to write news in a nonpartisan and professional manner emerged in the past one hundred years.”

It should perhaps come as no surprise, then, that the first normative arguments regarding what the press should do in democratic society sprung from the very same Enlightenment principles that gave rise to those democracies. After all, “liberal philosophy fought for the great founding principles that continue to underpin the democratic importance of media: freedom of speech, the autonomy of civil society from the state, the sovereignty of the people” (Scammell and Semetko 2000, p. xii). This intersection of journalism as a provider of factual information, on the one hand, and the citizens in a liberal democratic society, on the other hand, was, as Zelizer notes, “consonant with a certain version of modernity. It underscored an association with rationality, certainty, consent, reasoned thought, order, objectivity, progress, and

universal values – all of which journalism was expected to promote in order to create the conditions needed for an optimum public life. In this view, journalism was seen as a unifier, an enabler of understanding and reasoned deliberation, a provider of common reference and informed decision-making, a warning light and promoter of reconciliation, a facilitator of conversation” (Zelizer 2017, p. 65).

As these Enlightenment principles became the bedrock of the newly emerging liberal democracies of the Western world, they were enshrined, “either by law or by fact, in their constitutions over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The decisive philosophical debates concerning the liberty of the press took place then. The classic arguments in favour [sic] of press freedom, as a bulwark against despotism and for the attainment of truth through unrestricted public discussion became the established wisdom” (Scammell and Semetko 2000, p. xii).

While several American founders famously voiced these normative arguments for the importance of the press’s role in democratic society, the actual people doing the printing during the colonial era certainly didn’t see themselves as bearing a special journalistic responsibility. At that time, “printers were small-businesspeople, not journalists. They pretty much invented the newspaper as they went along, amid their efforts to make money selling stationery, printing wedding announcements, running the post office, or even selling from their print shops such sundries as chocolate, tea, snuff, rum, beaver hats, patent medicines, and musical instruments” (Schudson and Tift 2005, p. 18). Enshrining journalism’s normative mission in democratic life, of course, took time and work. The American press faced various challenges and setbacks over the next 250 years, typically from legislators who

sought to restrict press freedoms during times of war and perceived threats to national security – notably with the Alien and Sedition acts at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the Espionage Act of 1917. But crucial victories before the Supreme Court also bolstered press freedoms in the United States – notably in *Near v. Minnesota* of 1931, *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* of 1964, and the Pentagon Papers case of 1971 (Schorr 2005, pp. 303-305). Nonetheless, and perhaps because of repeated attempts to reign it in, journalism bolstered the importance of the different normative roles the press is expected to play in democratic society.

According to McNair, those expectations for journalism’s role in a democracy include four core functions: the press should provide citizens with information, it should act as a watchdog or fourth estate, it should act as a mediator for or representative of the citizenry, and it should take part in the public debate by taking up positions and persuading people to adopt their view (2009, pp. 238-240). Indeed, many writers on journalism norms identify comparable normative responsibilities for the press in democratic society.<sup>8</sup> Elliott and Ozar conclude that four roles are central to good journalism: “Making discerning pursuit and effectively disseminating needed information, sufficiently attending to society’s pulse to clearly and effectively convey common social desires, enhancing clients’ autonomy by reporting on vital information and acting as a watchdog of powerful institutions, and drawing upon and powerfully conveying those human interest stories that serve to build community” (Elliott and Ozar 2010, p. 16). McQuail largely echoes these normative roles: the

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<sup>8</sup> See also Gurevitch and Blumler 1990, pp. 269-272. And for a more thorough explication of each norm, see Overholser and Jamieson 2005, Chapters 1, 7-12; and Scammell and Semetko 2000, pp. xi-xiii, and Chapters 7-13.

press is meant to disseminate information, allow different voices and views to be expressed, provide a venue in which public opinion can form on various issues, and facilitate debate among citizens in democratic societies. And, of course, they are conceived of as a fourth estate, an independent set of eyes that can watch over government and its officials (McQuail 2005, pp. 162-170).

Scholars see this watchdog function as rooted in and stemming from traditional liberal theory and argue that this role as a fourth estate is among the most important functions that the press performs in society (Hanitzsch 2007, p. 373; Curran 2005, p. 122). In this view, the press can only be truly independent of government when they are part of the free market. “Once the media become subject to state regulation, they may lose their bite as watchdogs. Worse still, they may become transformed into snarling Rottweilers in the service of the state” (Curran 2005, p. 122). Taking up this metaphor, Donohue et. al (1995) expand on the different roles watchdogs can play. The press can play the role as described by the metaphor of a traditional fourth estate that independently watches over government, as noted above. But they can also act as lapdogs that are largely submissive to the status quo of political and economic authority. Or they can be neither watchdogs nor lapdogs, but a part of different oligarchic powers that rule in the political system (Donohue et. al 1995). These two points – that journalism can only be truly independent of government when it is part of a free market, and that journalism can work in the service of different oligarchic powers that rule in the political system – become especially prescient and significant for this work, as the findings in Chapter 6 provide evidence from the Ukrainian case that support precisely these two points.

Ward (2009, pp. 297-300) identifies four overarching normative roles for the press, which derive from four approaches listed below. He calls these four approaches “normative theories of the press that are currently influencing” our contemporary state of mixed-media ethics in which increasing numbers of non-professional citizen journalists and bloggers engage in journalism. Under a liberal theory approach, journalists form an independent press that informs citizens and acts as a watchdog of government and abuse of power. According to Ward’s interpretive and activist approach, journalism should seek to explain the significance of events and advocate for necessary reforms to society. Under the ethics of community and care approach, journalism should stress the communal good and the social nature of human relations. And, lastly, the approaches of objectivity and social responsibility were “liberal theories attempting to respond to a disillusionment with the liberal hope that an unregulated press would be a responsible educator of citizens on matters of public interest” (Ward 2009, p. 298). Objectivity was a response to the growing influence in the late 1800s and early 1900s of press barons who had turned a mass commercial press into a business of news. It wasn’t until later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that journalism began to face greater scrutiny regarding the role it should play in democratic society.

Social responsibility theory sought to refocus attention on to the neglected concepts of press responsibility and social utility. According to Ward, the theory has won global recognition over the past 50 years, it has also provided a basic vocabulary for new ethical approaches, such as feminist and communitarian theories, and it has offered standards by which media performance can be judged (2009, p. 299). But it was the Hutchins Commission report on the freedom of the press in the United States

that gave social responsibility theory “a clear and popular formulation” (Ward 2009, pp. 298-299), though the core ideas presented in the report were discussed years in advance of its publication.

The commission, an independent inquiry chaired by University of Chicago President Robert Hutchins, was convened in 1942 and paid for by Henry Luce, the publisher of Time, Inc. Luce commissioned the inquiry largely in response to criticisms from various sources that had been leveled against the mainstream press (Christians et. al 2009, p. 33). Namely, that as the press developed and grew throughout the twentieth century it developed a knack for sensationalism and scandal mongering. The political left criticized the press because it had developed monopolistic tendencies and its press magnates seemed to be abusing their power. In response, Luce asked Hutchins to form a commission that would consider the normative role of the press in society. While the press initially and for the most part welcomed the commission, members of the press were highly critical of the final report because it hinted at potential limitations on the press if they could not restrain themselves (Christians et. al 2009, p. 33).

McQuail notes that in a free society the press not only has little obligation to carry out its normative functions, but they also don't like being told how they should do their jobs. “They tend collectively to resent any attempt to prescribe their role in society, whether on the part of governments, special interests, individuals or even media theorists” (McQuail 2005, p. 162). And yet, it is important to note that normative pressures exist and persist not only from academia, but they develop also from the general public, the public as the audience of news, the state and its agencies,

various social and cultural interests in society, and democratic political institutions. “All in all this adds up to an environment of expectation and scrutiny that has considerable cumulative influence” (McQuail 2005, p. 163). Absent from McQuail’s list of the sources of such pressures, however, is the normative beliefs of journalists themselves.

Interestingly enough, this was the paramount finding of the Hutchins Commission final report. The commission did not call for more government regulation or oversight. Rather, the report’s authors said that the best judge of how the press should operate was the press itself. The report did, however, note that the press has a great responsibility to provide full and truthful accounts of the day’s news, alternative views of matters of dispute, a representative view of different groups in society, and it should present and clarify the goals and values of society. “The press must now take on the community’s press objectives as its own objectives. And for the correction of abuses the maxim holds good that self-correction is better than outside correction, so long as self-correction holds out a reasonable and realistic hope, as distinct from lip service to piously framed paper codes” (Commission on Freedom of the Press 1947, pp. 126-127).

Such consideration of the press’s role in society was not limited to the United States alone. In 1947, the Royal Commission on the Press was appointed and paid for by the government of the United Kingdom to examine whether ownership of the country’s press, which at that time was dominated by right-wing ideologies, had grown too concentrated. The commission found that self-correction on the part of the press was the best outcome in their particular situation. It concluded that “democratic

society ... needs a clear and truthful account of events, of their background and causes; a forum for discussion and informed criticism; and a means whereby individuals and groups can express a point of view or advocate a cause” (Royal Commission on the Press 1949, pp. 100-101). The report also did not call for direct government intervention or oversight into the affairs of the press (Christians et. al 2009, p. 9). But it did point out that, just as the U.S. commission had done before it, the press had certain responsibilities to uphold for the benefit of the society in which that press operated.

Not long after the Commission on Freedom of the Press in the United States issued its report, Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm also took up the subject of journalism’s normative role in their book *Four Theories of the Press* (1963). The authors, who sought to answer the question of why the mass media appear in widely different forms and serve different purposes in different countries, offered a typology of four different press systems: authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet Communist. They argued that “the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. Especially, it reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted” (Siebert et. al 1963, pp. 1-2).

The legacy of *Four Theories* in the decades since its publication has been both good and bad. Christians et. al (2009, p. 4) noted that *Four Theories* offered something that had previously been missing in normative theories of journalism and mass communication. The book explicitly analyzed the press’s relationship to society in terms of political values, professional ethics, and intellectual history as well as it

contrasted different paradigms of both press and society. “It provided an easily discussed typology of press-government relationships that was absent at the time in a simplified and memorable form” (Merrill and Nerone 2002, p. 133). On the other hand, critics argued that the book was vague, analytically shallow, that it relied on an outdated canon of political philosophy, flattened out differences between liberal thinkers and gave scarce consideration to the subtleties of press systems in countries with similar types of government. Referring to arguments presented in the book, Merrill and Nerone (2002, p. 135) asked: “Is there really no difference between the Pope and Hitler? Between Plato and Charles I of England? Do Locke and Hobbes really hold diametrically opposed notions of the nature of ‘man’ and ‘the state, or society’? Is there really such a thing as ‘THE authoritarian theory’?” Moreover, Nerone (1995, p. 18) notes that the book didn’t actually offer four theories as its title states. Rather, it has one overarching theory but four typologies of different press systems (one of which – Soviet Communism – no longer exists).

Nevertheless, these various moments of scrutiny over the press’s normative role in democratic society helped bolster the core ideas behind social responsibility theory – that the press has a moral and ethical obligation to consider the overall needs of society when making journalistic decisions in order to benefit the common good, and it should work toward that goal (McCombs et. al 1997, p. 158, Ward 2009, pp. 298-299). Ward (2009, p. 295) views journalism ethics as “practical normative activity that aims to solve problems, integrate values and help humans live rightly, as individuals and as societies,” and he defines journalism ethics as “a species of applied ethics that examines what journalists and news organizations should do, given their

role in society.” McQuail (2005, p. 173-174) echoes this point, saying that the contents of journalism’s different ethical codes provide “a good idea of what it was felt that journalism *ought* to be doing. [Emphasis is McQuail’s.] At least they reveal the values that the media publicly proclaim as guidelines for their work. To that extent they constitute a form of normative theory.”

Journalism ethics is then a subset of normative journalism theory. It arose when our normative journalism theories began to focus on the responsible role the press should play in society, and press ethics is an attempt to apply normative theory to the practice of journalism in society in order to foster responsible journalism. Or, as Ward puts it, “ethical reflection is *normative reason in social practice*” (2009, p. 296). And the reverse is also true: conceptions of what journalism should do – its normative values – delineate the realm of journalism ethics. “What one regards as a question of journalism ethics depends, ultimately, on one’s conception of the primary functions of journalism and the principles that promote those aims” (2009, p. 296). Ward identifies five stages in this subset of normative journalism theory and he offers four contemporary approaches to its study.

First, the invention of ethical discourse for journalism during the seventeenth century. Second, a ‘public ethics’ as the creed for the growing newspaper press, or Fourth Estate, of the Enlightenment public sphere. Third, the liberal theory of the press, during the nineteenth century. Fourth, development *and* criticism of this liberal doctrine across the twentieth century resulting in a professional ethics of objective journalism, bolstered by social responsibility theory; and an alternative ethics for interpretive and activist journalism. Fifth, today’s current

‘mixed media’ ethics which lacks consensus on what principles apply across types of media. These stages are used to explain four approaches: (1) liberal theory, (2) objectivity and social responsibility theory, (3) interpretive theory, and (4) an ethics of community and care (2009, p. 295).

Dramatic changes reshaping journalism and criticisms of contemporary approaches to journalism ethics have also pushed scholars to call for a fundamental re-thinking of the topic. “Journalism ethics needs a richer theoretical base, a more adequate epistemology, and new norms for the multi-platform, global journalism of today and tomorrow” (Ward 2009, p. 295). This call for a significant reexamination of contemporary journalism ethics is echoed by Stepp (1990, pp. 186-201), who questioned the extent to which coverage of news and public affairs by the press in a post-social responsibility age adequately represents the full diversity of opinion and points of view found in a plural society. Various developments in modern media, “coupled with the chronic and continuing problems of access and diversity, strongly suggest that a post-social responsibility era is at hand. They suggest the need for a muscular redefinition of the social contract that takes into account contemporary economic, political, and professional reality and that builds on the social responsibility notion in ways more likely to produce action. At the same time, it remains important that proposed remedies stop short of undermining inherent and enduring strengths of the American press” (Stepp 1990, pp. 193).

That there is a need for our normative theories of the press’s role in democracy to adapt to the needs of a given society is nothing new. If we consider the view offered by Christians et al. (2009, pp. 37-64) and Zelizer (2004, p. 146) that the

historical origins of normative theory begin with Plato and Aristotle, then normative theories are the result of a continuing conversation that has been taking place for more than 2,500 years. And, according to Christians et al., the normative belief that the press has a socially responsible role to play in society only developed in the third of four historical periods. The first is the classical period from 500 BC to 1500 AD, in which theorists were mainly concerned with the truthfulness of public discourse. The second is the early modern period from roughly 1500 to 1800, in which individual freedom in the public sphere was the major concern. The third period, in which social responsibility was the chief concern of normative theorizing, lasted from 1800 to 1970 and was characterized by modern populist democracies. And Christians et al. describe the fourth as a contemporary postmodern period from the 1970s until the present, in which a major concern of normative theory is the participation of citizens in the public sphere and in public debate (Christians et al. 2009, pp. 37-64).

In locating the historical origins of Western normative theory in classical thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle, Christians et al. (2009, p. 37-64) also make a historical point regarding the evolution of normative theory. Namely, such theories change to fit the society in which they are located, and they necessarily depend on the culture of that time and the national adaptations of a cultural era. Moreover, normative theories are necessarily colored by the dominant political philosophy of the era. For example, a libertarian society will construct normative theory in such a way that protections for individual freedom are included in journalistic norms (Christians et al. 2009, pp. 66-67). The work by Christians et al. stresses that normative conceptions of journalism's role in a democratic society are necessarily a function of

that society itself, and of the particular historical circumstances in which journalism in that society developed.

In the case of Ukraine, it is important to stress that journalism developed in a period of Soviet Communism that lasted over 70 years, and it has now spent more than a quarter century developing in a transitional, post-Soviet democratic society heavily influenced by oligarchic control over big business and industry. If we take the point made by Christians et al. above that normative theories of the press necessarily depend on the culture of their time and the national adaptations of a cultural era, then the norms of journalism in Ukraine may not be those that are found in the west, and they may even be different from those found in neighboring countries, such as Russia, on the one hand, and other eastern European countries that continue to navigate the transition to democracy, such as Poland, Hungary, or the Czech Republic, on the other. As Zelizer notes, “emerging democracies develop unique types of media systems whose journalistic conventions reflect the wider context” found within that society (2017, p. 67).

In fact, over the years there have been numerous calls for a reevaluation of normative theorizing that better takes into account contemporary political realities (Habermas 2006, p. 411; Curran 2005, p. 122; Christians et. al 2009, pp. vii-viii and p. xi). In exploring these same normative functions, Gurevitch and Blumler identify the “tensions and disparities between the ostensibly democratic ideals that the mass media are supposed to serve and the communication structures and practices that actually prevail (Gurevitch and Blumler 1990, p. 269-270). Indeed, Scammell and Semetko stress that too much of the work in contemporary media studies addressing

journalism's role in society assumes a singular form of democracy. "In theory there are a variety of models of democracy to choose from, yet one – the classic liberal model – predominates above all and provides the premises and touchstone for virtually all avenues of inquiry. It is curious that classic liberalism, developed over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, should dominate so much thinking about modern media. After all, political theory has largely discarded it as a hopelessly outdated way of accurately describing modern democratic society. Twentieth-century thinkers, pluralists, socialists and elite theorists, in all their diverse forms, present powerful critiques of the continuing relevance of the classic model, either as adequate description of what exists or as the ideal to be pursued, or sometimes both" (Scammell and Semetko 2000, p. xii).

This dissertation responds to calls for a richer theoretical base, a more adequate epistemology, and an exploration of global journalism norms. Ward (2009, p. 295) notes the main problem areas for further inquiry include editorial independence, verification, anonymous sources, the use of graphic or altered images, and norms for new forms of media. This dissertation addresses aspects of these problem areas, particularly by examining the normative beliefs of journalists on topics regarding objectivity, editorial independence, verification of facts, and sensationalism and stereotype in the press in an effort to contribute to a richer theoretical base.

In addition to these problem areas, "the current climate of journalism ethics is one of fundamental disagreement about its nature and purpose" (Ward 2009, p. 301). Abramson offers four additional critiques of traditional journalism ethics that derive

from “the popular debates of the day” (Abramson 1990, pp. 229-268) and Stepp adds that an argument can even be made that “the press commitment to social responsibility, which deepened following Hutchins and became entrenched in the language of journalistic ethics, may stand on increasingly unsteady pillars. In the modern marketplace, journalism becomes more like a conventional enterprise and less like a quasi-public social franchise. It becomes bigger and riskier business, blended increasingly into corporate America and more subject to control by managers schooled in profit making than by editors passionate for fierce journalism” (Stepp 1990, p. 193).

Among additional critiques of traditional journalism ethics most relevant to this work, one array comes from “a range of academic and critical perspectives from disciplines external to journalism and journalism ethics – political science, sociology, and culture and communication studies” (Ward 2009, p. 301). Such works critically examine the relationship between ethical discourse and, among other topics, post-modern skepticism about truth and objectivity, which, according to Ward, were the twin pillars on which professional journalism ethics was built. “The adherence to truth and objectivity was part of an Enlightenment belief in a rational public – that humans would rationally seek and discern truth from falsehood, right from wrong, if they were provided with the facts, or objectively presented information” (Ward 2009, p. 301).

However, as was discussed in the preface of this work, “the pillars of truth and objectivity show serious wear and tear” according to the work of post-Modern scholars (Ward 2009, p. 301). This has led to the decline of the traditional doctrine of

news objectivity “to the point where it is, today, a spent ethical force” (Ward 2009, p. 302). Ward, therefore, calls for a reform of objectivity into a “testing of journalistic articles, regarded as interpretations, by a set of agreed-upon criteria appropriate to a given domain” (Ward 2009, p. 302). It is important to stress that neither journalism ethics scholars nor pragmatist philosophers such as Rorty say we should dispense with truth and objectivity entirely. Ward, in particular, notes the danger of taking this vein of thinking too far, arguing that “some theorists may ... attack notions of truth and objectivity to the point where they undermine their own claims to truth” (Ward 2009, p. 304).

While Schiller’s *Objectivity and the News* (1981) and Schudson’s *Discovering the News* (1978) are regarded as two classic works on journalistic objectivity, Knowlton and Freeman’s *Fair and Balanced* (2005) provides an updated examination of the concept. In the introduction to the book – edited by Knowlton and Freeman, with chapter-length contributions from 17 scholars who trace the history of journalistic objectivity from the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the new millennium – Knowlton (p. 3) points out that the concept of objectivity in journalism – both its historical origins and its application in contemporary practice – continues to generate active debate. “Objectivity is one of the most troubling yet most fascinating concepts in journalism. Most professionals hold to it (by that name or some other) at least as an ideal to strive for, while critics treat a belief in objectivity with the condescension they would have for an adult who swears by the tooth fairy – as generally harmless enough unless taken to extremes, but so far beyond the pale as to make serious

discussion a laughable waste of time. When bright and intellectually honest people disagree so profoundly, a wealth of ignorance is often in the way. And so it is here.”

Nearly all contemporary writers and scholars who take up the topic seem to agree that a shift has taken place in how objectivity is now understood and applied in journalism. The shift in understanding has meant moving away from a belief that journalists can be completely neutral and unbiased in their work, and instead scholars have increasingly adopted fairness as a possible addition to objectivity. “In contemporary American journalism, scholars, practitioners and readers may agree on little else, but there is a widespread belief that what can be called old-school or simplistic objectivity – that commitment to an uncritical recitation of official facts – is not enough to provide the citizenry with what it needs to know to govern itself. Journalism ‘that comes from somewhere and stands for something’ seems to hold more promise – the idea that journalistic values, grounded in Enlightenment ideology, do support pointing out heroes and villains when the evidence is clear and convincing. The best of such journalism, however, still cleaves to a central tenant of objectivity: to present news and information in a context that is as fair and free of bias as thorough reporting can make it” (Knowlton 2005, p. 5). Indeed, this is a sentiment echoed among many scholars who address the topic – there is an acceptance that journalists as human beings can never truly be objective, but they can and should strive for balance, fairness, and even transparency (Mindich 1998, pp. 6-10, pp. 138-143; Abramson 1990, pp. 251-255; Maras 2013, Chapters 2-8).

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014, p. 55) provide a helpful clarification of traditional journalistic objectivity, arguing that our contemporary understanding of

the term is “mostly muddled and confused.” In an effort to recapture the concept’s original meaning, the authors point out that “objectivity was not meant to suggest that journalists were without bias. To the contrary, precisely because journalists could never be objective, their methods had to be. In the recognition that everyone is biased, in other words, the news, like science, should flow from a process for reporting that is defensible, rigorous, and transparent ...” (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2014, p. 10) The concept originally migrated from social science to journalism early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “It was not meant to imply that journalists were free of bias. Quite the contrary,” the authors note (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2014, p. 101). In the original understanding of the concept, only the methods used by journalists – not the journalists themselves – could attempt to be objective (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2014, p. 103)

Ward (2015) offers an updated, contemporary look at the concept, exploring objectivity’s historical origins, philosophical underpinnings, and development over the past decade, which has been affected by the emergence of an ethics for digital and global journalism. And he notably presents a theory of pragmatic objectivity, which offers a way forward for journalism and journalists on objectivity that acknowledges both the impossibility of reporters being truly objective, but also does not completely discard the notion of an objective truth. This theory of pragmatic objectivity is also notably consonant with the perspective of truth and reason presented by Richard Rorty in the section that follows. Ward gives three reasons why traditional objectivity in journalism can be usefully reconceived as a species of pragmatic objectivity: “First, the core features of pragmatic inquiry appear in objective journalism. Second,

we can reinterpret current procedures for testing the objectivity of reports as procedures of pragmatic objectivity without doing too much violence to existing concepts. Third, pragmatic objectivity is an attractive conceptual option for journalism, because it avoids the problems of traditional objectivity while continuing to express the best practices of responsible journalism.” This view stresses that transparency has a role to play in journalism’s claims to objective truth:

Pragmatic objectivity is the epistemic evaluation of truth-seeking inquiry in journalism. It guides the difficult search for verified truths, and it restrains partiality. Journalists and their reports are objective to the degree that they satisfy two levels of objectivity. On the first level, reports must satisfy, to some tolerable degree, the requirements of objectivity in general. That is, reports must be constructed by an objective stance in accordance with three types of generic standards – empirical standards, coherence standards, and standards of rational debate. On the second level, reports must satisfy, to some tolerable degree, the standards and rules specific to journalism. The same applies when we consider the objectivity of journalists and news organizations. Journalists are objective to the degree that they adopt the objective stance and adhere to the two levels of objective standards in composing their stories (Ward 2015, p. 315).

One obvious problem of acknowledging that complete objectivity is not possible – of acknowledging subjectivity – is that doing so can open the door for people who don’t like a certain truth to more easily claim a version of truth that pleases them. Thus, a core problem for journalists is finding an appropriate balance between acknowledging that subjectivity does play a role in their work while

retaining a conception of truth capable of binding society to a shared foundation. Ward's theory of pragmatic objectivity tries to accomplish this goal by stressing the importance of independently verifiable, factual information. "Pragmatic objectivity does not diminish the role of gathering and verifying facts. It recognizes, for instance, the importance of facts to investigative journalists in their efforts to expose corruption. Facts provide a vital test of interpretations, from the simplest of news reports to the most complex stories about foreign affairs. But pragmatic objectivity regards the appeal to facts as only one test of objectivity. Facts are a small part of our corpus of knowledge. Nevertheless they anchor our conceptual systems in experience. They force interpretations to face the test of an external world" (pp. 318-319).

Contemporary Ukraine is a society in which journalists are actively debating whether and to what extent the press should be objective and give voice to different conceptions of truth in the face of a constant flood of propaganda, misinformation and fake news from various pro-Russian sources. On the one hand, journalists in Ukraine may aspire to uphold Western norms and they may strive to report objectively. But, on the other hand, they may also take the position described in the literature above: false equivalency should not be conflated with objectivity. When journalists see Russian troops on the ground in Eastern Ukraine, they may believe it is their job to describe the truth as they see it (that Russian troops are in the country), and not give equal voice to Russian officials who say there are no Russian troops on the ground in Ukraine. This is consonant with Ward's view of a pragmatic journalistic objectivity. Comparing and contrasting journalists' beliefs regarding the roles that objectivity and truth play in Ukraine today against existing normative theories of journalism's role in

democratic society – and, specifically, against the normative concepts of truth and objectivity – would help address calls for a richer theoretical foundation for journalism ethics.

Additional concerns regarding journalism ethics as normative practice arise from critical theories of the media. The common starting point for these various critical approaches is “a disenchantment with Western notions of rationality, universality, objective knowledge and progress” (Ward 2009, p. 303). For example, post-colonial studies share with post-modernists and global media ethicists an attempt to resist imposing a hegemonic system of Western ideas and values on non-Western cultures. “For some writers, the attempt to speak about universal values is suspect, since it suggests an ‘essentialism’ that denies ‘difference’” (Ward 2009, p. 303). Such perspectives regarding difference and a critical approach to Western notions of rationality, universality, and objective knowledge are also found in pragmatist philosophy broadly, and, as will be discussed in detail below, in the work of Rorty specifically. The point is made here in order to stress that a commonality exists between journalism ethics and normative journalism theory, on the one hand, and pragmatism – in this case, the pragmatist philosophy of Rorty – on the other.

Moreover, not only does journalism have a normative responsibility to provide a voice that highlights the different views and beliefs in plural society, but building community is even a central value of journalism (Elliot and Ozar 2010, p. 15). Journalists can help do this work of community building through human interest stories and stories of people who are suffering misfortune. These stories work to develop empathy in people who might otherwise not see one another as bound

together in the same community. Rorty offers precisely this same solution to the problem of division in plural society (this proposed solution is detailed in the following section of this work). The people who read such human interest stories or stories of others who are suffering may not be able to do anything to help people dealing with misfortune in their society. “But eliciting empathy, like eliciting admiration or pride in others’ achievements, can enhance the bond that joins people together as a society. It is very possible, as every journalist knows, to report such stories in a fashion that is maudlin or sensational or merely ego-boosting and voyeuristic, and that therefore puts readers off rather than engaging them. But properly reported, human interest stories of this sort are examples of reporting that can build community and, by doing so, fulfill one of the central values of journalism” (Elliott and Ozar 2010, p. 16).

Ward also addresses this topic. He notes that an implication of applying critical theory to journalism ethics is a normative responsibility for the press to better represent “others” in society, “since mis-representation can spark wars, demean other cultures and support unjust social structures” (Ward 2009, p. 303). This normative role in which journalists should work to represent different voices and positions in society parallels the argument presented by Rorty as a solution to the problem of political liberalism at the heart of this work. Fulfilling this normative goal would require journalism education to supplement the traditional emphasis on reporting and fact gathering with a more ethnographic approach focused on international and cultural knowledge (Alia 2004, pp. 22-33). As Ward (2009) notes, “the imperative to ‘seek the truth and report’ is transformed from a stenography of fact to an informed

interpretation of the place that events have within a larger cultural and global context” (p. 303). Once again, Rorty’s work echoes this call for journalism to adopt a more ethnographic, descriptive, and representative approach.

It is the press’s normative role as a representative of the different positions and perspectives in a liberal democratic society that is the central focus of this dissertation. But as this work examines the importance Ukrainian journalists place on this normative goal, it also considers both the priority they give to other established normative goals and whether they voice other normative beliefs that may be culturally unique to Ukraine. The hypothesis in this work contends that, as the Internet has radically impacted the business of contemporary journalism, it has also affected the priority journalists place on the different normative roles described by various sources above. It contends that priority is given to those roles that help journalists attract a bigger audience, generate larger Internet click rates, and make money, while journalists deprioritize those roles which do not help them succeed in this new business environment. It further contends that this in effect pushes journalists to largely sensationalize and simplify news stories, which in turn polarizes the audience and encourages citizens to view the world in overly simplistic, dichotomous terms (black versus white, red state versus blue state, liberal versus conservative, etc.).

Among the various normative roles of the press in democratic society described above, one role stands out as inherently pragmatic (the others can be performed pragmatically, but are not themselves fundamentally so): journalism should give voice to the voiceless, it should allow for different views and voices to be heard, and it should provide some representative picture of the various perspectives in

society. Curran points out that, in order to benefit society and be considered democratic, a truly pluralist media system (one that lives up to our normative journalistic conceptions) would give voice to all of the different groups in society; it would allow in all of the different social groups that want to participate in the daily news discourse, and it would provide perspectives on the day's news that aim to reflect the plurality of political positions and beliefs that exist in society (Curran 2005, p. 137).

This work focuses on those aspects of normative journalism theory that suggest the press should play a more pragmatic role in society. It examines whether journalists do in fact acknowledge a normative responsibility to represent the range of different voices in society, to present people and social groups that make up society in more than simple, dichotomous, and sensational terms. In short, it examines whether reporters express a normative journalistic pragmatism.

### Rorty and Solidarity in Plural Society

The core problem at the heart of this work regards the tension inherent in any plural, liberal democratic society comprised of free and equal citizens with different moral, philosophical or religious beliefs, and different conceptions of what constitutes truth. John Rawls noted that deeply held, divergent beliefs among citizens in a plural democratic society could eventually clash, and under certain circumstances different accounts of truth might push people to resolve political and social differences through violent means.

As a pragmatist philosopher, Rorty argued that people are more likely to resort to violence when they see their political rivals as different from themselves, as

somehow the “other.” Rorty’s solution involved fostering a society with a “we-consciousness,” a society capable of expanding its definition of who constitutes “we” to include larger parts of society. In seeing our heated political rivals as members of a collective we-consciousness – as opposed to seeing rivals as others who can and should suffer – Rorty believed cruelty and violence would be diminished, thereby easing the tension described by Rawls at the outset of this work. Rorty maintained that the novel and the journalistic story could help achieve this goal (1989, p. xvi).

Rorty’s response to Rawls’s problem – his desire to diminish the potential for violence and acts of cruelty toward one another – involves acknowledging our solidarity and decreasing the degree to which we see members of our society as “other.” This is not easily done if one accepts that our moral, philosophical, and religious beliefs are what help shape our conception of individuals as either “one of us” or “other.” That is to say, this is an extremely difficult task if we believe that morality bores down to essence, that it is what separates “us” from “them.” Rorty offers as an example the argument made by Wilfrid Sellars that morality is a matter of what Sellars (1968, Chapters 6-7) calls “we-intentions,” that the core meaning of an “immoral action” is “the sort of thing *we* don’t do.” Or, as Rorty puts it, “an immoral action is, on this account, the sort of thing which, if done at all, is done only by animals, or by people of other families, tribes, cultures, or historical epochs. If done by one of us, or if done repeatedly by one of us, that person ceases to be one of us. She becomes an outcast, someone who doesn’t speak our language, even though she may once have appeared to do so” (1989, pp. 59-60). Such a characterization, according to Rorty, diminishes the humanity of people who aren’t like us by

portraying them as less human, and thus justifying toward them – toward “others” – acts of cruelty, suffering, or violence.

One way to solve this problem is to extend our conception of “we” to include more people, to highlight our “shared humanity,” to claim that we have a moral obligation to feel a sense of solidarity with all other human beings. But Rorty pointedly denies that such a claim has more force than appeals to smaller, more parochial claims: “a ‘Greek like ourselves’ (as opposed to a barbarian), or a ‘fellow Catholic’ (as opposed to a Protestant, a Jew, or an atheist)” (1989, p. 190). He acknowledges that we might talk about solidarity with “one of us human beings” as among other reasons why we would help a suffering individual, but this appeal to a shared humanity is simply weaker than narrower appeals, and Rorty himself is skeptical that such an appeal to our shared humanity is effective. “Our sense of solidarity is strongest when those with whom solidarity is expressed are thought of as ‘one of us,’ where ‘us’ means something smaller and more local than the human race. That is why ‘because she is a human being’ is a weak, unconvincing explanation of a generous action” (Rorty 1989, p. 191).

Following this path of logic seems unproductive: appeals to a common humanity are weak, while a more forceful appeal to a narrower conception of an individual as “one of us” ignores the problem altogether (the original problem is how we might *extend* solidarity to someone we believe is unlike us). Rorty believes he has a solution to the problem. This potential solution involves two elements. First, he wants to stress that life does not work in simple binaries and people are not either one type or another, such as Republican or Democrat. There are countless characteristics

and beliefs that make us who we are, and we can therefore automatically choose which of our similarities and differences we regard as most salient. In thinking this way and in seeing that we have a choice to focus on what unites us and not what separates us, we might begin to see ourselves as not so different from those people we regard as “other.” That this is a matter of choice is an important distinction for Rorty and for pragmatist thinkers in general: “My position entails that feelings of solidarity are necessarily a matter of which similarities and dissimilarities strike us as salient, and that such salience is a function of a historically contingent final vocabulary” (Rorty 1989, p. 192). A historically contingent final vocabulary is simply Rorty’s way of saying that the particular languages and stories we use to describe our world are nothing more than chance evolutions, and therefore no particular language (be it Christian, Jewish, Kantian, Freudian, etc.) or description of reality is better suited to describe our world than another or is more connected to “the Truth” than another. But some languages, stories, or descriptions of reality have simply been historically more useful at solving particular problems, and so we continue to use them. Through the use of more empathetic stories (in novels, ethnographies, and in journalism), Rorty wants to place more salience on those descriptions of our world that show how much we suffer. This focus on providing detailed descriptions of the pain and suffering of human beings is the second element of Rorty’s potential solution to the problem of political liberalism. He believes that empathy with the plight and suffering of others would help us see a commonality:

The view I am offering says that there is such a thing as moral progress, and that this progress is indeed in the direction of greater human solidarity. But that solidarity is not thought of as recognition of a core

self, the human essence, in all human beings. Rather, it is thought of as the ability to see more and more traditional differences (of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation – the ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of ‘us.’ That is why I said ... that detailed descriptions of particular varieties of pain and humiliation (in, e.g., novels or ethnographies), rather than philosophical or religious treatises, were the modern intellectual’s principal contributions to moral progress (Rorty 1989, p. 192).

Central to Rorty’s work and to that of nearly all pragmatist thinkers is an argument that our world is much richer and complex than simple dichotomies. Seeing our world in various shades of gray helps us also see that people are not merely either/or, Republican or Democrat, one of us or somehow other. Stressing this view allows Rorty to argue that a potential solution to the problem of difference in a liberal democratic society is a matter of salience and empathy. Rorty addressed this problem in his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, which sought to deal with the problem of difference, and to do so while acknowledging the dilemma of solving this problem in a society that gives its citizens the space to pursue their own private perfections, desires, and beliefs.

*Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* describes a figure Rorty calls the “liberal ironist.” An ironist is a “person who faces up to the contingency of his or her own most central beliefs and desires.” An ironist, in Rorty’s view, is merely someone who understands the contingency of life. Rorty takes his definition of a liberal from Judith Shklar, “who says that liberals are the people who think that cruelty is the worst thing

we do” (Rorty 1989, p. xv). He notes that while ironist philosophy has not done, and will not do, much for freedom and equality, certain forms of literature, as well as ethnography and journalism, do a lot: “The language the victims once used is not working anymore, and they are suffering too much to put new words together. So the job of putting their situation into language is going to have to be done for them by somebody else. The liberal novelist, poet, or journalist is good at that. The liberal theorist is usually not” (Rorty 1989, p. 94). But more than that, Rorty believes a solution to the problem of difference and discord in society is a matter of social construction, and such a task is best carried out by those disciplines that specialize in thick descriptions of our private and idiosyncratic lives. Such thick description gives us the material we need to see ourselves as more similar to one another than we are different. Metaphysics, Rorty argued, cannot do this job – because solidarity is not based on finding a hidden common essence among people; social solidarity is built by choice:

The metaphysician’s association of theory with social hope and of literature with private perfection is, in an ironist liberal culture, reversed. Within a liberal metaphysical culture the disciplines which were charged with penetrating behind the many private appearances to the one general common reality – theology, science, philosophy – were the ones which were expected to bind human beings together, and thus to help eliminate cruelty. Within an ironist culture, by contrast, it is the disciplines which specialize in thick description of the private and idiosyncratic which are assigned this job. In particular, novels and ethnographies which sensitize one to the pain of those who do not speak our language must do the job

which demonstrations of a common human nature were supposed to do.

Solidarity has to be constructed out of little pieces, rather than found already waiting, in the form of an ur-language which all of us recognize when we hear it (Rorty 1989, p. 94).

Rorty's philosophical arguments have faced various criticisms (Brandom 2000; Saatkamp 1995; Festenstein and Thompson 2001; Melkonian 1999; and Malachowski 2002, Chapter 6; Calder 2007; among others). Although some saw Rorty as "one of the most original and important philosophers writing today"<sup>9</sup> (Brandom 2000, p. ix), his writing has also been the subject of intense scrutiny and criticism. Among his most famous critics was Jürgen Habermas, with whom he held a long-standing debate regarding the place of reason, rationality, and the idea of universal validity in society.

Habermas argued that claims of truth, and therefore universal validity, are submitted to others for the purpose of discursively testing those claims. In submitting these individual claims to public discourse, Habermas sought to resolve the problem of individual subjectivity by relating it to what he called "linguistically established intersubjectivity," thereby developing truth claims that have a developed universal validity (1984, p. 397). That is to say that the actual act of communication itself would help link individuals and their beliefs to each other, and to the larger society:

On this model, participants actualize on any given occasion some of the background convictions drawn from the cultural stock of knowledge; the process of reaching understanding serves the negotiation of common situation definitions, and these must in turn meet the critical conditions

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<sup>9</sup> Rorty died on June 8, 2007.

of an agreement accepted as reasonable. Cultural knowledge, insofar as it flows into situational definitions, is thus exposed to a test: it has to prove itself ‘against the world,’ that is, against the facts, norms, experiences (Habermas 1989, p. 139).

Rorty, however, argued that such differences with Habermas were “merely philosophical” (Rorty 1989, p. 67). The effort made by Habermas in his “Theory of Communicative Action” to update rationalism, and his substitution of communicative reason for subject-centered reason was simply another way (Rorty called it a “misleading way”) of making the same point that he (Rorty) had already made: “A liberal society is one which is content to call ‘true’ (or ‘right’ or ‘just’) whatever the outcome of undistorted communication happens to be, whatever view wins in a free and open encounter” (Rorty 1989, p.67). What’s more, Rorty’s belief in the contingency of language made him suspicious of Habermas’s claim of universal validity; he argued that people would do better to live with plurality and stop asking for universal validity (Rorty 1989, p. 67).

Habermas was not the only critic of Rorty’s who wanted a more social, shared conception of truth. Donald Davidson argued that “a notion of truth more robust than Rorty will admit is required to make sense of our interpretations of others as engaged in *meaningful* discourse.” This is arguing that we need a stronger conception of truth as a glue to bind society together in meaningful discourse. Such criticisms were not limited to Davidson. Brandom’s *Rorty and His Critics* includes critical examinations of Rorty’s work by a dozen philosophers, among them Habermas, Davidson, Hilary Putnam, Daniel Dennett, and Akeel Bilgrami (Brandom 2000).

Yet another standard criticism of Rorty's pragmatist thinking is that such a philosophy abandons traditional standards of objectivity, truth, and rationality (central ideas in the journalistic profession), which "opens the way for an educational agenda one of whose primary purposes is to achieve social and political transformation" (Searle 1993, p. 72). Many pragmatists would respond that such criticisms of abandoning traditional standards of objectivity, truth, and rationality only confirm what the pragmatist has always claimed: what people believe to be true is just what they think it is good for them to think is true. Menand makes exactly this point:

The critic who argues from the consequences of accepting the pragmatist account of the way we think – the critic who warns that dumping those other accounts over a cliff will lead to despair, war, illiberalism, or political correctness – has (in the pragmatist's view) already conceded the key point, which is that every account of the way people think is, at bottom, a support for those human goods the person making the account believes to be important (Menand 1997, p. xiii).

It is this point – pragmatism as an account of how people think in a plural society – that raises a question regarding the role of truth (or of facts, more formal scientific facts, the objective journalistic report, or, more broadly, of reason and rationality) in journalism and, subsequently, in how normative theories of the press theorize that people should think. Pragmatist thinkers were and still are concerned about the ramifications of a liberal democratic society in which individuals don't think in a way that our normative journalism and political theories say they should think. They argue that people typically develop various moral, philosophical or

religious beliefs and information that contradicts those beliefs is discarded, rather than used to change deeply entrenched worldviews.

Current normative journalism theories, however, place much greater emphasis on individual reason and rationality. Pragmatist thinkers such as Rorty let go of the idea of a metaphysical truth. They argue that, when individuals hold deep convictions to opposing “truths,” and when political decisions must be made that bring these different versions of truth into conflict, the belief that one group of individuals has some greater connection to or understanding of the “Truth” can push society toward violent conflict. Rorty wanted to keep plural, liberal democratic society, but he wanted to find a way in which society could resolve political differences nonviolently and without coercion, oppression, or cruelty.

As Cornel West points out, though pragmatist thinkers represent a diverse and heterogeneous tradition (West 1989, p. 5), nearly all pragmatists reject the idea that the purpose of thought is to accurately describe a single reality. They believe that the question of whether there is such a thing as a single, overarching metaphysical truth in the world that can and should be described (or fought over) has not been helpful. They want to drop altogether the question of whether there is such a thing as “Truth,” and instead focus on using thought as a tool to predict, act, or solve actual problems (Menand 2001).

This idea of a singular “Truth” out there in the world waiting for discovery derives from a question posed by Plato and the ancient Greeks, who wanted to understand the metaphysical essence of a thing. What makes a chair a chair, for example, and what is a chair’s true essence? What does it mean to be a horse, or an

elephant? Philosophers had long taken up such questions in an attempt to find a convincing answer because such an answer might say something useful about metaphysical truth. Pragmatists like William James argued that such questions were misguided and, moreover, not particularly helpful. James and the pragmatists thought it would be better if we stopped looking for the metaphysical essence of an object, such as a chair, and if we instead considered all of the different uses to which a chair may be put. That is what makes a chair a chair, or a horse a horse. In a lecture in Berkeley, California, in 1899, which became the basis for his 1907 book *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, James argued that “to attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what effects of a conceivably practical kind the object may involve – what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, then, is for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all” (Richardson 2010, p. 187). It was this same principle, James said, that we could apply to beliefs. What makes a particular belief true is simply that holding such a belief has practical use in our lives – that holding the belief can help us do or accomplish some thing.

Considering a conception of truth from a pragmatist’s viewpoint – that truth is not defined by the essence of a thing, but rather by its various uses – also helps us explain to a large extent why the concept of “Truth” in contemporary society has been undermined not only in Ukraine, but in the United States as well. This is perhaps one of the most dangerous results of adopting either implicitly or explicitly the pragmatist’s view of truth – doing so throws open a world in which those things we

call true and what constitutes a truth are now broader than they once were, and therefore more easily disputed, fought over, and tossed aside. If we move from truth as singular essence to truth as multiple uses, then we broaden the scope of things we call true, and we make it easier to open for debate and fight over different (or alternative) views of truth – what in journalism a few years back came to be called alternative facts, and which now appears to have morphed into the phenomenon in which people label information that contradicts their established worldviews with the moniker “fake news.” This movement from singular essence to various uses makes it much easier for a deeply divided public to cherry pick truth, accepting those uses of truth that suit their purposes while discarding those which do not. This creates an obvious problem for society and for journalism. If we open the door to a broader view of truth as all of the different ways in which a truth can be used, then we also open the door to an eroding of a singular foundation on which reason and rational public discourse have been built. Pragmatists would likely argue that those foundations were never as solid as we once thought they were, and that the concept of a singular truth has not been particularly helpful to historically marginalized political, racial, or social segments of democratic societies which claimed to provide freedom and equality to all of its members.

Pragmatists such as Rorty believed that by telling the story of “other” people – by explaining through detailed description the pain and suffering they endure, by providing them a voice – we could understand why “other” people believe what they do (even if we choose not to accept their beliefs). But more than that, such detailed description of who these people are might allow us to see that we share more in

common with people we once perceived as simply somehow other. Such detailed descriptions move beyond presenting people as stereotypes and simple dichotomies that break the world cleanly into ‘us’ and ‘the other.’

This dissertation asks whether journalists in Ukraine believe they should represent the different minority groups in their society. The first chapter of this work pointed out that ethnic Russians make up a significant minority of the population in Ukraine. According to the country’s most recent state census data, out of a total population of 48.5 million people, roughly 8 million were ethnic Russians.<sup>10</sup> But there are other minority groups as well. Belarusians, Moldovans, and Crimean Tatars each numbered about a quarter million people. There were roughly 150,000 Hungarians, Romanians, and Poles, roughly 105,000 Jews, and about 50,000 Romani. In terms of religion, a survey conducted in 2016 by the Razumkov Center in Ukraine found that 70 percent of Ukraine’s population declared a belief in a religion, while roughly 6 percent said they were agnostic, and 3 percent said they were atheist. Of the total population in Ukraine, some 82 percent are Christians. Of that group, roughly 65 percent were Orthodox. Islam (one percent), Judaism (0.2 percent), and Hinduism (0.2 percent) are also practiced in Ukraine.<sup>11</sup>

It is from Rorty’s theoretical vantage point that the press should represent these different minority perspectives and beliefs that this work considers journalists’ conceptions of their normative roles in democratic society. When asked to discuss their conceptions of the role journalism should play in democratic society, this work

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<sup>10</sup> Accessed online on April 23, 2018, at <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/>.

<sup>11</sup> Accessed online on June 9, 2018, at [http://old.razumkov.org.ua/upload/Religiya\\_200516\\_A4.compressed.pdf](http://old.razumkov.org.ua/upload/Religiya_200516_A4.compressed.pdf).

aims to understand whether journalists will at any point talk about the goal of journalism in terms similar to Rorty's ideal of providing detailed descriptions of the varieties of pain and humiliation found in a particular society. That is to say, should journalism aim to represent the myriad perspectives of a plural, liberal democratic society? Should it be a voice for the voiceless, and should it be a voice that aims to represent the different positions found in its society?

### Journalists' Conceptions of Their Normative Responsibilities

John W. C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski, and William W. Bowman are credited with conducting the first comprehensive national study of news workers in the United States (Weaver et al. 2007, p. vii). Their research, which was conducted in 1971 and published in 1976 as the book *The News People*, “produced baseline information about U.S. journalists’ backgrounds, education and training, careers, working patterns, and attitudes about their jobs, their roles, and their responsibilities” (Weaver et al. 2007, p. vii). This work kicked off a series of similar comprehensive, periodic studies of journalists in the United States. Those studies were published in the following books: *The American Journalist* (Weaver and Wilhoit 1986), *The American Journalist in the 1990s* (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996), *The American Journalist in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Weaver et al. 2007), and *The American Journalist in the Digital Age* (Willnat et al. 2017). The later offered a half-century perspective “on the vital questions and characteristics” of the profession in the United States (Willnat et al. 2017, p. xiv). Similar studies were also done on a global scale, and the results published in two books: *The Global Journalist* (Weaver and Wu 1998), and *The Global Journalist in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Weaver and Willnat 2012). Both series of

studies – the American and the global – provide a wealth of information about journalists and their beliefs, though their data does not directly address the core research questions at the heart of this work.

In summarizing the focus of the American studies, Willnat et al. (2017, p. xviii) wrote the following: “As in the earlier books, our chief concerns in this book are with changes in the backgrounds and education of those working in U.S. news media; their working conditions and jobs, including the use and impact of new technologies; and their views concerning their roles and ethical values. A new concern in this book is with the attacks on journalism by current President Donald Trump and his administration, and how journalists’ beliefs and attitudes are related to such attacks.”

Each of the books on U.S. journalists includes a chapter on “professionalism: roles, values, and ethics,” and within each chapter is a section titled “journalistic role conceptions.” Since the first study in 1971, American journalists’ conceptions of their roles “have been roughly similar over the years,” the authors point out in the most recent work (Willnat et al. 2017, p. 177). Although the national samples of journalists “evaluated the importance of 15 role conceptions, ranging from investigating government claims to pointing to possible solutions to societal problems” (Willnat et al. 2017, p. 177), not a single one of those role conceptions included anything that resembles the normative goal of representing the different beliefs and perspectives in society or being a voice for the voiceless. The research found that, throughout the 50-year span of the five studies, the four most important roles for U.S. journalists were investigating government claims, getting information to the public quickly, avoiding

stories with unverified content, and providing analysis of complex problems (Willnat et al. 2017, p. 178). This most recent work was based on interviews conducted with nearly 1,100 U.S. journalists in the fall of 2013.

The global research by Weaver and Willnat (2012) published in the book *The Global Journalist in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* provides a large-scale assessment of the demographics, education, socialization, professional attitudes, and working conditions of journalists in 31 countries around the world (representing the perspectives of more than 29,000 journalists). Among other findings, the authors conclude that there is too much disagreement on professional norms and values to claim an emergence of “universal occupational standards” in journalism (Weaver and Willnat 2012, p. 538). The authors note that, “it is clear that there are strong national differences that override any universal professional norms or values of journalism around the world, except in the case of revealing confidential sources ...” (Weaver and Willnat 2012, p. 540). Notably relevant for this research, *The Global Journalist in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* did not study journalists in Ukraine, though it did conduct research on journalists in Poland, Russia, and Slovenia. The research on those three countries did not ask journalists about their role conceptions.

However, there has been useful research done on the professional role perceptions of Ukrainian reporters. Although not as extensive as the work described above, Budivska and Orlova (2017) conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 14 Ukrainian journalists in the aftermath of the 2014-2015 Euromaidan revolution. The research sought to “identify journalists’ perceptions of their professional roles and the reasoning behind journalists’ involvement (or purposeful

non-involvement) in activist actions during and after the Euromaidan” (Budivska and Orlova 2017, p. 146). The researchers specifically interviewed Ukrainian journalists’ about their normative roles in the wake of the revolution, as the extreme nature of the event made it difficult for reporters in the country to remain objective and neutral. In fact, “the Euromaidan protests set a benchmark for many journalists that was distinct from, if not disruptive of, their profession’s routines. Most said they participated in the Euromaidan both as journalists and as ordinary citizens” (Budivska and Orlova 2017, p. 146). Journalists also said that the speed with which the revolution unfolded left them with virtually no time to reflect on the question of whether they should remain neutral or whether they should actively take part in the protests, and so journalists effectively tried to do both. The authors pointed out that the decision to take part in the protests was “generally stronger among journalists who had less solid views about their profession and its normative foundations than those who held firm views” (Budivska and Orlova 2017, p. 147). The majority of the journalists interviewed said that their primary function is to inform society, while some mentioned the media’s role as a watchdog and as an educator of the public (Budivska and Orlova 2017, p. 151). The researchers did conclude that journalists in Ukraine are polarized on the question of whether they should remain neutral and objective (Budivska and Orlova 2017, p. 152). There was no mention in the paper of journalism’s role as a representative voice for the spectrum of beliefs and positions in society.

Grynko (2012) explored the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists on the topic of transparency in the media and the practice in the country of reporters and

editors taking money from news sources to cover a story a certain way. Journalists in Ukraine said that a lack of independence on both individual and organizational levels was a significant problem for the press in the country. In conducting three focus groups with a total of 18 journalists and editors, Grynko found that the practice of paying for news coverage was still a problem in Ukraine. The journalists who took part in the focus groups said that the practice – known in Ukrainian as “dzynsa” [roughly translated: to be in the back pocket of someone’s jeans] – happens in two ways: when news sources pay editors for favorable coverage (the editor then assigns the story to a journalist), and when a news source pays a journalist directly to cover a topic (Grynko 2012, p. 267). While some of the journalists who took part in the focus groups acknowledged that accepting cash for coverage was unprofessional and unethical, others justified the practice by pointing out that reporters in Ukraine are paid very little. Journalists also said that corruption is normal in Ukraine, and “it is hard to survive without accepting bribes” (Grynko 2012, p. 267). This work also did not address the press’s role of representing different perspectives in Ukrainian society.

On the topic of objectivity among post-Soviet journalists, Mickiewicz noted that some reporters adopted subjectivity in order to provide a truthful picture of events. “For countries shedding an authoritarian past, in contrast to longtime democracies, objectivity in news reporting may be understood differently. Subjectively reported news was for many the first bold step toward accurate coverage and an alternate meaning to the state-dominated message” (Mickiewicz 1998, p. 52), meaning that journalists at that time took the step of subjectively calling out

authoritarian propaganda. Journalists in Ukraine have faced not only years of Soviet control, but control by oligarchic media owners since independence in 1991, and with the outbreak of war in Eastern Ukraine journalists face the question of whether they should be objective in how they report on their own country's army and the pro-Russian occupation forces. The findings by Mickiewicz above regarding subjectivity are important to keep in mind when looking at the findings in this dissertation research.

More recent work on ideology was conducted by Hearn-Branaman (2014), who examined data collected in interviews with 20 U.S. and U.K.-based political reporters in the summer of 2010. This work found that two major concepts of ideology operate simultaneously within journalistic practice: "professional norms and socialization being the indirect 'control' that filters out non-compliant journalists, and fetishistic disavowal as the way that they can rationally critique the system that they work for while still doing their job" (Hearn-Branaman 2014, p. 33). Such fetishistic disavowal is defined as the ability to "actively admit the limitations of one's ideology as long as one still follows it" (Hearn-Branaman 2014, p. 21). The work concludes that both are needed to maintain the stability of the ideology of journalistic professionalism. While this work did explore journalists' conceptions of their professional ideology, it did not address their beliefs regarding the roles they should play in providing a voice for the broad spectrum of beliefs and perspectives found in their societies.

Professional ideology can be defined "as a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular group, including – but not limited to – the general process of the production

of meanings and ideas (within that group)” (Deuze 2005, p. 445). Deuze explored “the concepts, values and elements said to be part of journalism’s ideology in the available literature,” and found “five ideal-typical traits or values” for journalism (Deuze 2005, p. 446):

- Public service: journalists provide a public service (as watchdogs or ‘newshounds’, active collectors and disseminators of information);
- Objectivity: journalists are impartial, neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible;
- Autonomy: journalists must be autonomous, free and independent in their work;
- Immediacy: journalists have a sense of immediacy, actuality and speed (inherent in the concept of ‘news’);
- Ethics: journalists have a sense of ethics, validity and legitimacy (Deuze 2005, p. 447).

Once again, notably absent from this list of “ideal-typical traits or values” is any mention that among these values journalists should represent the spectrum of voices and beliefs in a plural society.

In an earlier work, Deuze (2002) also sought to connect the findings from surveys of journalists to the concept of a national news culture by examining data collected from journalists in the Netherlands and comparing it to similar work carried out on journalists in Germany, Great Britain, Australia, and the United States. The work generated data on three sets of characteristics among journalists: basic demographic, occupational, and professional, which included media role perceptions and views on ethics (Deuze 2002, p. 136). Data on professional roles was generated using surveys of journalists in Great Britain (726 people), Germany (1,498 people), Australia (1,068 people), the United States (1,156 people), and the Netherlands (773

people). These surveys, however, used the same framework from the seminal 1971 survey conducted by Johnstone et al., which meant that journalists were not asked to rate the importance of fulfilling a role of representing the full spectrum of voices and perspectives in society. Journalists from the five countries listed above said the most important roles for the press to play in a democratic society included the following functions: provide analysis and interpretation, get news to the public quickly, and be an adversary of public/business officials (Deuze 2002, p. 141).

When discussing norms and standards with journalists in Ukraine, an Eastern European country, it is possible that interview participants will refer to the editorial guidelines of the BBC. Those guidelines, which are notoriously extensive, are addressed in a 215-page document that outlines the organization's editorial values. "In a perfect world the BBC Editorial Guidelines would consist of one sentence: use your own best judgement," the company's director-general, Mark Thompson, wrote in a preface to the guidelines. But, as Thompson notes, the BBC's editorial guidelines are, by necessity, not reducible to a simple sentence or a codex of a few pages. "What makes the Guidelines so valuable is that they are a distillation of years of exactly that – the experience, common sense and values of BBC practitioners built up over many years. Not abstract or theoretical, but based on real cases and the lessons learned from real successes and real failures." The BBC's full editorial guidelines can be found online.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The web version was accessed online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/guidelines> on June 8, 2018, and the pdf document can be found online at [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/pdfs/Editorial\\_Guidelines\\_in\\_full.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/pdfs/Editorial_Guidelines_in_full.pdf).

## Journalism in Transitional, Post-Soviet, and Ukrainian Society

In making the transition from Soviet rule to democracy, journalists have struggled to break free from control by owners and politicians. In surveying both journalists and public relations practitioners in Ukraine, Tsetsura and Grynko (2009) found that both direct and indirect forms of media influence distorted coverage of news in Ukraine. That influence occurred on three levels in Ukraine: interpersonal, intra-organizational, and inter-organizational. Their work indicated that Ukraine's media professionals as well as public relations practitioners had yet to identify the modern roles and functions of both media and media relations practitioners, and yet to find ways to underpin their professional codes of ethics.

Oates (2007) also found that journalists in neighboring Russia were facing many of the same challenges. Based on an analysis of data from media monitoring reports on Russia from 1993 to 2002 and similar reports from Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine, Oates concluded that Russian media operate in a neo-Soviet fashion. This work explored 14 categories that present challenges for the press in the region, and, notably for this dissertation research, found that all media in the five countries were consistently biased. "There is bias evident in virtually all types of mass media worldwide but that bias is far subtler and less pervasive than the type of bias seen in post-Soviet countries, particularly on state-run television channels" (Oates 2007, p. 1289). It found that many post-Soviet journalists do not believe in balanced or objective reporting, and they regard the practice of placing hidden advertising in their reports as normal. "Journalists in some post-Soviet countries even defend hidden advertising by claiming virtually all news coverage is now bought"

(Oates 2007, p. 1291). Self-censorship appeared to be pervasive in four countries (not in Armenia), and journalists regularly use the particularly distinctive post-Soviet media product known in Russian as *kompromat*, which is essentially compromising materials that are used by the press to sling mud at political figures viewed unfavorably by those who control the journalist's media organization (Oates 2007, p. 1292).

Many of these same challenges had seemingly remained unresolved in Ukraine as recently as 2016, although Orlova (2016) found that Ukrainian media in the period after the Euromaidan revolution of 2014-2015 had seen improvements. But as Ukraine continues a stop-start transition to democracy, there have been setbacks, too. The author identified four major challenges for the media in Ukraine: "Editorial dependence on owners, concentration of mainstream media in the hands of oligarchs, deteriorating quality of content and crisis of professional identity are distinctive features of the post-Maidan [Euromaidan revolution of 2014-2015] media landscape in Ukraine" (Orlova 2016, p. 441).

Dyczok (2006) examined the role outright censorship of the press played in Ukraine during the second term of then-President Leonid Kuchma (1999-2004), who went to great lengths to control mainstream media in an effort to consolidate power and minimize criticism of his government. And Nikolayenko (2004) examined whether the degree of press freedom in Ukrainian had decreased from the 1994 presidential election to the presidential election in 1999. More recently, Belyakove (2009) also examined the role of "censorship by money" on free speech in Ukraine – themes that also emerged in this research.

Dyczok (2005) examined the impact of the mass media in Ukraine on political events in the country during the 2004 presidential election campaign, and the protests that erupted during the campaign (the protests came to be known as the Orange Revolution). Dyczok found that television in particular played a central, though in some cases seemingly contradictory, role in the events that led to the Orange Revolution and its aftermath. It was seemingly contradictory because this was a time when television stations parroted the pro-government position, but in the middle of the revolution a few channels split from supporting the government position and began reporting events objectively.

Baysha and Hallahan (2004) examined select Ukrainian news media (three television channels, one newspaper, and one Internet site) in order to analyze how those sources framed a political crisis in Ukraine in 2000–2001. The authors found that political ideology strongly influenced the way different Ukrainian media framed the controversy, which they concluded distorted the deliberative process (The two main patterns of framing included overt propaganda and hidden manipulation). They argued that the dominant framing devices were metaphors and depictions that exploited cultural values and past political events.

Krasnoboka and Brants (2006) analyzed both traditional media outlets (print and broadcast) and articles from Internet sources that reported on the 2002 parliamentary elections in Ukraine in an effort to explain the logic that drives post-Soviet media developments in the country. They concluded that television didn't cover events, but Internet news sites did, suggesting that the Internet offered a journalistic platform, provided information, and framed political events for the public

in a way that took some of the authority away from established television channels. And Riabchuk (2001) examined the complex relationship between the authoritarian Ukrainian state of the late 1990s and early 2000s and the independent mass media. In particular, this work analyzed “the protracted struggle between the crypto-Soviet authoritarian state and the emerging civil society” (Riabchuk 2001, p. 95).

### Ukrainian Journalism and Media Ownership in Ukraine

Influence over and control of the press has a long history in Ukraine. Krasnoboka and Brants (2006, pp. 94-99) and Dyczok (2009, pp. 19-21) provide a helpful look at the history and evolution of modern media in Ukraine that began under the strict guidance of the Communist Party during Soviet rule in the country. While Soviet citizens in Ukraine had access to a wide variety of media – including at least one national television channel and two republican channels – they also had access to a variety of newspapers, newsletters, bulletins, and magazines that “were published in almost unlimited quantities and editions” (Krasnoboka and Brants 2006, pp. 94-95). While radio sets were available in all Soviet households, television played a particularly important role, “both as a provider of information and propaganda and as a tool in creating cohesion and order, and preserving a connection between the regions and the centre” (Krasnoboka and Brants 2006, p. 95). In terms of maintaining tight control over the media, the Communist Party was particularly concerned about the situation in Ukraine, as the country’s national cultural elites were known to harbor nationalistic and libertarian tendencies. This, in turn, meant a very high degree of both party and self-censorship characterized the editorial policy of Ukrainian media prior to independence in 1991 (Krasnoboka and Brants 2006, p. 95).

After independence, media in Ukraine largely turned their focus to the project of building national identity. “This nationalism, however, led the Ukrainian media to overlook the establishment of domestic oligarchs and the conversion of the former local communist leaders into national political figures. Blaming the communists and Russia for all evil, the Ukrainian media closed their eyes to the emergence of domestic oppressors” (Krasnoboka and Brants 2006, p. 96). The country’s oligarchs bought up media organizations and began using them to get elected to political office and wield power. “Media became increasingly viewed as an instrument of political and economic influence,” and many new media outlets were created with this goal in mind rather than providing information or making a profit (Dyczok 2009, p. 21). Media that did strive to present an objective picture of events in Ukraine – particularly if such reporting threatened vested interests – “underwent regular and special fire, health, anti-epidemic and tax inspections each time they tried to be independent” (Krasnoboka and Brants 2006, p. 97). The beheading of Georgiy Gongadze is perhaps the most famous recent case in which a journalist in independent Ukraine faced reprisal for reporting that threatened vested interests. Gongadze, who together with another journalist founded the Internet newspaper *Ukrainska Pravda* in 2000, was kidnapped and his body was later found doused in dioxin in an effort to make its identification more difficult. The exact details of who ordered Gongadze’s death is still unclear, although audiotapes surfaced in which the president of Ukraine at the time, Leonid Kuchma, and other top administration officials were heard discussing the need to silence the journalist (Kyiv Post 2009).

The current state of Ukraine’s media environment echoes the old saying that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Despite undergoing two major revolutions in the past 14 years – each of which pushed the country closer to Europe – the major media in Ukraine are still very much controlled by the country’s oligarchs. Writing in 2015, Dyczok noted that “media owners are also the largest corporate actors in Ukraine, and use their media assets as a political tool to curry favour with the state to protect their other business interests where they make their main profits. The state continues to own part of the media system (television, radio, and print) and they were used as mouthpieces of the government during the Yanukovich presidency [2010-2014 – He was chased out of office in 2014 by Euromaidan protesters and he subsequently fled to Russia]” (Dyczok 2015, p. 79).

Recent reports by media monitoring NGOs show that oligarchs and politicians continue to control most of the major media organizations in Ukraine, and all of the television channels. In fact, an October 2017 report by Reporters Without Borders found that “the influence of politicians over media in Ukraine has increased over the last year,” and it is difficult to paint a complete picture of who owns what media because “complex offshore structures that obscure levels of influence via media ownership remain popular business models”<sup>13</sup> in Ukraine (Reporters Without Borders 2017). The Ukrainian NGO Detector Media report of 2018<sup>14</sup> also said that Ukrainian television channels “quite clearly promote the interests of one or another political-

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<sup>13</sup> Accessed online on April 17, 2018, at <https://rsf.org/en/reports/media-ownership-ukraine-informal-influence-through-murky-business-schemes>.

<sup>14</sup> In full disclosure, the author of this work translated this report from Ukrainian to English.

business group. Some of them are also de facto affiliated with large oligarchic media groups. ... The ownership of these groups is often unclear or raises doubts. It is also a feature of the current state of television in Ukraine that, although almost all private information channels are political and business tools of their owners, their precise purpose is often hidden not only from viewers, but even from experts” (Detector Media 2018, p. 10).

Freedom House’s 2017 report on the press in Ukraine listed journalism as partly free in the country.<sup>15</sup> The organization noted that this status for Ukraine did not reflect conditions in Crimea, which was examined in a separate report. According to the October 2017 report by Reporters Without Borders on the press in Ukraine, there are 2,550 terrestrial television stations in the country and 742 digital television stations. The report listed 30 national television stations and noted that 82 percent of Ukrainians watch television. The market for television in Ukraine, the report added, is very unevenly developed between regional and national stations as well as between commercial and public television.<sup>16</sup>

Print publications in Ukraine are required to register with the Ministry of Justice, although data provided by the ministry on print publications operating in the country is often problematic for a number of reasons. Reporters Without Borders noted that, according to the Ministry of Statistics, roughly half a dozen print publications are created daily in Ukraine. “Some are created as projects for a day or one month (before the elections), some lose their funds for publication (for example,

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<sup>15</sup> Accessed online at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/ukraine> on May 27, 2018.

<sup>16</sup> Accessed online at <https://ukraine.mom-rsf.org/en/ukraine/media/tv/> on May 27, 2018.

a grant) or stop receiving financial support from the owner, who does not officially shut down the outlet. Some of these media outlets were privatized from communal ownership and failed to endure the market pressure. In addition, some print media outlets ceased publications in hard copy but retained their online websites. Still, even if the statistical data is very far from reality and extremely inflated, the Ukrainian print media market can be considered as heavily overloaded.” According to the Ministry of Justice in Ukraine, there were 27,696 registered print media outlets in the country in 2009. Of that number, 4,187 publications were active, according to the UA Association of Periodical Press Publishers.<sup>17</sup>

In terms of radio in Ukraine, Reporters Without Borders noted that as of 2016 there were 1,216 terrestrial radio stations in the country and 248 local stations. The report noted that radio in Ukraine is also subject to control by the country’s oligarchs, though it does offer some degree of greater freedom than television and print media.

It is significant that seven Ukrainian oligarchs own 10 of the top rated television channels among people age 18-54: Ihor Kolomoyskyi, Ihor Surkis, Rinat Akhmetov, Victor Pinchuk, Dmytro Firtash, Serhiy Lyovochkin, and Valeriy Khoroshkovskyi (Detector Media 2018, p. 9). The Reporters Without Borders report also breaks down which oligarchs own what media.<sup>18</sup> The report adds that television in Ukraine is highly concentrated, “as the major four TV owners represent an audience share of more than three quarters,” while the top four radio groups reach 92 percent of the audience in Ukraine (Reporters Without Borders 2017). Their report

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<sup>17</sup> Accessed online at <https://ukraine.mom-rsf.org/en/ukraine/media/print/> on June 8, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Accessed online at <http://ukraine.mom-rsf.org/en/ukraine/owners/> on April 17, 2018.

notes that print media and the Internet are less concentrated. In terms of audience, Detector Media noted that, “according to a survey conducted by the Research and Branding Group in February 2017, approximately 9 out of 10 adult Ukrainians more or less regularly received news via television, and about half got their news via the Internet” (Detector Media 2018, p. 7).

The Internet has also been a significant platform for spreading information in Ukraine over the past 10 years, including propaganda, misinformation, and outright fake news stories. So much so that the Ukrainian government blocked Russian Internet services offered by Mail.ru, Yandex, VKontakte, and Odnoklassniki in an attempt to stop misinformation from flowing into Ukraine (Detector Media 2018, p. 10). While there were no news organizations among the top 10 most popular Internet sites in 2017 (Detector Media 2018, p. 10), various independent, Internet-based news organizations that began operating in the country in the past decade have provided objective reporting, particularly during the Euromaidan revolution. In doing so, news sites such as Hromadske.TV, Hromadske Radio, Spilno.TV, and Espresso.TV all developed a reputation for providing objective information. The Internet news site *Ukrainska Pravda* (Ukrainian Truth) is among the most popular sites in the country. By February 2014, it had become “one of the most commonly visited news sites, with 1.5 to 2.5 million visitors daily. By March, the number had climbed to 4.5 million” (Dyczok 2015, p. 79-80). In contrast, Ukraine’s population was 42.5 million in 2017, according to national statistics provided by the Ukrainian government.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Accessed online on April 17, 2018, at [http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2017/ds/kn/kn\\_u/kn1017\\_u.html](http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2017/ds/kn/kn_u/kn1017_u.html).

This chapter sought to demonstrate the need for the research conducted in this work by exploring both the theoretical and empirical literature that is most relevant to the focus of this dissertation. It began by reviewing the literature on normative journalism theory, and specifically the theoretical literature that traces the evolution of social responsibility in journalism and the normative ideal that the press should be a representative voice for all of the people who constitute a plural, democratic society. It reviewed work that has posed recent challenges to conceptions of journalistic objectivity. And the review of literature then sought to show that the particular normative role in which the press should represent the spectrum of beliefs and perspectives in a democratic society is analogous with an element of Rorty's pragmatic philosophy as defined in his *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, which argued that a representative journalism of thick description can play a role in alleviating the tension found in a plural society.

This chapter subsequently reviewed the empirical literature that conducted research on journalists' conceptions of their roles and on journalism in transitional, post-Soviet Ukrainian society. It sought to demonstrate that, while there is a significant body of work that explored journalists' conceptions of their roles in different contexts and in various countries, there is a need for research that examines whether reporters believe they can and should play a role in alleviating division in a plural, democratic society. And it sought to demonstrate that there is a need for research that explores more broadly the norms of journalism in Ukraine and compares and contrasts them against western normative theory. This work, therefore, addresses these various needs by talking directly with journalists in Ukraine regarding their

normative beliefs. The following chapter describes the core method of in-depth, semi-structured interviews used to conduct this dissertation research.

## Chapter 3: Research Methods

The data in this dissertation was generated from qualitative in-depth, semi-structured interviews of Ukrainian reporters. This work uses a qualitative methodology since, as Creswell notes, such an approach allows the researcher to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative research seeks to understand why a given phenomenon occurs, and attempts to provide a deeper understanding of participants' motivations or meanings (Creswell 2009, p. 4). What's more, such research attempts to interpret and understand individuals in their particular social systems, subcultures, or aesthetic traditions (Creswell 2009, pp. 3-20).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. xvi) maintain that, although constant breaks and ruptures define the field of qualitative research, there is nonetheless a center, albeit a shifting one, to the project. That center includes a commitment to study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p. 3). Zhou notes that qualitative research approaches the subject being studied with empathetic understanding and can behave as a participant in the subject being studied (although the degree to which a researcher participates can vary). The goals of qualitative research are to provide contextualization and situational interpretation, while the approaches within the methodology typically involve inductive methods, and the researcher acts as the instrument of the study (Zhou 2009, p. 17). Therefore, a qualitative methodology is well-suited for this research, which seeks to understand an aspect of Ukrainian journalism from the perspective of its particular cultural context.

## Research Approach: Philosophical Assumptions and Worldview

Research is influenced by an individual researcher's philosophical worldview – more specifically, it is affected by the philosophical assumptions a person makes regarding the nature of knowledge (Creswell 2009, p. 5). Creswell notes that, although philosophical ideas remain largely hidden in research, they nonetheless influence the practice of research and need to be identified, and he urges that individuals conducting research should explicitly state the philosophical ideas they adopt. By stating their worldview explicitly researchers will be in a better position to explain why they chose a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approach to their research (Creswell 2009, p. 5).

Guba (1990, p. 17) defines worldview as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action,” while Creswell (2009, p. 6) sees them as “a general orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher holds,” while others have also referred to this as paradigms, philosophical assumptions, or epistemologies. Cooper, Potter, and Dupagne (1994, p. 55) use the phrase “values of inquiry.” Nonetheless, these values influence the design and purpose of the research, the topics to be investigated, the questions asked, the procedures and sources used to gather data, the emphasis on theory to guide the research, as well as the standards used to evaluate the validity of knowledge claims (Cooper, Potter, and Dupagne 1994, p. 55; Potter, Cooper, and Dupagne 1993, p. 317).

Because the study of journalism and mass communication uses qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, this field is characterized by significant differences of opinion with regard to individual researchers' philosophical worldviews and

assumptions. These differences of worldview have led to what Trumbo (2004, p. 418) calls “epistemological frictions” within the field, and a number of additional authors have discussed at length fragmentation within the field of journalism and mass communication research (Zelizer 2004, Rogers 1997, Park and Pooley 2008, Levy and Gurevitch 1994). While other disciplines have a more clearly defined, and more uniformly agreed upon worldview (Potter, Cooper, and Dupagne 1993, P. 317), journalism and mass communication is a field in which different philosophical assumptions contribute to differences in methodologies employed in conducting research (Zelizer 2004, pp. 13-44).

Creswell (2009, p. 6) identifies four broad schools of thought on knowledge claims: postpositivist, constructivist, advocacy/participatory, and pragmatic. My own belief regarding claims of knowledge most closely resembles Creswell’s pragmatic worldview. That is to say that the research conducted for this dissertation is influenced by a pragmatic worldview of the claims of knowledge. Researchers who adopt a pragmatic worldview are often most concerned with solutions to problems, according to Creswell. “Pragmatism as a worldview arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in postpositivism). . . . Instead of focusing on methods, researchers emphasize the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the problem” (Creswell 2009, p. 10). This worldview suits this dissertation research as it accepts the use of multiple research methods (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed) to address a given research problem. Although the data in this work is generated from qualitative in-depth interviews,

additional methodological approaches, such as quantitative and mixed methods, would also produce valuable data.

### In-depth Interviews

Researchers use interviews to talk directly with individual research participants and get their perspective on the subject being discussed, or to inquire about something that happened in the past. This technique is used to probe participants' thoughts, motivations, opinions, beliefs, and values, and can be conducted in the participant's environment (Lindlof and Taylor 2002, p. 175). Interviews allowed the researcher to probe the thoughts, motivations, opinions, beliefs, and values of Ukrainian journalists regarding the role they believe they should play in a liberal democratic society.

Interviews also allowed the researcher to talk with journalists in a loosely structured and flexible format, so that the conversation could move in unplanned though productive directions. As Lindlof and Taylor (2002, p. 175) note, if the researcher has begun to explore a topic that he or she finds particularly interesting, the interview can continue down that path, uncovering a potentially rich layer of information that might not have surfaced using other techniques (for example, in a focus group, but especially in a survey). In this sense, the researcher has much more control over the direction of the interview.

The use of interviews (as opposed to focus groups) is also beneficial because this methodology isolates the research participant from the possible effect of a group dynamic (a concern when conducting focus groups). This research sought to examine the thoughts, beliefs, values, etc., of individual journalists without influence from

other research participants. Although focus groups are beneficial research tools for a number of reasons, they are also affected by the dynamic of a group discussion. This dynamic can encourage individuals to open up and talk only after other participants have spoken, and it can also produce new streams of discussion that might not have come up in individual interviews (as the verbalized experience of others in the group often stimulates memories, ideas, and experiences in other participants). This is also known as the group effect, where group members engage in what Lindlof and Taylor (2002, p. 182) call a kind of “chaining” or “cascading” effect: “talk links to, or tumbles out of, the topics and expressions preceding it.”

But this group dynamic means that focus group participants may not be as candid as they would in an interview, or they may try to answer the focus group moderator’s questions with answers they feel the moderator (or the group) wants to hear. The group dynamic may also discourage individual journalists from voicing their real beliefs if their professional peers might perceive those beliefs negatively. This is a particular concern when researching individual journalists’ conceptions of norms in journalism. The dynamic of a group of journalists would likely influence how Ukrainian journalists discuss their normative beliefs of journalism’s role in their society. This latter point, when combined with the group effect, would seem to push a conversation down an unproductive path. The responses in focus groups are offered in the context of a group discussion, and the same participant would likely respond differently in a one-on-one anonymous interview.

In both interviews and focus groups the researcher expects participants to tell them about events, processes, or objects that exist outside of the immediate interview

context. But the researcher also understands that people are not neutral when they discuss their own experiences. According to Lindloff and Taylor (2002, p. 172), interview participants “might enlarge their role in an event, minimize it, or tell about it from the perspective of others who were there. It is in fact the strikingly distinctive ways that people articulate their experience that makes interviews so fascinating and useful.” The goal of this dissertation research is to understand the different ways Ukrainian journalists talk about their normative belief regarding the role they believe the press should play in democratic society. Thirty-one individual interviews with reporters from throughout Ukraine were conducted for this work. Those interviews were recorded and analyzed by the researcher. The responses of Ukrainian journalists’ normative beliefs were then analyzed with the original research questions as a guide. The findings and their possible ramifications are discussed in the following chapters of this work.

### Selection of Ukraine

The decision to focus this work on Ukraine was made for a number of reasons. First, the researcher is an American of Ukrainian descent. All four of his grandparents were born and raised in Ukraine. They fled the country as refugees during World War II, and both of his parents were born in European refugee camps. The researcher’s first language was Ukrainian, and, although he was raised in New Jersey, he grew up immersed in the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States. Second, the researcher and his parents moved to Kyiv, Ukraine, a year after the country gained its independence in 1991. He attended high school in Ukraine for a year before moving back to the United States. His parents stayed in Ukraine for nearly a decade,

while he lived with Ukrainian family friends in the United States. He regularly visited his parents in Kyiv during the summers and travelled throughout Ukraine during those visits. Third, after graduating from college he worked as a reporter for an English-language Ukrainian weekly newspaper. Based in the United States, *The Ukrainian Weekly* covers the Ukrainian diaspora in North America and provides reporting from Ukraine. In the winter of 2004, he covered the Orange Revolution in Ukraine as Kyiv bureau chief of *The Ukrainian Weekly*. Fourth, the researcher was a Fulbright Fellow in Ukraine during the 2012-2013 academic year. During that time he conducted a preliminary exploration of the journalistic environment in Ukraine and talked with journalists throughout the country to inform the design of this dissertation research and guide the data collection that followed. The researcher also used this time to develop contacts within the journalism community in Ukraine. Those contacts were later used to recruit research participants for this dissertation. In short, the researcher's cultural and linguistic understanding of Ukraine and the Ukrainian language not only influenced the choice of the country as the focus of this dissertation, but they were instrumental tools used to conduct and complete this research. Finally, at the heart of this work is a concern regarding tension in a plural society and concern over the possibility of such tension turning violent. Ukraine was chosen as a focus for this work because it presents a case study of a democratic society in which such tension did turn violent and resulted in both massive protests in the capital of the country and an ongoing war in the east.

## Selection and Recruitment of Ukrainian Journalists

Interviews for this work were conducted with 31 journalists from national and regional news outlets in Ukraine. The journalists represented print, broadcast, and Internet news organizations from around the country. Of the 31 journalists interviewed, 16 were men and 15 were women. Recruitment of participants began with the researcher emailing a list of Ukrainian journalists to ask if they would participate in the research. This list was generated from the contacts that the researcher had made with Ukrainian journalists on previous visits to the country. The researcher then moved to using the instant messenger feature in Facebook as a means to send direct recruitment messages to journalists he had met previously in Ukraine. In attempting to locate additional research participants, the researcher next explored the public Facebook profiles of these contacts. In looking through the public profiles of these contacts, the researcher was able to locate Facebook friends of his contacts who are also journalists, in effect snowball sampling using the social media site. A recruitment message was sent to potential participants asking if they would take part in the research. Once a journalist agreed to participate, the researcher coordinated a time and date when the interview took place.

## Interviews of Ukrainian Journalists

Prior to conducting an interview with a journalist, the researcher used either email or the direct messenger function in Facebook to send the participant a digital copy of a consent form in English, Russian,<sup>20</sup> or Ukrainian, depending on the

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<sup>20</sup> The researcher understands Russian, and can read the language.

participant's preference. The journalist was asked to print the consent form, and read it carefully. The journalist was then asked if they had any questions or concerns regarding the research. No participant raised any questions or concerns. Journalists were then asked to sign the form and check off the box on the consent form that asked whether they wanted to remain anonymous or whether they agreed that their name could be printed in the dissertation. The participants were then asked to either scan the signed consent form or use their cell phone camera to take a photo of the document and return it electronically to the researcher via email or the direct message function in Facebook. The interviews of Ukrainian journalists were then conducted using either Skype or the video chat function in Facebook, with the researcher located in North America and most of the research participants located in Ukraine. Two participants were in Europe when they took part in the interview, and one had just moved to Notre Dame, Indiana.

On average, the interviews took one hour and 23 minutes to complete – the shortest interview took 58 minutes, and the longest took two hours. The researcher conducted the interviews using questions that were approved by the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board as an initial guide for the discussion with each Ukrainian journalist. The interviews have been characterized as “semi-structured” because, while the written and approved interview questions were used as a guide to conduct the interviews, the researcher did not ask participants every question that was on the written sheet (the complete, IRB-approved list of questions can be found in Appendix 1 of this dissertation). The semi-structured format of the interviews allowed the researcher to begin each interview the same way, but it also provided some

flexibility and discretion for the researcher to pursue more deeply themes as they emerged during the course of the individual interviews and throughout the process of interviewing all 31 of the journalists who took part in this research.

Using Skype to conduct the interviews allowed the researcher to speak with journalists in Ukraine while he was in North America, and it allowed him to speak with journalists throughout the country. For example, when one interview finished with a journalist in the far west of Ukraine, another interview could begin immediately with a participant in a completely different region of the country. This was often the case during the interview phase of the project, and this would not have been possible without the ability to conduct the interviews using an Internet video tool such as Skype or the video chat function in Facebook. There are, of course, positives and negatives to using Skype to conduct research interviews. As Lo Iacono et al. (2016, p. 4) point out, Internet video chat technologies open research up to a more democratic process, in the sense that a broader spectrum of participants can be included in the study as the technology decreases or nearly eliminates the impact of distance as “a variable that prevents an international representation of participants in most qualitative studies.” In addition, Lo Iacono et al. note that the technology can dramatically decrease the financial burden on a researcher who must otherwise travel to a different continent to interview participants, and it “gives the participants themselves a greater freedom to participate in research if they want, without the need to travel” (Lo Iacono et al. 2016, p. 4). This last point is also particularly relevant for this dissertation research, as every interview had to be scheduled around a journalist’s hectic and often changing schedule. But conducting the interviews via Skype gave

research participants more flexibility to schedule a meeting and actually sit for an interview. It gave them more flexibility because, by eliminating the burden on the research participant to dedicate time and energy to travel to a particular interview location, the participant needed only to find a block of time and a location that suited them to take part in the interview.

Lo Iacono et al. (2016) also highlight the drawbacks of using Skype to conduct research interviews: “Many communities and peoples worldwide still lack access to the internet, although this situation is rapidly improving,” and not everyone has access to a computer with the necessary software or the knowledge of how to use Internet tools such as Skype (Lo Iacono et al. 2016, p. 5). These were not limitations in this work, as contemporary journalists in Ukraine are completely connected to the Internet and regularly use these technologies in their daily lives, both personally and for work. Developing rapport with an interview participant has also been raised as a potential limitation to using Skype, though Lo Iacono et al. also note that “it is a complementary tool and certainly better than nothing at all” (Lo Iacono et al. 2016, p. 8). On the subject of developing rapport with a research participant in a Skype interview, it is also not clear that a face-to-face interview is in all cases better for building rapport. In certain cases, the rapport may actually be better in a Skype interview than in a face-to-face interaction. Deciding which method is best “really depends on the topic of the research and on the personality of the participant and interviewer” (Lo Iacono et al. 2016, p. 7). Using Skype as a tool to interview Ukrainian journalists did not appear to present any problems with rapport, as the

research participants appeared to talk openly and freely about the roles they believe the press should play in a democratic society.

There are also ethical considerations when using Skype to conduct research interviews, including issues related to informed consent, right to withdraw, and confidentiality. In addressing these ethical concerns, this dissertation research adopted the method used by Lo Iacono et al. in which “volunteers had a chance to pre-read the consent form; they were pre-warned and asked if the interviews could be recorded; they were informed that the recording of the interview could be stopped at any time on request and that they could withdraw at any time from the research, they were given the opportunity to choose the location, day and time of their interview” (Lo Iacono et al. 2016, p. 9). Participants in this research were given the option to remain anonymous, and only a few asked for anonymity.

While conducting the interviews via Skype or the video chat function in Facebook, the researcher recorded the audio using the voice memos application on the researcher’s iPhone, and the recordings were then saved as MPEG 4 audio files on the researcher’s computer. Those audio files were uploaded into a qualitative data analysis software program. The interviews for this work were conducted in both English and Ukrainian, with occasional Russian used by research participants. The research participants themselves selected the language in which an interview was conducted. Prior to beginning an interview, a participant was asked to use the language in which they felt most comfortable expressing themselves and their thoughts. Of the 31 interviews, 23 were in Ukrainian and eight were in English.

## Coding and Analysis of the Interviews

The audio of the interviews were uploaded into and then coded using the software program MAXQDA, which allows a researcher to listen to audio of the interviews and apply multiple codes directly onto the audio wave files. Codes were applied to the interviews by the researcher using a number of coding techniques. As defined by Saldaña, “a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. The data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, literature, artifacts, photographs, video, websites, e-mail correspondence, and so on” (2009, p. 3).

In the first cycle of coding, the researcher used several coding methods, including simultaneous, attribute, descriptive, values, and in vivo coding methods. “Attribute coding logs essential information about the data and demographic characteristics of the participants for future management and reference. ... Simultaneous coding occurs when two or more codes are applied to or overlap with a qualitative datum to detail its complexity” (Saldaña 2009, p. 55). “Descriptive coding assigns basic labels to data to provide an inventory of their topics. ... In Vivo coding draws from the participant’s own language for the codes” (Saldaña 2009, p. 66). In vivo coding uses the words of the research participants’ to generate a code. And, finally, “values coding is the application of codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview” (Saldaña 2009, p. 89).

The researcher also wrote analytic memos using the MAXQDA software program during the first pass of coding. As Saldaña notes, such memos are “a place to ‘dump your brain’ about the participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation by thinking and thus writing and thus thinking even more about them” (Saldaña 2009, p. 32). The researcher also employed Saldaña’s understanding of the use of memos in this dissertation. “Virtually every qualitative research methodologist agrees: Whenever anything related to and significant about the coding or analysis of the data comes to mind, stop whatever you’re doing and write a memo about it immediately. Future directions, unanswered questions, frustrations with the analysis, insightful connections, and anything about the researched and the researcher are acceptable content for memos” (Saldaña 2009, p. 33).

In the case of this research, the data coded was the audio recording of the interviews conducted with Ukrainian journalists. The data was coded in two passes by the researcher. Saldaña also notes that, “the portion of data to be coded during First Cycle coding processes can range in magnitude from a single word to a full sentence to an entire page of text to a stream of moving images. In Second Cycle coding processes, the portions coded can be the exact same units, longer passages of text, and even a reconfiguration of the codes themselves developed thus far” (2009, p. 3).

This work further utilized Saldaña’s understanding of coding as an effort to develop core themes in the findings. “And,” as Saldaña notes, “coding is a cyclical act. Rarely is the first cycle of coding data perfectly attempted. The second cycle (and possibly the third and fourth, and so on) of recoding further manages, filters, highlights, and focuses the salient features of the qualitative data record for

generating categories, themes, and concepts, grasping meaning, and/or building theory” (2009, p. 8). What’s more, “coding is thus a method that enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or ‘families’ because they share some characteristic – the beginning of a pattern. You use classification reasoning plus your tacit and intuitive senses to determine which data ‘look alike’ and ‘feel alike’ when grouping them together.” The core themes in the findings of this work were generated using these coding methods in a second pass of the coded material.

This work also used interviews conducted with 41 journalists in the United States. Those interviews were already transcribed and available in an electronic format. The researcher uploaded those transcripts into MAXQDA and used the same process described above to code the interviews, analyze the coded material, and generate themes. Using these methods generated the findings presented in Chapters 4-6, which address the normative beliefs of journalists in Ukraine. And the findings from the interviews with American journalists are presented in Chapter 7, and are subsequently used as a contrast and comparison with the normative beliefs of Ukrainian reporters. The following section introduces the core findings chapters, and it provides a brief roadmap of what follows in those chapters.

## Introduction to and Organization of the Findings Presented in Chapters 4-6

The research questions at the heart of this work sought to address two core themes. First, they focused narrowly on the established normative role the press plays in a democratic society of representing the various beliefs and perspectives found in that society, of being a voice not only for the voiceless, but a voice that represents the spectrum of beliefs and perspectives found in a given society. It is this same role that the pragmatist political philosopher Richard Rorty argued could help ease the tension found in a society comprised of different religious, moral, and philosophical beliefs – a problem originally articulated by the political theorist John Rawls. To be clear, the research questions did not ask whether journalism in Ukraine actually is fulfilling this role; they asked whether journalists believe they should be a representative voice for various perspectives in society, whether journalists themselves are aware of the role journalism might play in easing such division, and whether they believe they have a normative responsibility to present a picture of the world broader than what stereotypes or simple dichotomies allow.

The second focus of the research questions addressed more broadly the norms of journalism in Ukraine in an effort to understand whether Ukrainian journalists believe their norms are the ones found in western democratic societies, or whether they believe some norms are unique to Ukraine’s particular historical and cultural context. This research relied on deep, though semi-structured interviews that sought

to provide Ukrainian journalists the space to discuss the roles they believe the press should play in their post-Soviet, transitional democratic society.

Three core themes emerged from these interviews; each theme is presented in each subsequent chapter of this work. The following provides a brief roadmap to those findings. Chapter 4 takes up the research questions that directly address Rorty's call for a pragmatic journalism that strives to move beyond the use of simple stereotypes and dichotomies, and offers instead a richer, more representative picture of the different perspectives and beliefs found in Ukrainian society. The findings show that journalists do acknowledge a normative responsibility to provide a voice for the various citizens that make up their society.

When discussing their beliefs regarding the different normative roles journalism should play in Ukraine, nearly every journalist said that journalism should strive to represent people's different beliefs and positions. Many used the specific phrase that journalism should be a voice for the voiceless, and they spoke in terms analogous to Rorty's desire for a pragmatic journalism that should provide a broader, richer description of the world than stereotypes and dichotomies often allow. In many instances the journalists acknowledged this role without priming from the researcher, and in a handful of cases they said so in response to the first question of the interview, which asked them what first interested them about journalism.

The second core theme of the findings, presented in Chapter 5, regards the question of the broader set of norms and standards in Ukraine, and whether journalists believe there are certain norms that are uniquely Ukrainian. Here, as with the previous theme, journalists in Ukraine were overwhelmingly united. Nearly each

participant in this study said that journalists in Ukraine should work according to western norms and standards, and many said that journalists in Ukraine should work according to the standards set forth by the British Broadcasting Corporation. When pressed that perhaps some norms are uniquely Ukrainian, journalists pushed back and maintained their view; in some cases they even talked about universal norms for journalism. Even though the journalists in this study talked about adhering to western norms and standards, the in-depth, semi-structured interviews revealed that journalists say a dominant influence on both the practice and standards of journalism in Ukraine is the role of non-ideological Ukrainian oligarchs, who own many of the country's news organizations and use these media to fight one another. In discussing their work in this uniquely Ukrainian media environment, journalists did talk about norms of practicing journalism in Ukraine that differed from those discussed by the U.S. journalists presented in Chapter 7 of this work.

While Chapter 4 presents the findings on the researcher's effort to look for the seeds of a journalistic pragmatism among the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists, and Chapter 5 presents the findings on the broader normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists, Chapter 6 narrows the focus again to explore a dominant theme that emerged organically from the semi-structured format of the interviews. In talking broadly about norms in Ukraine, it became evident that the normative concept of journalistic objectivity is now the subject of an active, at times heated, debate among journalists in the country.

While Ukrainian journalists presented nearly uniform agreement on the two themes presented in Chapters 4 and 5, they were split on the subject of objectivity as

a norm, particularly when their country is at war with Russia, and its citizens in the occupied territories and in Crimea – who have extremely limited access to Ukrainian media – face a constant barrage of Russian propaganda and fake news that they say is intended to inflame and manipulate their society. This question of adhering to the objectivity norm swirls not only around how the press should report on people who adopt pro-Russian positions or support the Russian military and Ukrainian separatists in the region, but it also turns on the question of whether journalists in Ukraine should report objectively or whether they have a duty during war to support pro-Ukrainian positions and their own government. Some journalists questioned whether the press should be objective in the face of blatant Russian propaganda and what some said was a clear intent on the part of Russia to use the democratic tools of free speech to purposefully muck up and inflame public discourse.

In dealing with propaganda and a flood of fake news from various Russian sources, those Ukrainian journalists who believed the press must maintain its objectivity also noted that the best way to fight propaganda, fake news, and alternative versions of truth was for journalists to do objective reporting and, in essence, “call a spade a spade.” The journalists interviewed in this study said journalism must still find some foundation on which to base truth, and that it is the responsibility of each individual journalist to call true what they find to be true after doing the grass roots, on-the-ground reporting.

## Chapter 4: Journalistic Pragmatism in Ukraine

The core problem at the heart of this work involves division – the divisions that exist naturally in a society in which individuals are free to think and believe what they choose to believe. It asked Ukrainian journalists whether they should play a role in alleviating such division, and it hypothesized that journalists in Ukraine may not only use division in order to promote their work, but they would deprioritize the normative goal of fully representing the spectrum of perspectives, beliefs, and truths found in Ukraine at a time when the country has faced war, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, and what many journalists called a hybrid information war in which Russian media pump propaganda into the occupied regions of Ukraine in an effort both to inflame and manipulate the population there. It further hypothesized that Ukrainian journalists would deprioritize the normative role of a pragmatic journalism that represents the full spectrum of perspectives in its society during a time when journalism as a business has suffered as a result of the Internet. Because of this need to attract viewers, this work further hypothesized that journalism in Ukraine would strive not to represent the full spectrum of voices in Ukrainian society, but would rely instead on sensation, stereotype, and generalization, thereby possibly fueling social divisions.

This work viewed a potential solution to the problem of division in Ukraine through the pragmatist philosophy of Richard Rorty, who argued that a journalistic pragmatism could help alleviate this tension. Two elements of Rorty's philosophical argument are particularly relevant when examining the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists. First, Rorty argued that difference is a matter of salience – that deciding to

view someone in our society as somehow “other” as opposed to “one of us” is necessarily a matter of deciding which characteristics we believe are most salient (for example, a red apple and a green apple are both apples. But if color becomes a defining characteristic, then all red apples are now different from all green apples). Second, Rorty argued that detailed descriptions of the lives of various people in a society would help individuals in that society see a much broader range of characteristics in people we once regarded as somehow “other” (Yes, red apples are red, and green apples are green. But Rorty believed that by providing a richer, broader description of, in this case, an apple, we might see that what makes an apple an apple is more than just its color). By providing this richer description both of peoples’ different characteristics and a richer picture of all of the different people who make up a plural society, journalists might help people see that what they share in common is more salient than what seems to divide them. One core goal, then, of the interviews conducted for this work – and the main goal for this chapter – was to examine whether journalists believe they have a normative responsibility to try to represent a broader spectrum of the different voices in Ukrainian society. This goal is also analogous with normative journalism theory’s call for the press to be a voice for the voiceless, to represent the different people who make up a plural, liberal democratic society.

The interviews conducted for this work sought to give Ukrainian journalists the space to talk about norms with as little priming from the researcher as possible. This was done for a number of reasons. The first interview questions sought to get research participants talking about journalistic norms in very broad terms. In doing

so, the interview questions examined qualitatively whether and when the norm of a pragmatic journalism that represents different voices would come up in the conversation. It also allowed the researcher to see whether any dominant themes organically emerged from a conversation about journalistic norms in Ukraine, and it allowed Ukrainian journalists to discuss which norms they felt were most important now in Ukraine (Chapter 3 on research methods addresses the structure and purpose of the interview questions in greater detail). If, after moving deeper and deeper into the interview, the research participant had not talked about the norm of representing different voices, the researcher essentially “peeled back the onion” and questioned the research participant directly about this normative role.

Every one of the 31 journalists interviewed for this work acknowledged journalism’s normative responsibility to represent the spectrum of voices, beliefs, and positions in their society. Of those, 29 journalists stated this norm without the researcher having to explicitly prompt them about this role. Two of the journalists acknowledged the role, but only after being explicitly asked about it by the researcher. The journalists interviewed for this work came from across Ukraine – from Lviv, a city in the far west of the country, to Zaporizhia and Donetsk, cities in the east – they represented different age groups, levels of experience, and segments of journalism (print versus broadcast, and regional versus national). Of the 31 journalists interviewed, 15 were women and 16 were men (a more complete breakdown of research participants’ demographic information is provided in Chapter 3 on research methods).

While all of the journalists acknowledged a normative goal of representing different voices, they were, however, divided on the question of whether they thought journalism was actually fulfilling this role. Those who thought it was fulfilling this role provided some examples. Others said that journalism was not fulfilling this role, and they gave several reasons why they thought journalism was unable to represent different voices. The following pages present their thoughts on the potential of a journalistic pragmatism in Ukraine, and their thoughts on what makes it difficult for journalists to fulfill this role in their country.

Two points should be made here before moving on to the specific findings. The first is an obvious point, but it bears stating explicitly. The aim of this work was to explore journalists' normative beliefs, and in discussing what journalists thought the press should do in a democracy, they also talked about what is wrong with the practice of journalism in the country, and problems in Ukraine more broadly. The point to be made here explicitly is that there is a difference between journalists' beliefs – what they said, which is the data of this work – and whether what they said is actually the case in Ukraine. For example, all of the journalists interviewed for this work discussed the impact of oligarchic ownership of Ukrainian media, and they at times said a given television channel is owned by a certain oligarch. But it is notoriously difficult to uncover who really owns a given television channel in Ukraine because such ownership is purposefully concealed.<sup>21</sup> They talked about whether Ukraine is a divided society, and they discussed what role the press can play

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<sup>21</sup> An October 2017 report by Reporters Without Borders said “complex offshore structures that obscure levels of influence via media ownership remain popular business models” in Ukraine. Accessed online at <https://rsf.org/en/reports/media-ownership-ukraine-informal-influence-through-murky-business-schemes> on February 26, 2018.

in inflaming social divisions, or what it can do once the war is over to reintegrate those citizens who live in the occupied regions of Ukraine and receive a steady diet of Russian propaganda. And while they discussed what they thought journalism should do in their society, they also talked about the state of the audience, critical thinking, and tolerance in Ukraine. Which is to say that these subjects often go hand-in-hand with their normative beliefs, and it is often impossible to split apart these beliefs as reflected in the quotations below from what they said about the audience, oligarchs, or tolerance in Ukraine, for example. The literature review chapter of this work explores in greater depth research on journalism in Ukraine and media monitoring reports on ownership of Ukrainian media.

And the second point is that the core themes of this work very often overlap, and sometimes in seemingly contradictory ways. There is, however, nuance that explains what at first glance appears to be contradictory. For example, this chapter addresses journalists' beliefs on being a voice that represents all of the different groups in Ukrainian society. Chapter 6, however, examines journalists' normative beliefs on the concept of journalistic objectivity, which is now a subject of intense debate in Ukraine. Many journalists said that the press in Ukraine should not be objective about representing pro-Russian positions in the occupied territories, although they all also said that journalism in Ukraine should represent the spectrum of voices in Ukrainian society. The simple explanation for these different views – a richer explanation is presented in Chapter 6 – is that journalists say Ukraine is both a plural society divided on many issues internal to Ukraine (LGBT, for example, and they say they should represent these different internal perspectives) and it is a society

largely unified on the question of Russia and Russian influence in Ukraine (though journalists here are largely split on the question of whether they should be objective on this issue, and therefore whether they should represent these voices in Ukraine). On the other hand, journalists in the country have a long history of dealing with objectivity, both as a normative goal and in practice. They have, in certain ways, a wealth of experience in finding a line between being objective in practice while also managing the various pressures that have long pushed journalists to be biased (these different pressures were explored in the literature review chapter of this work and they are the focus of Chapter 6). From this perspective, Ukrainian journalists have a great deal of experience walking this line, and their discussion on this issue may prove helpful for the American context.

In the pages of this chapter that follow, Ukrainian journalists discuss this specific role of being a representative voice for the different beliefs and perspectives in their society. They highlight the different factors that limit their ability to fulfill this normative role. While the war in the east of Ukraine, and the subsequent battle by the country against pro-Russian misinformation and propaganda, has had a significant impact on the kinds of stories the press provides the public, the journalists interviewed in this work, nonetheless, said the press in Ukraine should do this work. The reporters said that being a representative voice for different perspectives can help people broaden their worldviews, increase the level of tolerance for conflicting beliefs, and help citizens throughout the country better understand one another and help dispel certain regional myths and stereotypes that exist in Ukraine.

## Journalists' Normative Beliefs on a Journalistic Pragmatism in Ukraine

In response to a question only 12 minutes into the interview on what the press should be doing for Ukrainian democracy, the very first role journalist Ihor Tymots listed was that the press should be a communicator between different groups in society, and they should do so with the purpose of pulling people out of their own echo chambers. “First, the press should serve as communicators between different groups so that they don’t close themselves off in their own truth [chuckled slightly], in their established beliefs – so that there is communication. This is the hope,” said Tymots, a 33-year-old reporter who has worked as a journalist for more than 10 years.

Tymots said he first became interested in journalism as a 16-year-old student in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv as he watched journalists cover the protests against then-president Leonid Kuchma in 2001. Before he started, he was very idealistic about the role journalism plays in society, and he thought it was a way to fight for justice and a way to improve society, though he now acknowledges that his view of the job is tempered more with both positives and negatives after having worked in the profession for more than a decade. But it is this role that journalism plays as a link between people and society that he thinks will be needed if Ukraine wants to fix many of the problems it faces.

Tymots wasn’t the only journalist to bring up this role very early in the conversation. Within seven minutes of starting the interview and without any priming from the researcher and in response to the first question of the interview that asked her what first interested her about journalism, journalist Viktoriya Babenko said that the job gave her the opportunity “to show people a different, interesting world with

the goal of either changing something or to provoke in people a desire to learn more, to expand their own worldviews by learning about different people.”

Babenko, who for the past eight years has taught documentary journalism and journalism ethics and conducts research on television in Ukraine, said she was pulled to journalism as a tool to uncover for the audience what is hidden, or to point out issues or problems that are important for people that were not being talked about. In addition to her work teaching journalism at the Ukrainian Catholic University, one of only a handful of western style journalism schools in Ukraine, Babenko also produces various social documentaries for television and film. She said she does the documentary work because it allows her to learn about and then tell the story of different kinds of people – “people who have interesting thoughts and colorful ideas,” said Babenko, a 35-year-old native of Lviv. “And it seems to me that it’s important now to talk about these people. It seems to me that this is a timeless role.”

Oksana Piddubna, who worked as a reporter and television host for Espresso TV before moving to the BBC in Ukraine, began in journalism in 2011 as an investigative reporter focusing on courts and Ukrainian law. Three minutes into her interview, after being asked what first interested her about journalism, she said that she wanted to do a job that she believed was important for society and that could influence how people think about the news. “I really like to help people, and I think it’s what drives me – really helping people, and, as we always say, giving voice to the voiceless. It is something that is really important for me in my work.”

Some journalists took a little more prodding to get to this role. One journalist, a 33-year-old from Zaporizhia Oblast in the east of Ukraine, first listed a number of

other roles that the press should play in Ukraine: journalists should be watchdogs, they should educate and enlighten society, they should not be sensational, and they should talk with people at the grass roots. Asked directly if journalists should represent the different voices in society, she said, “Theoretically, yes. I think everybody, at least people with some kind of level of education, understand that. People even understood that during Soviet times, but you know the structure of society was completely different,” said the journalist, who asked to remain anonymous. “But, again, all of these online media right now, they do support this idea. And if you don’t have a voice in the national media or your local media, you always have your page online. And that would be even more powerful than the well-known, well-recognized media. So that is something new in recent years, but that is very big right now,” said the journalist, who spent 13 years working as a reporter. She started in journalism as a reporter in her hometown at the state-owned newspaper, Zaporizhka Pravda, and she now teaches journalism and conducts research on the press in Ukraine at Zaporizhia National University.

The same journalist was asked how journalists should handle a plural society of different beliefs, and even perhaps different truths. “How I handle that?” she asked. “I try to be a good listener first, because if you don’t put new ideas in your mind first, you can’t be tolerant of everybody else. You should be open to new information, to new people – not to judge first, but to think first,” she said.

Roman Romaniuk, a political journalist for one of Ukraine’s leading newspapers, Ukrainska Pravda, said that not only should the press in Ukraine promote pluralism, but that such a pluralism does exist in Ukraine because a wide variety of

publications and news outlets are representing various positions and beliefs in Ukraine. “Thank god there is a broad range of publications which you can just go and read, figure out what’s happening and understand why things happen a certain way and not another. And that there is access to, let’s say it like this, a plurality of different viewpoints, this is also accepted in society. There is no monopoly on information. Publications can be under the influence of some politician or industrial group, but you can always find another publication that will give you a different perspective on the same event, and you can establish a picture for yourself, and in principle understand the situation. Thankfully this pluralism exists.” He said it is this pluralism that separates Ukrainian democracy from Belarus and Russia.

Another journalist, who asked to remain anonymous, said near the beginning of the interview that journalism should represent different positions. The journalist was asked later how she handles a plural society of different views, and whether she thought, as Rorty had suggested, that division and difference was a matter of salience – a matter of highlighting what differentiates people – and whether journalism could help highlight those characteristics that a society shares in common. In reply, she discussed a story that she and a colleague did on a religious procession in Kyiv organized by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate, a self-governing church of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine. The procession had raised the ire of many of Kyiv’s citizens, who said that the people marching were provocateurs and people who were only paid to be there. In explaining how they decided to cover the story, the journalist said, “we took the position that journalism is not only the news, but it’s also about responsibility, which is why we decided that we

would talk not about those things that divide us, that which leads to arguments, but we're going to talk about what unites us, and about what's important."

The journalist, a 27-year-old who has worked for both western and Ukrainian media in the capital, Kyiv, then talked about social difference among various groups. Her description nearly echoed Rorty's understanding of difference as a matter of salience:

I think that the relationship between large groups of people in one country is similar to the relationship between a married couple, or a family. At some stage, the level of egoism in both partners is very high. They need. They want to take. They don't want to give back. Each person wants happiness. There is a stage where people talk only about those things that separate them, only about how far apart they are. And possibly at some stage it's necessary to talk about differences so that later we can understand the goal of the discussion. What are we talking about? ... Because of which differences [are we divided]? And later when we understand the differences we see in each other, then comes a stage when we calm our emotions, we begin to talk. And we understand our differences and we begin to accept each other and see how similar we are. And on this we [journalists] have to focus ourselves.

Yuriy Opoka, a 29-year-old who began in journalism in 2013, was also asked to consider this point about salience and difference, and about journalists helping a society to unite by focusing on what people share in common. But, he said, we're already accustomed to these things. What separates us, on the other hand, is often something that has changed, and it's much easier to get riled up, focused on, and emotional about that. "For example," he said, "if we're connected because we live

together in one country with a sense of security, we've gotten used to this. ... And this life in one country with a sense of security has already been accepted as a given, something that must be, something that already is." But, every time Ukraine has faced revolution or war and that sense of security has been threatened, Opoka says that all of those little things that might have previously divided Ukrainians falls away and Ukrainians focus on what binds them together. In many ways, he says, this is exactly what is happening now in Ukraine. In fact, many journalists said that they believed Ukraine was divided on various internal and what they saw as more minor issues, but that the country was largely unified on the bigger issue of Russian involvement in Ukraine, and the continuing threat that Russia will attempt to push deeper into the country. "A crisis develops in Ukraine and we can sense that this feeling of safety is gone, and life together in one country can be lost. And then these smaller ... that which separates us falls away. Then we really understand that that which binds us together is more important, it is paramount." For Opoka, then, it was the war that had done most of the work to unite Ukrainians.

### Disagreement Over Whether Journalism is Providing Voice

In talking about this normative role of providing a voice to the various perspectives found in their society, the journalists interviewed for this work were largely divided on the question of whether journalism actually is doing this work in Ukraine. Those journalists who said they thought journalism in Ukraine was not representing the various perspectives and beliefs in Ukrainian society gave various reasons for what they thought made it difficult in Ukraine for journalists to do this

work, while other journalists said that the press in Ukraine was fulfilling this role, and they provided various examples.

Babenko, the 35-year-old documentary producer, pointed to the work of Hromadske.TV, an Internet television station in Ukraine that began in the aftermath of Ukraine's decision under then-president Viktor Yanukovich, who later fled to Russia during the Euromaidan protests in 2014, to not sign a European Union-Ukraine Association Agreement. The channel developed a large audience because of its coverage of the Euromaidan protests. It has since, however, come under criticism from journalists in Ukraine – including from journalists during the interviews for this dissertation – for a perceived lack of objectivity regarding the war with Russia and their support of the Ukrainian army. Despite their stance on the war and Russian involvement in Ukraine, Babenko said that Hromadske was doing the work of travelling throughout the country and speaking with people at the grass roots in an effort to hear their voices, listen to their concerns, and pass their perspectives on to “help inform public thought.”

When asked if the press was representing different minority groups in Ukraine, Stas Kozljuk, a 27-year-old political reporter for The Ukrainian Week, brought up the media's representations of the LGBTQ communities in Ukraine. The country has been historically conservative on such issues, but Kozljuk said that not only was the national press providing a voice for the LGBTQ community in Ukraine, but they were also conducting various trainings for the country's regional media on how to report on such groups. “These discussions [about covering LGBTQ issues] really began right after the Revolution of Dignity [which is what Ukrainians call the

2014 revolution that led to the ouster of former president Viktor Yanukych], at the beginning of 2014. We began actively talking about the problems of the LGBTQ community, that they should not be discriminated against just because they're different. Media even produced programs, narrative portraits as we call them, about these people. That is to say, how do they live? What do they do? What are their worldviews? What do they want from this life?" But, Kozljuk added, these programs were pegged to pride events in Ukraine, such as a pride parade in Kyiv, as opposed to being offered more regularly throughout the year. "But the discussion continues throughout the year [among the press on how to cover such issues]. ... There are, and are being organized, specifically for regional media – because regional media in Ukraine are a separate problem – trainings on how to write about the problems of LGBT. How to write about these people so that they are not denigrated? And how to explain to people that, actually, representatives of sexual minorities are the same as everyone else?"

Other journalists, however, said that, even though they believed the press should represent the different perspectives found in Ukrainian society, there are a variety of different pressures on journalists in Ukraine that make it very difficult for the press to fulfill this function. Some of those pressures effectively work to paint Ukraine as a society split into two simple camps. It is a divide that many in the west previously claimed fell along geographic or linguistic lines – western Ukraine versus eastern Ukraine, or the Ukrainian language versus Russian. But since the Euromaidan protests in 2013-2014, that divide has been portrayed as falling along the line of Ukrainians who support moving closer to Europe, and those Ukrainians who want to

maintain a closer relationship with Russia. Since the war began, however, and since Russia annexed Crimea, many journalists said that Ukraine had become much more patriotic and it is now a country largely united by the war in the east. They say that there is still a divide in the country on this issue, but it is by no means an equal division. Most of the country is pro-Ukrainian and pro-European, while the minority of Ukrainians who have stayed in the occupied territories of the country are largely pro-Russian. Nearly all of the journalists, however, said there is much more plurality and nuance on issues internal to Ukraine.

Ihor Balynskyy, a 48-year-old journalism professor at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, said that journalism in Ukraine, particularly on television, does split society into two camps of “us” and “the other,” and he says it should not do this. Balynskyy said that he knows such a split into two simple camps is not the case in reality, but journalists needed to be particularly careful about doing this in the occupied region of Donbass. Later in the interview he returned to this same topic. “Overall, television channels are creating a split into two Ukraines: one Ukraine that is pro-European and one that hues closer to Russia. This is happening. But on the level of each individual channel, you won’t feel this.” He says that you can feel this only when you look at the aggregate of what’s happening on various channels, and he adds that this effect gets more acute during campaigns for elections.

Balynskyy, who first became interested in journalism while serving in the army and working for a military newspaper more than 25 years ago, said there is another problem: an audience that wants to see Ukraine as “us” and “other” and news channels that portray the world as “us” and “other” have created a situation in which

the audience only wants to hear itself and it doesn't want to listen to others. It has created an echo chamber. He said that this is happening "specifically in the context of Donbass and the annexation of Crimea. That is to say that television channels, in an effort to maintain their audience, are not promoting the idea that people should try to understand the other."

Balynskyy said that not only are television channels in Ukraine not promoting the idea that people should try to listen to different perspectives and points of view, but the audience really only wants information that reinforces their beliefs. "I believe that this type of reliance [on only watching the news that you want, the news that fits your already established worldview] has created, not a critical mindset, but a denial of different worldviews and perspectives. And, because of this, audiences have begun shutting themselves up within themselves," he said, adding that the press needs to provide their audiences a broader perspective of what's happening in the world.

The conversation turned to the question of what can be done if people don't want to think critically, and the researcher suggested that this same problem appears in the United States. Is there something that journalism can do to encourage people to move beyond their established worldviews and learn about other people and other perspectives? Balynskyy replied: "If you're saying that in American society there isn't an answer to this question, or an answer among the community of journalists to the question of what to do when a person won't accept, even in the smallest amount, other points of view, a person closes themselves off and says 'enough, goodbye,' then in the Ukrainian case the situation is even more complicated. It's not that the situation

is more complicated; it's that the solution to the problem is even more complicated. What should we [journalists] do with this?"

Other journalists also had no answer for this problem. Romaniuk, the political journalist from one of Ukraine's leading newspapers, *Ukrainska Pravda*, said the press can't force people to expand their worldviews, and, in fact, social media and the press exacerbate the issue. "Contemporary media and social networks can be used as an instrument to stir up these trends. This seems obvious to me," he said, adding that he's occasionally interacted with members of such largely closed groups.

They don't hear another side. They use Facebook exclusively to search for people of the same mindset. This is not a platform for the exchange of ideas; it is a platform to gather and to concentrate a kind of social well of some idea. And then within the confines of this community, of course it seems to them that everyone around them thinks the same way. The deeper you go into it, the more powerful this environment becomes. Yes, this really is a big problem. But this isn't completely a problem for the media because there's really nothing we can do with this, right? That is to say, this is an instrument of a different stage in the development of civilization, speaking honestly. We can't do anything with this; it is beyond the sphere of our influence. We can only get through to them if we are interesting, and to be interesting we have to step beyond our individual principles. That is to say, by definition communication is not possible.

Romaniuk paused. He wanted to make an additional point that this phenomenon benefits not only xenophobic, chauvinist, or radical right nationalist groups. It has also been used, for example, by the group of volunteers who are

working to gather first aid supplies or money for Ukrainian soldiers fighting the war in the east. His point being that this echo chamber is also being used to help society. “This same instrument can be used exactly the same way for good as it can to concentrate your own schizophrenia,” he said.

“And this raises a different question,” Romaniuk said, moving to another point that seemed prescient, as he raised it before news broke of Russia’s efforts to inflame American democracy using social media and other means. “Are there forces that are interested in concentrating social groups around certain negative ideas and using them for political purposes? I think there are, naturally. Is this self-organized, or is this deliberate work supported by someone against another? This is a sphere that is completely unregulated. And how should we understand it?” He paused and thought, then said jokingly, “This is work for a separate dissertation.”

The researcher asked whether the press was using certain issues or topics because they are either sensational or inflammatory. Balynskyy, who throughout his career worked as a journalist, an editor, and later in media management, said that television news in Ukraine is highlighting divisions, and perhaps inflaming society. “Media, depending on the political interests of their owners or those groups behind television channels, are playing on all of those internal divisions. This is all true. This has a place. But despite this play on people’s fears, a moment of responsibility [among the press] remains. It has grown compared with previous years. That is to say, media benefit from inflaming this division, from inflaming these kinds of internal misunderstandings.” But he says that even though this is happening in Ukraine, media there seem to understand that they should do no harm. He says it’s less about

responsibility, and more an understanding that they should not go so far as to harm society.

But Balynskyy later points out in the interview that very often scandals and sensations wouldn't exist if the press didn't highlight them. He acknowledges that there are instances where it seems the press in Ukraine is inflaming society, but he also points out that the Ukrainian audience is very passive, and because of this he does not think that the press inflaming society is a very big problem in Ukraine. "This is a kind of post-Soviet society that was always told that initiative is punished."

Another journalist who asked to remain anonymous said that the press in Ukraine should be a platform for rational debate of various ideas, beliefs, and perspectives; it should be a public sphere. She said they stopped doing this and they've become venues for entertainment and a place that channels people's negativism.

This conversation regarding the use of emotion by the media also turned to the example of Ukrainian political talk shows, which Balynskyy said are not venues for rational and reasonable debate, but rather they are often venues for heated argument among talking heads. The best example of this is the program hosted by Savik Shuster, a political journalist and host of several talk shows. "I once had a discussion with Savik Shuster, and I said 'Savik, why do you need so many of these clowns on the air?' And he said 'because they generate ratings. ... And ratings generate

advertising. And advertising is money. Put on smart, intelligent, knowledgeable experts,' he [Shuster] says, 'and the audience will leave the channel.'"<sup>22</sup>

The 33-year-old journalist from the eastern town of Zaporizhia also brought up Shuster as an example of the use of emotion in venues meant for political discourse. "We have this person, Savik Shuster. ... This is a very interesting case in Ukrainian journalism. ... He has been working in Ukraine for, I guess, 10 years. Almost every TV channel ... he had his show on every TV channel. His show was closed on Inter, closed on 1+1, on UA1, everywhere. But he is still on because he puts on garbage, he brings garbage, and everybody hates him, but everybody watches him. He has his show online right now, but everybody still watches him, and he will be forever here. It doesn't matter who prohibits him, who doesn't want him to be on TV. He will be."

Asked about the use of emotion in Ukrainian media, Stas Kozljuk, the 27-year-old political reporter for The Ukrainian Week, said the situation seemed analogous to what is seen in political talk shows in the United States. He also brought up the example of Shuster, whom he identified as a popular political talk show host on television. It was a program in which "opponents yelled at one another," said Kozljuk, who is from the capital, Kyiv. "This was a good entertainment program, but nothing more. That is to say, the correctly chosen personalities who can make a show, who are going to yell at each other – they may, perhaps, even start physically

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<sup>22</sup> While these programs in Ukraine are political talk shows, they are often anything but calm public debate. Shuster's program in particular – Savik Shuster Live – is notorious for being incredibly venomous and nasty. The English-language Kyiv Post wrote that such programs frequently turn "into shouting matches where mudslinging is the main weapon rather than powerful arguments." The Post's story also quoted Natalya Ligachova, head of the media watchdog Telekrytyka, who said that such programs "have turned into dogfights where presenters also exploit topics." Accessed on April 20, 2018, at <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/tuning-out-117201.html>.

fighting, but constructive infotainment was absolutely not there.” Kozljuk went on to say, as many other journalists did, that it is wrong for the press to use emotion to generate greater ratings or a larger audience. “No, journalists should not be like this. Playing on people’s emotions, this isn’t right. . . . Instead of being analytical, we have emotion, and really this works to divide society.”

On the question of tolerance in Ukraine, and the role of the press in helping to promote a more tolerant and less emotional society, Balynskyy said that Ukraine is working to decrease intolerance in the country, and the press in Ukraine is helping to better represent different groups in Ukraine. “All the same, the level in Ukrainian society of a radical intolerance of other perspectives is noticeably lower,” he claimed. Asked if that meant that the level of tolerance in Ukraine was increasing, he said he would frame it differently. He’s not ready to say that Ukraine is becoming more tolerant, but that the extent to which people are radically intolerant to others is decreasing. “Whether this is already tolerance, I’m not ready to say. But that people view you as ‘the other’ because of politics, belief, or ideas means less. You can feel this.”

Balynskyy said that even on the issue of Russia, Ukrainian media have not made Russians an enemy. “There is absolutely an understanding that Russia is the aggressor, but the average Russian has not become the enemy. That is to say that the media is not demonizing Russian people.” He says the Ukrainian society has a great number of stereotypes, and they can be manipulated and exacerbated, if Ukraine is not careful. There is a tradition of anti-Semitism and other issues, but he says that the level of xenophobia and aggressiveness is noticeably lower than what it potentially

could be. He says that if things continue to develop carefully in Ukraine, he can see a more tolerant, plural Ukraine.

Romaniuk, the political reporter for *Ukrainska Pravda*, also acknowledged that stereotyping does happen in the press, and journalists should work to avoid using such shortcuts and instead focus on actions and a given person's specific actions. "There is a problem here, naturally, this stereotypization when you say 'this person here is a Communist. And that's all. The rest is not important.' Any kind of thinking disappears. This, in principle, means we should judge by a person's actions. Even a bad person can do something good."

For Romaniuk, and a number of other journalists, this danger of relying on stereotypes and words to inflame and split society was even more acute and critical in the occupied territories of Donbass and Crimea. "I think about the possibility of reintegration [of people] in the captured region of Donbass. This is a war of discourses. Not a war of people, because, well, naturally there are people who are physically fighting, but they are fighting for certain words – separatist, fascist, Banderite [a derogatory term for people portrayed as radical nationalists from western Ukraine]. That is to say that there are certain forced external stereotyped constructions that are more important than certain personal connections between people who stand on either side of the front line. And this will be the problem because people will survive [the war]," he said. People will return to their homes, life will go on once the conflict ends, "but the problem is that people will continue to fight with words that were put in their heads. And this needs to be addressed now. This is a very serious problem."

In response to a question that asked whether the press can play a role in helping a society heal after a violent division, one journalist who asked to remain anonymous said, “Yes, media would play a significant role in this process of reconciliation. I think media maybe they are a key player in any reconciliation process.”

The journalist, who recently left Hromadske to work for the BBC in Ukraine, said that the war in the east had created a potential problem for journalists who try to fulfill this role of representing the different perspectives and voices in their society, which in this case includes Ukrainian separatists who are fighting with Russia against Ukraine. “You know, there is this very, very recurrent for any war problem when the enemy is depicted extremely ... is demonized, on the one hand, and also people who stay in the occupied territories they also ... sometimes they’re extremely victimized, sometimes they’re demonized, sometimes they are treated unfairly. And Ukrainian media, by now, they didn’t work out their answer: How they have to write about these people. How they have to cover these issues. There is no clear answer. Every single journalist tries to answer the question by herself or himself,” she said.

But the journalist also noted the importance for Ukrainian journalism of deciding how they should represent and give voice to Ukrainian citizens who fought with Russia against Ukraine, and she said some press were already working to humanize Ukrainian citizens who live in the occupied regions of Donbass. “Media they brought their basic representations of the other side, and these representations helped to create new narratives, new updated narratives, where those who were on the other side during the conflict they were humanized instead of any kind of

dehumanization. ... So Ukrainian media have to prepare now, already, very seriously what they will do in 5, 10, 20 years,” she said, with regard to helping with the process of reconciliation. “We have to think rationally, on the one hand, and on the other to help the country move beyond any hatred, any prolonged tensions that consume peoples’ energy.”

Romaniuk said it was important to remember that the conflict in Ukraine did not turn violent on its own, and that Russian propaganda in Donbass has purposefully worked to split Ukraine by playing on inflammatory stereotypes. He was asked what could be done to bring two warring sides down from a very emotional, heated conflict in which the “other” is stereotyped and demonized. The question for him was whether anything can be done when the discourse is essentially one side saying “you’re an idiot,” while the other side responds, “No, you’re an idiot,” and both sides just entrench themselves further in a very emotional, simplistic, and stereotyped view of the “other” side. He acknowledged that this was a big task, and, as many of the journalists interviewed for this work said, perhaps not one that journalism was capable of solving without help.

“I can’t imagine. I honestly can’t imagine who will do this, and I can’t even imagine how much effort this will take, because so much effort has been placed in, as I see it, inflaming people’s differences that I can’t imagine who will be able to soften them,” Romaniuk said. “But for us there is another problem. Family ties. Many relatives don’t talk with each other,” he paused and stressed, “Families. A brother, sister, mother, father, a daughter, a son, someone else. In my newsroom there are people who don’t talk with their parents. Parents, who gave birth to them, raised

them, looked after them, all of it. They don't talk with them because they can't, because right away the conversation turns to this ideological divide, and that's it. It's no longer possible to talk about anything. It's impossible to talk about the weather, or what's happening at home, or how's your heart, or other things. A discussion is impossible because it immediately turns to the ideological."

Despite acknowledging the depth of the problem, Romaniuk then began talking in Rortian terms about difference as a matter of salience. "I'm personally ready to say, ok, 'you want to think this way, I want to think this way, let's instead go ahead and think about something that unites us. And on the basis of that let's build a common future, and not on the basis of that which divides us.'" He continued in a soft, pleading tone: "What difference does it make to me, good heavens, what you ... I don't know ... some kind of Soviet Union. What is that? The concept of it hasn't existed for more than 25 years. And I'm supposed to have a war here in my country over that? Because of a thing that hasn't existed, good heavens, for a quarter century? It's impossible. Who is Bandera? Good heavens. I don't care. Seriously," he said, raising his voice slightly as he referenced the historical figure who some people in Ukraine label an ultra nationalist and extremist, while others in the country view as a World War II freedom fighter. "There was a person," Romaniuk said, "and now there's not a person. That's it. That story's done. What else are we going to talk about? Let's instead talk about how we're going to clean up around the house, I don't know. Paint the elevator. [Common areas for residential elevators and stairwells in post-Soviet countries such as Ukraine and Russia are notoriously run down and

neglected.] And later when we've done all the work we need to do we can talk about Bandera, if we need to.”

On the issue of the war with Russia, Romaniuk said that he does believe the press in Ukraine is partly to blame for inflaming that discourse. He said that the conversation in Ukraine on other topics not related to the war remained calm, but on the issue of the war, he said that when you view different television news programs in Ukraine you can see that there is a divide between those people fighting on the pro-Ukrainian side and others fighting with Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine. “Right now there’s a different problem,” he said. “Stoking people to extremes. The language is very ... it’s about specific distinctions, in which people lose their individual ...” he paused to think of the right words, then added, “All wars begin when there appears a ‘you’ and ‘your enemy.’ And when you have a ‘you’ and ‘your enemy,’ that’s it. There is war. It becomes possible. And right now this is the language used by media. There are ‘ours’ and there is ‘the enemy.’ There is no individualization. When individualization appears, then ‘he’ as an enemy disappears, and instead there appears a ‘him’ as ‘him,’ a person with whom you can talk, with whom you can find agreement.” He paused again. “Plain discussion.”

Romaniuk’s understanding that, when the press removes individualization from the news and when they use generalization and stereotype, they effectively reinforce simple dichotomies in which Ukrainians are portrayed as either “one of us” or “the enemy.” His inference, of course, is that when journalists do provide these individual details – when they provide deep descriptions of peoples’ lives – the press can instead blur simple divisions that reinforce an “us” versus “them” mentality.

Romaniuk's understanding of the problem and the role journalism plays in either easing or exacerbating such division is remarkably similar to Rorty's description of and solution to the problem.

Rorty believed that people are more likely to resort to violence when they see their political rivals as different from themselves, as somehow the "other." Rorty's solution involved fostering a society with a "we-consciousness," a society capable of expanding its definition of who constitutes "we" to include larger parts of society. This characterization of people as "other," according to Rorty, diminishes the humanity of people who aren't like us by portraying them as less human, and thus justifying toward them – toward "others" – acts of cruelty, suffering, or violence. Rorty argued that "the disciplines which specialize in thick description of the private and idiosyncratic" can ease this division. "This process of coming to see other human beings as 'one of us' rather than as 'them' is a matter of detailed description of what unfamiliar people are like and of redescription of what we ourselves are like. This is a task not for theory but for genres such as ethnography, the journalist's report, the comic book, the docudrama, and, especially, the novel (Rorty 1989, p. xvi). Romaniuk's comments above demonstrate that, whether or not he is familiar with Rorty's work, he certainly understands the essence of Rorty's argument that journalism can ease or exacerbate this division.

It is important to note that Romaniuk said, as did many other journalists interviewed in this work, that the press in Ukraine seems to be reinforcing an "us" versus "them" mentality on the subject of the war with pro-Russian forces in the east of the country. But on various local or regional topics the Ukrainian press is not

polarizing society. In short, this division between external and internal topics appears to be one of the main distinctions in terms of journalism providing a voice for different perspectives in Ukraine. When the conversation with Ukrainian journalists turned to the topic of the war in Ukraine, or Russian involvement in the country, either directly in terms of tolerating Russian troops on Ukrainian territory, or in terms of the broadcasting of Russian television into Ukraine, the press is largely divided on whether it should represent that perspective. This question of objectively representing this perspective in Ukraine, and whether it should do so in an effort to accurately portray the pro-Russian position in the country, is the core theme of Chapter 6 of this dissertation. That chapter focuses squarely on the debate within the Ukrainian press on journalistic objectivity.

But on the topic of representing different voices on issues that are internal to Ukraine, journalists all acknowledged that the press should fulfill this role and they should be a representative voice for the full spectrum of beliefs and perspectives in their society, including minority positions that were historically marginalized in the Soviet era. Whether and the extent to which reporters are able to do this in their society is a different matter. Journalists say there are various factors that make it difficult to uphold this particular norm, and uphold the broader spectrum of journalistic norms and standards. They point out that Ukraine's particular media landscape, one in which oligarchs hold significant sway over both the business and editorial aspects of journalism in their country, creates a setting in which Ukrainian journalists operate according to a mixture of both western norms and norms that exist

within Ukraine's specific media environment. This is the subject of the following chapter.

## Chapter 5: Normative Beliefs of Ukrainian Journalists

In addition to looking specifically for a pragmatic journalism among the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists, this research sought to explore more broadly the norms of journalism in Ukraine. In doing so, it directly addressed calls from the literature for the need to conduct research on journalism in non-Western societies, on journalism in transition democracies, on media theory and democracy, on de-Westernizing our understanding of journalism ethics, and on the beliefs of journalists regarding the roles they should play in a democracy. While the previous chapter presented the findings on one specific normative belief among Ukrainian journalists, this chapter presents the findings on the broader spectrum of press norms in Ukraine.

The core research questions here asked whether the standards for journalism in Ukraine are western, or whether there are certain norms that are uniquely Ukrainian. In short, the interviews of Ukrainian journalists revealed that journalists overwhelmingly believe that the press in Ukraine should work according to western norms, and they often specifically cited the standards of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Even when pressed to consider whether journalism in Ukraine may have certain standards that are unique to the country – which spent more than 70 years under Soviet Communism and more than 25 years as a transitional democracy ruled largely by corrupt oligarchs – several journalists pushed back and said that journalism norms are universal.

That, however, is not the complete story. While all of the journalists interviewed for this research said that journalism in Ukraine should aspire to work by

western standards, the interviews also revealed a more nuanced picture of the normative beliefs that exist in the Ukrainian media environment, and an active, at times heated, debate among journalists in the country regarding those standards. At the heart of that debate is the normative concept of journalistic objectivity itself, which is the subject of the following chapter. But the interviews also revealed that many journalists in Ukraine are themselves highly critical of the press in their country for not adhering more closely to western norms, and they often voice that criticism of one another on social media. In several interviews, journalists said that such standards are almost completely non-existent in certain organizations, and lacking or largely ignored in others. Although journalists voiced criticism of the degree to which the press in Ukraine adheres to western norms, they also acknowledged that Ukraine's particular media environment makes it very difficult for journalists to live up to those standards. It is this particular environment that makes the norms of journalism in the country both western, and, at the same time and to a degree, uniquely Ukrainian. It is through this paradoxical situation – that challenges to media freedom are both acknowledged, yet criticized – that one can see both the constraints and opportunities inherent within Rortian principles of journalistic norms.

Throughout the interviews conducted for this research, journalists highlighted two factors that most affect their environment: First, media in the country are predominantly owned and heavily influenced by various oligarchs and politicians, and, second, the business market for the press in Ukraine is driven much more by the need for influence rather than advertising and subscriptions, as are the media markets in many western democratic countries. Journalists said that those independent media

organizations that do exist in Ukraine are largely financed by grants and funding from western Europe, while media owned by oligarchs are largely funded by their owners and are used as tools to fight one another and influence public opinion either to support their interests or denigrate competing oligarchs. One journalist even pointed out that a Twitter meme spread throughout the journalism community in Ukraine that sarcastically poked fun at the idea of journalists in the country adhering to western standards while working for oligarchic media.

Therefore, in a society in which journalism has long been an instrument used by people in power, it is not surprising that journalists overwhelmingly said that the press in Ukraine should be independent of government and of the people who own media in the country. Many of the journalists said that, if Ukraine aspires to progress as a democracy, the press as an institution in the country and its individual journalists must be allowed to work freely and without influence from their ownership or from politicians. And, what's more, based on the interviews conducted for this research, journalists in Ukraine understand that they need to develop an institutional tradition of independence and adherence to western norms. They say this is a work in progress. In the following pages of this chapter, journalists discuss the different normative roles they believe journalism should play in their democratic society, and they address the different factors that they say make it difficult to adhere to these standards in Ukraine.

### Ukrainian Journalists on Western Norms

When asked about norms in Ukraine, and whether there were any that might be different from those found in western democratic countries, journalist Paul Shapoval said that “everyone, everyone uses the standards of the BBC” in Ukraine.

“Eastern Europe is in no way different from western Europe, or from the United States.” He paused for a moment, than added, “I really don’t like it when people say that in Eastern Europe there’s some kind of different journalism. We have the same technical standards. We write the same kinds of texts, if it really is journalism. With that said, it’s an open question of what you can call journalism [in Ukraine], and what you can’t,” he said. “We are no different than the western world.”

Journalist Serhiy Mamaiev, who works for the television channel 1+1 as the editor-in-chief of the news program “Right to Power,” said that not only is the Ukrainian press aware of western norms, but the press in Ukraine should work according to BBC standards. Mamaiev, a 42-year-old who has worked for a variety of major television channels in Ukraine, said that many journalism students in Ukraine don’t understand the way a western newsroom works, and when he speaks to young journalists he refers them to a western fictional television show about the press to illustrate what journalists really do inside a newsroom. “Ukrainian journalism is still only learning to do quality, high value journalism, which is why we have a lot to learn. We have the standards of the BBC, which we use. In all honesty, I use the serial Newsroom and recommend that my students watch it so that they understand ... that they understand there is an idealistic history, but to also show them how an editorial newsroom works on the inside, how they verify facts multiple times. I recommend it because if you want to understand how contemporary television works, than watch the serial Newsroom. It’s not poorly done. Really, for me as a television producer and editor, I watch it and I understand that this is true, actually. Well, it’s

slightly, slightly different from what we have, but it's true," said Mamaiev, who often conducts media seminars for journalists on standards and ethics.

Stas Kozljuk, a 27-year-old political reporter for The Ukrainian Week who covers the war in the east, said he first became interested in journalism after watching the role journalists played during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004-2005. He studied journalism at the National Aviation University's Institute of International Relations, which includes a department of journalism. It was there that his first professor, who worked as a journalist in Ukraine when the Soviet Union still existed, told Kozljuk to ignore the norms of the old Soviet journalism. "During our first year in university, one of the teachers described his journalistic experiences, because he worked as a journalist during a time of reconstruction in the Soviet Union, and he talked about the time when journalists fought with and broke the old system which had existed – how they worked to develop new journalistic realities, to the extent that journalists stopped being, well, if I can put it this way, a servant girl at court who served someone's interests. Journalists were able to speak the truth, and this was extremely important."

Later in the interview, as he talked about the ethical problems of photographers altering war photographs, Kozljuk returned to the topic of Ukrainian journalism discarding Soviet norms for what he said were universal press norms. He was asked by the researcher to consider if, in doing this, Ukrainian journalists were adopting western norms, or whether Ukrainian journalists were organically developing norms specific to Ukraine and necessary for the country's particular democratic context. "When we began talking [about norms in school], this was during

our first year in university, we had just started our first year, our teachers told us, ‘don’t look at Soviet journalism because this is a journalism of propaganda and this is a journalism from a different time.’ Now, when we live in an independent Ukraine, we are working to build a different kind of journalism, an objective journalism, a journalism without propaganda. And when you’re going to work [in journalism], strive to work as the BBC works. You’re supposed to be objective. If there’s something you don’t like, this doesn’t mean you’re allowed to ignore it. You must understand it, you must provide different perspectives, because, sooner or later, one way or another, just one perspective can spoil your work. This isn’t right.”

Kozljuk returned to his example of war photographers altering photographs, and he stressed that every journalist knows this isn’t right. And it wasn’t an expectation they took from the west, he said. It was something every journalist knows not to do. In talking about the doctored photos, Kozljuk added, “we’re deceiving our audience. This isn’t right. I don’t know what it’s like among other journalists, in other media, but at least in our circle it worked like this: we didn’t look at examples of how it [ethical discussions among journalists of adhering to norms] worked somewhere else, let’s say, in the U.S.A., of how it worked in Britain, how it worked, somewhere, in France, in Germany, or in other places. We had our concrete example, and we know how it’s supposed to work,” he paused. “And we know there were violations. That’s it.”

Kozljuk was among many journalists who said that the press in Ukraine was working to build a tradition of adhering to standards in their country, and working to create a culture in which future generations of Ukrainian journalists would look

internally for exemplars of this tradition. Ihor Samokish, a journalist with The Day newspaper in the capital, Kyiv, who is originally from the eastern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhia, also noted that journalism in Ukraine is going through a major transformation and working to build its own press traditions. “If you want to know about a role that journalism should play in such a society as Ukraine, first of all, I remember one opinion that, when Ukraine gained its independence, Ukrainian journalists after this totalitarian regime just didn’t know what to do with this freedom and democracy. This also impacted their quality, on the quality of their materials, because people just realized that they can talk about everything. But these messages didn’t have any kinds of borders ... and that’s really sad. ... As I said before, in my opinion, the responsibilities of journalists and journalism are very important. But, unfortunately, we are not the same type of society as Great Britain, which has its BBC with its own standards. We are just transforming into something new, which Ukraine wasn’t before, and we’re separating from Russia.”

Dmytro Vlasov, a journalist with the Associated Press for the past 12 years who first became interested in journalism when he was 10 years old, said he already knew of the BBC standards when he was growing up. “Of course most of us, we know about BBC standards. Most people got this training with the BBC,” Vlasov said, though he also noted, as many journalists did, that even though journalists in Ukraine are aware of western norms and standards, many media organizations in the country don’t adhere to such norms. He said it was difficult as a reporter for the Associated Press when he talked with colleagues in Ukraine about why the AP adheres to standards that are typically higher than the standards that exist in most

Ukrainian media organizations. Vlasov said that Ukrainian colleagues from other organizations often don't understand why Vlasov adheres to these higher standards and norms.

Not all of the journalists pointed to a universal set of journalistic norms. Ihor Burdyga, a 32-year-old journalist who works for the Internet television station Hromadske, said that many Ukrainian journalists are familiar with western standards because those standards came from the United States. "A colleague and I were talking not long ago and we were recalling that we were taught by Russians who were taught by Americans. We worked in editorial offices which were run by Russian media managers who taught us, who in their time were taught by Americans from Radio Free Europe, The Washington Post, or Voice of America. They learned in these organizations, became media managers or editors. We had fewer western teachers than Russian teachers who understood American experiences, American standards." Burdyga then touched on one of the problems that many Ukrainian journalists also addressed. Namely, that even though the press in Ukraine knows western norms and standards doesn't mean they adhere to them. "All of this leads to the relationship to standards and some kinds of rules, in Ukraine there is not and has never been a consensus [on norms and standards]. And when the situation got worse [referring to the war in the east], it became even harder to find consensus."

Throughout the interviews, when journalists discussed norms and talked broadly about the standards of the BBC, the researcher sought to push the journalists to discuss specific, concrete norms that they thought the press should work toward in Ukraine. They were asked to describe the actual, individual roles that they thought the

press should play in their democratic society. What should journalism do? What does Ukrainian democracy need it to do in the country? Their responses to these questions were typically short and to the point – typically not offering much that would make for good quotations. Not surprisingly, the role of providing and verifying information was a primary role cited by each journalist. Among the additional roles that journalists described, they said the press should do the following in Ukraine: the press should be a platform for rational debate and a public sphere for the discussion of different ideas, they should be a bridge between people and government, they should work for society, they should be a check on government and work to expose corruption (they should be watchdogs), they should educate and enlighten, they should be independent, they should not lie, they should be impartial, and they should be objective. This last point on objectivity is where journalists in Ukraine appeared rather fiercely divided, and it is the core focus of the following chapter.

While all of these roles seemed no different than the norms of journalism in western democratic societies, there was one that many journalists discussed that stood out as perhaps different from western norms. Many of the journalists in Ukraine said that the press should solve problems for people. This wasn't the journalistic pragmatism described in the preceding chapter, and yet journalists were making a point that the press in Ukraine should be pragmatic and work to help citizens in the country solve actual problems. For the journalists interviewed for this work, that often meant both identifying what a given problem is, and then working to find and provide information that might help citizens solve that problem.

For example, prior to taking part in this research, Olena Zashko, a journalist who works for the Internet television channel Hromadske, did a segment in which she was filmed applying for and then obtaining her passport. Obtaining a passport in Ukraine has always been difficult, whether it was attempted during Soviet times or since Ukraine gained its independence. The country, as many former Soviet republics did, used two passports: one was internal, which every citizen had, and one was external, to be issued to a very small number of people. This system still exists, although Ukraine is trying to reform the process of obtaining external passports in an effort to make it more transparent, and thereby less corrupt. What Zashko's reporting did was try to solve a problem for people who had no idea how to go about getting a new Ukrainian foreign passport. This was not a story meant to expose corruption. It was a story that sought to show people the new process put in place for citizens to obtain their foreign passports.

All of this is not to say that journalism does not do similar work in western societies, but it was noticeable to hear this role mentioned among many of the journalists interviewed for this work. Andrii Bohdanovych, a 42-year-old editor at 1+1 Media, which owns eight television channels in the country, said Ukrainians traditionally have been very good at pointing out problems, but not very good at solving them. Journalism, he said, should help them work to solve problems. "For us, in Ukraine, often times we take up a problem, we talk, talk, talk, talk, and what?" he said, raising his voice at the end. "There is no result, or nothing happens after this. We sat, we talked, and that's it. ... We say that we have to improve the economy, or

something. But what concretely? And how does this affect people concretely?”

Journalism, he said, should help answer such questions.

Khristina Golovko, a 24-year-old freelance journalist from Lviv, also pushed back on the notion that perhaps there are some norms in Ukraine that are unique to the country. “Everyone understands, just as they probably do in America, that there are universal standards of journalism that we’ve all been taught – honesty, separation of facts from editorial commentary, and others, like the standards of the BBC. There are journalism schools in Ukraine that teach this to students. In particular, the school where I studied, the Ukrainian Catholic University, in the journalism masters program, and [the National University of] Kyiv Mohyla Academy’s journalism school, where they teach these western standards, like the BBC, like the western model. But when you come to work in an editorial office, it is understood that they will tell you about some rules which work in that editorial office, but the standards remain.” Golovko said that journalists in Ukraine all know and are prepared to work by western journalistic standards. But, upon joining a mass media organization in Ukraine, reporters are told by their editors and managers that there are certain expectations that exist within that organization. In essence, journalists are told by their editors that ‘yes, yes, the standards of the BBC are nice. But while you work here you are expected to do what we tell you to do or what not to do.’

### Journalistic Norms in Contemporary Ukraine

In the quotation above, Golovko was getting at a point that arose from many of the participants interviewed for this work. Namely, journalists in Ukraine are very aware of western standards, and they have been taught these standards either by other

journalists or during their formal education. But many journalists said there is a clear split between the formal, western standards that all journalists in the country know, and the norms that exist within specific organizations. And, moreover, this split does not appear soft, or somehow tacit – meaning that journalists do not learn about western standards, begin working in the Ukrainian press, and are then tacitly socialized into learning a different set of norms and standards that exist in their organizations. Many of the reporters interviewed for this work said that, even though all journalists know and talk about western standards in Ukraine, they are often explicitly told when they begin working at a given news organization that things are done differently there, just as Golovko indicated above. Many of the journalists interviewed for this dissertation talked about the divide between what they learned in school regarding journalistic norms, ethics, and standards, and what they have to learn once they enter media organizations in Ukraine. Far and away, the dominant theme that emerged from the interviews was that the norms that must be learned once reporters enter given Ukrainian media organizations are not specific to different media organizations. That is to say that, based on the interviews of journalists for this work, a dominant theme that emerged from what journalists said in the interviews is that there are different, although commonly-shared expectations that exist across many Ukrainian media organizations.

There are two factors that most affect the development of these norms in Ukraine. First, most media organizations in the country are owned by Ukrainian oligarchs or politicians who use the press to sway public opinion either in favor of their various business or political interests, or to denigrate and smear the interests of

their rivals. And, second, the market for journalism in Ukraine is not a market in which journalism is largely reliant on income from circulation and advertising, as is the case in many western countries. As the literature review revealed, Ukrainian oligarchs own and finance much of the media in the country, and journalists said that the wall that divides them and their editorial decisions from the business side of journalism in Ukraine largely does not exist in media owned by oligarchs in the country. Journalists who have worked in regional or local media throughout Ukraine also described scenarios in which such media are not owned by oligarchs, but local politicians. They described a situation in which those media that were once state-owned under Soviet Communism, and used as tools of propaganda by the state, merely switched ownership once Ukraine gained its independence. Local politicians took ownership where they could, but the tradition of being an arm of propaganda remained.

Journalists said this created a second layer of norms in Ukraine in which the press understands that their freedom to report and write as they choose is limited to topics that the ownership of their organization allows. Every single journalist interviewed for this work said that, within those media owned by oligarchs, journalists understand that certain topics cannot be touched. Ukraine, however, is developing a tradition of independent journalism, but it is relatively nascent, and many journalists said such journalism is dependent on grant funding from Europe and the United States. An independent, objective journalism in Ukraine has also been heavily influenced by the war in the east, which has pushed many journalists in the country to abandon objectivity in favor of a patriotic journalism that ignores many of

the country's deep, historic, post-Soviet problems. But many journalists said that they believe the work of developing a tradition in Ukraine of adhering to western norms has begun. This process has resulted in a great deal of debate among journalists – a theme that is reflected in the interviews conducted for this work – as Ukrainian journalists themselves are debating the future of Ukrainian journalism. In many ways, it is a conflict between these two layers of press norms and standards in the country.

Balynskyy, who chaired the department of journalism at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Ukraine and still teaches journalism there, said he is optimistic that this fierce debate among journalists in the country is a positive sign that the press is developing an institutional tradition of adhering to western norms. “Throughout these discussions, these conflicts [between journalists], journalism is formulating certain rules, which we later call standards. And in Ukraine these things were not formulated, but I would say that the events of Maidan [Euromaidan of 2013-2014] and the Revolution of Dignity, this was probably the first time in Ukraine that these processes began, and that's why I'm saying that my profession has not disappointed me up to now, because I see that there are incremental, and naturally slow and complex, changes, but the process of formulating certain rules, and formulating rules around the questions: What is bad? What is good? What is bad? This is beginning to be discussed in Ukrainian journalism. This is important,” said Balynskyy, who worked in journalism during both the Soviet period and post independence.

Another journalist, who asked to remain anonymous, said that journalism as an institution and profession has not developed as far as it needs to for Ukrainian democracy. “It is not for nothing that journalism is called a fourth estate. This is an

institution that is absolutely necessary for contemporary society, and that unfortunately in Ukraine up to this point, in my opinion, has not developed enough,” said the 37-year-old.

The journalist, who works for a Western news organization in Ukraine, said she had no desire to be a reporter when she was growing up, though one of her parents was active in journalism in Ukraine. “I was in this circle [of journalists] since I was a child,” though she added that she wasn’t interested in the profession. Her first job in journalism was with the Ukrainian news agency Unian, which is where she first became interested in the profession and where she had to learn how to be a journalist. “I had to learn how to write, I had to learn, in essence, from scratch.” Asked what interested her about journalism, she said, “listening to people’s stories is one of the main reasons that I like this work.” She added that the most important role journalism must play in Ukraine is to inform. “To explain and show the processes that are happening in society. There is the question of whether the press should influence people’s perspectives. All in all, it seems to me that a journalist’s first responsibility is to deliver information to people, and people should on their own decide if this is true, if it’s harmful.” In some instances, she said that journalists in Ukraine go too far in their effort to influence public opinion.

But this same journalist also said that people in power in Ukraine regularly treat journalists as mouthpieces who promote only their perspectives. This, after all, is a role that journalists performed during the Soviet era, and Ukraine’s oligarchs continue to use the press as servants who are hired to promote their various business interests. “For us journalism is, despite everything that people in Ukraine say, ‘oh,

yes, in Ukraine we now have freedom of speech.’ Of course everything has changed, especially compared to the period leading up to Yanukovich [the former president of Ukraine who fled to Russia as a result of the Euromaidan revolution], but at the same time journalists are in a more humiliating state than journalists from the west. That is to say, the attitude toward journalists by politicians and elites, their attitude toward journalists is like the attitude toward some sort of servant. And, unfortunately, in many instances the journalists themselves agree to this role. Maybe this is a little rough to say, but they are like lackeys that serve certain political parties or political groups,” the journalist said. “All in all, it seems to me that journalists are supposed to be more independent and to have some professional dignity. For us, unfortunately, this is missing.”

Balynskyy also noted that Ukrainian journalism’s legacy as a tool of Soviet propaganda has continued to influence the expectations of journalism in contemporary Ukraine, and that changing this environment will be extremely difficult without a tradition of adherence to norms and standards that the Ukrainian press can emulate. This is a cyclical problem in which journalism in Ukraine doesn’t uphold norms because it doesn’t have a tradition of upholding these expectations, and it doesn’t have that tradition because it doesn’t uphold norms. “Adhering to standards is not possible without a certain tradition that exists in society and in media. Journalism in Ukraine up to 1991, to the fall of the Soviet Union, was an ideological profession. There were two ideological faculties in any given university: a faculty of history and a faculty of journalism. That is to say that the Communist Party in the Soviet Union educated not journalists, but propagandists. This is a very important moment. And

what was important was that, when a journalist then went to a job, they gave him an assignment: how to write, what to write about, and so on. And this heritage of journalism education has just changed its colors. Right? Now it's not the red color of the Communist Party; it's yellow and blue with all of the national symbols. ... It is a very big problem, under these circumstances, ethics, media ethics, the standards of journalism. They teach this [ethics, norms, and standards], they're everywhere, but they are formal. Right? Because the people who teach this have never felt the need to function by these things," Balynskyy said, adding that many journalism educators in Ukraine have little professional experience and are leftovers from Soviet universities. There are a handful of western style journalism schools in the country, but they remain in the minority. Many of the journalists interviewed for this work also stressed that journalism education in Ukraine needs improvement.

Balynskyy also noted that Ukraine lacks credible, respected professional journalism societies that would help establish a set of standards for journalists in the country. "In many western markets a journalist is that person who holds a media card. This is a person who belongs to a professional society, to a community, to an editorial office, to something. Right? This identification, it's formal, but it creates a community, and this community, over the course of decades, creates its own internal rules that have developed into certain codices or standards. And, if there is some concern or question from society, then, accordingly, this [adherence to standards] begins to work. You start to live by this [standards and norms]. In Ukraine this does not exist. Right? That is to say that journalistic identification is extremely blurry."

Other journalists pointed out that criticism of Ukraine's professional societies by reporters in the country went even further. Burdyga, the 32-year-old journalist who works for the Internet television station Hromadske, said that a meme had even developed in the country in which journalists sarcastically referred to the country's professional societies as credible, respected professional organizations in Ukraine. "The question of authority in Ukrainian journalism, in principle, whom are we supposed to listen to? These things are based on tradition, or on authority. Any kind of governing body, any kind of power, is based on competency, tradition, or authority. And knowing the Ukrainian media society, there's even a meme in Ukraine – Ukrainian media society. It's not such a big community, when everyone knows how much each person costs – they know how much it costs for each journalist to either be bought, or seduced," Burdyga said, adding that it's hard to talk about a credible professional media society in Ukraine when this is the reality in the country. He said that journalism in Ukraine must work on building itself as authoritative and it must develop a tradition of adhering to norms and standards. "This is what we still, I agree, that we are supposed to formulate right now, and develop some kind of authority, although, during a conflict situation, during a situation in which we have the kind of conflict we have now, developing this authority is highly unlikely. And it's the same thing with traditions. Because how many years now have we had independent Ukrainian journalism? Nearly 30?" he asked with an air of disappointment in his voice.

Burdyga said that Ukraine does have independent ethics commissions, and he was also among many of the journalists who said that, even though journalists in

Ukraine know about western norms and standards, in practice they don't exist in many journalism organizations in Ukraine. "In Ukraine, ethical questions, they are, an ethical codex of some kind is so fragmented that I know of editorial offices which will never ask how you obtained information. Should we publish the face of a child that we're writing about even though we don't have permission from the parents? I know editorial offices that won't even ask these questions. They'll say, 'oh, you brought a story? Ok. Well, yeah, it's a good story.' Verifying it? Beginning with a fact check and ending with a verification of adhering to some kinds of ethical norms so we don't defame someone, or so that we don't harm the people in our story? Most editorial staffs don't do this."

Burdyga said that Ukraine's ethics commissions suffer from a lack of authority. "These commissions that exist, why have several of these commissions on journalistic ethics in Ukraine, which include associations of journalists? And they're not state owned or something. Why are they an example of a self-regulating journalistic community that decides what is right and what is not, when they are, well, for me at least, not one of these commissions is an authority. It's not that I'm saying that everything they write is foolish. It's just that the people who belong to these commissions, they are not authoritative."

Nastya Stanko, a 31-year-old journalist who works for the Internet television channel Hromadske and has been covering the war in the east for more than three years, also said that it's not possible to adhere to BBC standards while working in Ukraine, particularly when there is a war. She said that talking about adhering to journalistic standards while working for oligarchic media organizations in Ukraine

had even become a joke among journalists. “Everyone [in the journalistic community in Ukraine] says that it’s not possible to work by the standards of the BBC in our country. You know, it’s even a meme that people laugh at. Because we, at Hromadske, supposedly work by the standards of the BBC, but everyone tells us that we don’t have principles, that overall we’re not patriots of our country,” she said, adding that many journalists believe the press in Ukraine should be patriotic even if doing so conflicts with established norms and standards. Later in the interview, after the researcher had asked her what she thought Ukrainian democracy needed from the press in Ukraine, Stanko reiterated that she saw no other way for journalism to operate in the country than according to western standards, though she said that she feels as though she is very much in the minority position on this issue in Ukraine. “Honestly, I don’t see any other kind of solution [than to work by western norms]. In our country, of course, right now what prevails, if we talk in general about the kind of journalism that exists in Ukraine now, not the kind that should be but the kind that is right now, then the standards of the BBC are like using foul language, it is a negative context. There cannot be the standards of the BBC during a time of war, they believe.”

The role of oligarchic ownership of the media is an additional and possibly even greater reason that journalists in Ukraine say it is very difficult to live up to western norms. In response to a question less than three minutes into the interview on what he disliked about journalism in Ukraine, Shapoval, as did many of the journalists who took part in the interviews for this research, immediately responded that oligarchs own most major media in Ukraine and that there are not enough

independent journalism organizations. Shapoval, who previously worked as a freelancer and for Espresso TV, an independent Internet television station in Ukraine, earlier in the interview noted that the core function for journalism in a democracy is to inform, and he said that working in Ukraine's oligarchic media environment means that some topics are taboo at certain news organizations.

“There are very few publications and television stations that are not engaged [by oligarchs or politicians], because if you don't want to work for an oligarch then you have a very small choice [of where to work],” Shapoval said. “I now personally work as an independent journalist, a freelancer, because I worked for television channels, and I couldn't work there. I worked for Espresso. And Espresso is controlled by Mykola Kniazhytskyi [a pro-western and pro-European oligarch, but an oligarch who controls media nonetheless]. ... It's a constant fight with our morals if you work in Ukrainian journalism. I continue to do it because I think it's really important to keep informing people, and if you're an independent journalist in Ukraine than you can choose for whom you want to write information, and you can, for the most part, control how that information is presented because it's my choice.”

Bohdanovych, the 42-year-old editor at 1+1 media who said he started working in journalism at a regional television station when he was 16, said that Ukrainian oligarchs who own many of the television channels in Ukraine don't use these assets to make money. Rather, they are used to push the information that their owners want the public to know. “Right now there is a total degradation [of norms and standards in Ukraine], because, unfortunately, mass media, particularly television, belong to businessmen, and these businessmen don't use them [news

organizations] for business. They use them only as propaganda, and because of this the mass media survive in this situation. ... Everything that is done [within oligarch owned television channels] is done to present the idea that is important for the owner.” Bohdanovych said he understands that many journalists who work in oligarch owned media do it because they need a job. He said he does not blame journalists for working at media organizations that ignore journalistic norms and standards and instead work to manipulate public opinion. “There is a very large number of information channels in the country now, and all of them are manipulative. And I, so far, have not seen any protest from journalists who might say, ‘ah, this channel belongs to so and so, or belongs to Poroshenko [the current president of Ukraine], and I’m not going to work here because ...’ No,” Bohdanovych said emphatically. “The issue is that you still need to survive in this country, I’ll remind you.”

Many of the journalists interviewed for this work noted that oligarchs use the mass media in the country as tools of propaganda and their interest, first and foremost, is to use their media to promote their own business and financial interests. Many of the journalists said that oligarchs do not use the media to promote particular political ideologies because such attachment to particular political ideology either by the public or by politicians in Ukraine is very weak, bordering on non-existent. The researcher asked journalists whether this wasn’t a positive situation for Ukrainian society – whether it created an environment in which there exists a plurality of information and media owned by a broad range of non-ideological oligarchs? Many

journalists strongly disagreed. “The problem is that oligarch pluralism is not really pluralism in Ukraine,” Shapoval said.

Our politicians don’t use ideology the way politicians use ideology in the United States. We don’t have Democrats. We don’t have Republicans. ... These [Ukrainian oligarchs] are all kleptocrats who strive to expand their wealth. ... That’s why this is more like, not pluralism, but syndicalism when all media represent only the interests of capital. ... Oligarchic pluralism is never pluralism. ... For me pluralism means defending some kind of ideological position, but it doesn’t look like this [in Ukraine]. For us, no politician has their own ideology. They can switch parties. We don’t have senators who have always been Republican. Those politicians who were members of the Party of Regions now work for the party of Poroshenko [the president of Ukraine, who’s oligarchic interests conflict with those of the officials who control the Party of Regions].

Ideologically, in principle, they shouldn’t have done this because the Party of Regions was pro-Russian, though now it’s become more pro-European. That’s why we don’t have an ideological pluralism.

For Shapoval, one of the core obstacles to creating a higher quality journalism that adheres closer to normative standards and democratic ideals is to develop a demand for such quality from both the audience in Ukraine and journalists themselves. He said that neither the audience in Ukraine nor journalists themselves really know what high quality journalism looks like. This was a common refrain among the journalists interviewed for this research. “The biggest problem with the Ukrainian audience,” Shapoval said, “is that they don’t understand what quality journalism looks like, because in 25 years in Ukraine almost no one has built it. What

people get from television channels and from publications is devoid of any kinds of standards. ... This becomes a problem for the development of journalism, quality journalism, because people don't understand what kind of journalism it should be. Journalists don't understand what kind of journalism it should be. Which is why we've been spinning our wheels in the same place for 25 years. And, at the moment, I don't see that this will improve in the next 5 or 10 years. Maybe in 15 years."

A number of journalists also discussed the impact that Soviet Communism has had on the practice and norms of journalism in Ukraine. "In the Soviet Union journalists were taught different standards," Shapoval said. "Overall, in the Soviet Union journalists were propagandists, and they were taught to be the voice of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union]." He said that it's a legacy and a tradition that journalism in Ukraine is still working to leave behind. And while there are young journalists who have grown up in an independent, democratic Ukraine, many of the journalism schools in Ukraine still maintain both the Soviet style of teaching and curriculum. Many journalists said that the level of journalism education in the country is low, and that the education they received in journalism in Ukraine was not enough when they began working as professional journalists in Ukraine.

As the country has transitioned from Soviet Communism to democracy, its journalists have also had to make a transition from working within a Soviet system to working in a democratic one with the journalistic standards that come with such a society. Many of the journalists interviewed for this dissertation said that Soviet legacy journalists have slowly left the profession, and have been replaced with a younger generation of journalists. This, Shapoval noted, is also an issue. "There is an

additional problem with Ukrainian journalism. The average age of journalists is somewhere around 25-30 years old, and they are typically not experienced. There is little money in journalism, and everybody leaves. ... But there is a new generation of young journalists, and they are not heirs of Soviet journalism schools,” said Shapoval, who noted that he is himself a graduate of the journalism masters program at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. He stressed that the school offers a completely western European journalism education, “and there is no difference between it and European journalism schools.”

Such schools have certainly helped introduce Ukrainian journalists to western norms. In other cases, reporters have traveled to Europe for journalism seminars and trainings. A number of the journalists interviewed for this work talked about having attended seminars in Germany, Poland, or the United Kingdom. But since independence in 1991, Ukraine has had much more access to the west, and access to the Internet has given the average Ukrainian more exposure to foreign cultures. Journalists in Ukraine have also taken advantage of this access to the Internet, which has given them more exposure to western journalistic norms and practices. No matter how the journalists interviewed for this work learned about these standards, they are all clearly familiar with the different roles the press should play in their democratic society. And though they know about these norms, there is a great debate among reporters in Ukraine regarding the norm of journalistic objectivity. This debate – and the different justifications journalists give for why they should or should not remain neutral amid a flood of pro-Russian propaganda, fake news, and misinformation – is the subject of the following chapter.

## Chapter 6: Journalistic Objectivity in Ukraine

The interview questions used in this dissertation sought to achieve three goals. First, they looked specifically for the language of a journalistic pragmatism among the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists – these findings were presented in Chapter 4. Second, they explored more broadly the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists, and examined whether journalists believe there are certain norms in the country that differ from those in western democracies – these findings were presented in Chapter 5. And, third, the interview questions gave journalists space to discuss issues that they thought were most pressing and important for journalism in Ukraine. In giving research participants this space, it became evident throughout the interviews that journalists in Ukraine are actively, and often passionately, debating whether they should be unbiased, particularly as their country fights a war with Russian-backed separatists and Russian soldiers in the east, and as citizens in the occupied territories only have access to Russian media.

This chapter explores the debate on adhering to the norm of objectivity. It presents the different reasons journalists give for not adhering to the norm. And, among those journalists who argue that the press must remain unbiased, this chapter presents their views of how journalism and individual responsibility as a norm among journalists might help the press battle against propaganda and misinformation in the country. As opposed to the previous two findings chapters, this chapter shifts slightly to focus on the comments of a smaller number of journalists. It does so in order to highlight some of the interviewees in depth, as they best articulated the subtle pressures and paradoxes of the post-Soviet journalist in a state at war with Russia.

Two points should be made here to address what may initially look like a discrepancy in the findings. First, the central premise of this chapter might seem to contradict the core findings of Chapter 5. That is to say, journalists in the previous chapter all agreed that the press should work according to western standards, and, yet, the findings in this chapter show that journalists in Ukraine are split on the question of whether they should adhere to the particular norm of journalistic objectivity. How can this be? How can the journalists interviewed for this work say the press should adhere to western norms, on the one hand, while half of these same journalists questioned whether the press should be objective, on the other hand? The answer rests in the second point of clarification.

When asked whether the press in Ukraine should be objective, there wasn't a single journalist who said, no, the press should discard objectivity completely. Instead, roughly half of the journalists interviewed for this work said the press should be unbiased, but they also offered a hedge or a qualification of some kind. "Yes, we should be objective, but ...," they said. While roughly half of the journalists maintained the position that the press must stick to complete objectivity no matter the situation in Ukraine, the second half said the press should be neutral, but when the conversation moved to certain topics (for example, war in the east, propaganda, fake news, support of the Ukrainian army), they justified, to various degrees, not being entirely objective. Many journalists questioned why they should remain neutral and unbiased when, they say, Russian and pro-Russian media clearly do not care about objectivity and steadily push propaganda into the occupied territories.

Other journalists, however, stressed that biased reporting is no different than propaganda, and, in order to actually be journalism, the press in Ukraine must adhere to western standards and remain neutral and objective when reporting on and presenting the news. It is this hedge – though not an outright disavowal – of objectivity among roughly half of the journalists interviewed for this work that helps explain what may at times feel like a contradiction in the findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6. For example, one journalist said the press should adhere to western norms, but later in the interview questioned why, in certain situations, the press should be objective. This debate was not only evident when coding and analyzing the interviews, but journalists themselves said there is a fight over objectivity in Ukraine. It is a debate, they say, that is often heated, passionate, and visible on social media.

For those journalists who do strive for balance and impartiality in their reporting, there are two broad forces that work against their efforts. One pulls at them to retain the country's traditional media norms in which journalists act as propagandists for the Soviet state, and since independence as mouthpieces for competing oligarchs. The second is a pressure that compels some reporters to abandon objectivity in favor of a patriotic journalism that supports the Ukrainian military and the country's effort to win the war, on the one hand, and criticizes pro-Russian perspectives, on the other hand. This same force also drives journalists to overlook problems within the Ukrainian military and state, and ignore to some degree pro-Russian citizens in the occupied territories. In fact, several journalists said they have faced harsh criticism from other journalists for reporting objectively on such people in the east.

## A Debate Over Objectivity

Journalist Nastya Stanko dove right into a discussion of this debate less than eight minutes into the interview. Stanko, who for three years has led a television news program that focuses solely on the situation in the eastern occupied regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, said she has received tremendous criticism for her work. The program, Eastern Society (Громадський Схід in Ukrainian), is an attempt to provide a representative picture of life in the region. They try to cover more than just the military and the war, although it certainly includes those topics. She says her team does the best they can to keep people in the rest of Ukraine informed about what's happening in the occupied territories by reporting on average, everyday people who live there. She said it's almost impossible to physically report from the region because of pro-Russian aggression against western journalists, so instead her team talks with people inside the occupied territories via telephone or the Internet.

In doing all of this work, Stanko says she receives incredible criticism from various Internet bots and online trolls, but also from journalists who believe the press should not report objectively about Ukrainians who stayed in the occupied regions. "I encounter this every day. I, myself, was a target of several of these focused attacks over the past two years. ...It's as if I was the enemy, a traitor, and the hand of [the pro-Russian] leadership, just because – when I was doing what I was doing, and what I'm still doing – you encounter a situation when thousands of bots controlled by a single person's right hand says something about you in three or 10 minutes that is just completely untrue. And you know that you can't reply to thousands of people, because all of this gets amplified on social media, and then stories get written for

different kinds of web sites. ... And you know that you just don't have the physical resources to respond to everyone and explain yourself. You end up in a situation where, well, there's just more of them, and you know that you're supposed to just keep doing your work. ... And, honestly, there are so many truly good journalists, particularly investigative reporters, who suffer because they're fending off all of these trolls or bots."

Stanko said there is a general sense among most Ukrainians that the press should not report objectively on people who stayed in Donetsk and Luhansk because they support the pro-Russian separatists who control the area, but she said she feels compelled to continue reporting objectively on life in the region. During the interview, the researcher asked her what drives that sense of responsibility to keep reporting on the occupied territories, and pushes her to keep doing this work despite the harsh criticism. She paused for a few seconds and exhaled, then said, "These are Ukrainian territories. These are Ukrainian citizens who live in difficult conditions. And we, as Ukrainian journalists, have a responsibility to tell people about these Ukrainian citizens. And that's it. This is our job."

Stanko was adamant that the press must remain unbiased and neutral. By not being objective, she said the press was destroying its credibility and authority among citizens. This is especially true in the war zone, she said, because people on the ground can see for themselves what's happening, and then read different press reports on the events that contradict what they saw with their own eyes. Stanko described one case in particular when Ukrainian jets bombed pro-Russian positions. The following day the Ukrainian press reported that the bombings were mortars fired by pro-Russian

forces. Many of the journalists who cover the war echoed Stanko's concern that people in the region can see for themselves what's actually happening and then compare it with what the press later reports. Many journalists said that people in the region think all media covering the war are lying, and they no longer trust the press.

As a journalist who covers the war, Stanko said that people in the region desperately need not only information, but they need factual, truthful accounts of what is happening around them. In fact, she argued that, in lying to people, biased, patriotic reporting could harm civilians in the region. "What is our role as journalists?" Stanko asked. "We're supposed to report the truth, right? But somehow we are dressing it up. And I think to myself, 'how do my colleagues make this choice of who they'll save and who they won't save,'" Stanko said, referring to the idea that choosing to publish certain information or choosing not to publish certain facts could directly affect whether some people in war live or die. "Do they know the kind of decisions they make, and do they know that this information might help a soldier, but possibly someone else will die because of it? Where does this knowledge come from? Is it intuitive or what? I understand that they have certain intentions, but it seems to me that the results ..." She paused, and added, "well, I don't know what the results are."

Stanko also raised the issue of reporting neutrally on the Ukrainian army during a time of war, and when Russian actions in Ukraine have pushed many of its citizens to be much more patriotic. "Should we be hiding some things that happen in the army incorrectly? Because in the army there are still lots of things happening that are not right, and if journalists talk about these things, than these problems would be

fixed, and not buried. ... But they [her critics] say ‘now’s not the time to talk about problems in the army’ ... I don’t know, maybe others don’t agree, but I’d say it’s better to get the truth instead, no matter what it is. I treat my viewers and readers the same way, you know. The truth is better, whatever it may be.”

Though Stanko takes this stand to stick with objectivity no matter what the truth may be, she acknowledged that doing so, and then getting criticism for it from the public and other journalists, certainly wears on those reporters who are trying to adhere to the standards of their profession, and in particular to remain neutral in their reporting.

For example, I was 18 years old and I remember the revolution, the Orange Revolution [of 2004-2005], of which I was a very active participant during my first year in college. And I continue in this process of fighting, and particularly for journalism. We’re fighting for these standards, and we’re organizing media associations. We take part in protests if they have something to do with legislation that concerns the media. We are very active people within this sphere, within this work. And you, honestly, after these past three years since Maidan [Euromaidan revolution of 2014-2015], physically you feel your energy, you need to recharge in some way. It’s just that, the reality of it, it exhausts you – that you physically cannot keep working the way you worked those three years ago. Simply put, that’s it – you’ve just about burned out. And when people snipe at you constantly, you can’t always keep saying that, ‘ah, on the contrary, this actually revitalizes me. Everything’s great. I’m good.’ Because this isn’t true. It really affects you. And sometimes I wonder how many people can continue to fight for

this democracy, for these standards. I want to believe that we'll be able to, and I see many young people around me who are no longer willing to accept that the rules and laws in this country don't apply to everyone equally. People are no longer willing to accept things as they are.

It is precisely this kind of free and open debate – both within the community of journalists and more broadly in the public sphere in Ukraine – that was addressed conceptually in the first two chapters of this dissertation. Those sections explored the democratic and journalistic theories that consider the roles reason, rationality, and truth play in public discourse. These normative theories suggest that, in the course of public debate, people rely on reason, and in particular factual information, to inform their position on given issues. Meanwhile, the work of pragmatist philosophers, including Richard Rorty, offer theoretical depth to contemporary accounts of how individuals in plural, liberal democratic societies think about, decide on, and debate their political beliefs. Simply put, they argue that, during war or when emotions run hot and society is deeply divided, people look for information that fits their worldview. What's more, this subjective, purposeful selection of facts is often done behind a declaration of objectivity, which, in turn, leads to competing accounts of who is neutral and unbiased, and what information is true or false. For more than a century, journalists have relied to various extents on objectivity to bolster their claims of truth. It is, therefore, not surprising that journalists in Ukraine are deeply involved in this debate, and central to their criticisms of other journalists is the question of objectivity.

Ihor Burdyga, the 32-year-old journalist who works for the Internet television station Hromadske, said that journalists have found themselves in a difficult position

because of both the war and also as a result of the Euromaidan protests in 2014-2015. To a great extent, society compels journalists to pick a side, he said, and those reporters who strive to be balanced and neutral face criticism for their determination to remain objective. “Since the beginning of the street protests [during Euromaidan] society started to split, and a question arose for journalists: Which side do you work for? And society constantly puts you in a position where you have to take a side. It was difficult during the protests of Euromaidan to remain impartial or, at least, to honestly not pull for one branch or side in the protests, or, at some point, to start pulling a certain way because it’s important for society, as was the case after the legislation of January 17 [2014, in which parliament passed laws to dramatically restrict protest, curtail freedom of speech, and severely limit the press] (Herszenhorn 2014). For me, from the perspective of journalism as a profession after the legislation of January 17, journalists were right to protest against the government because this was a direct threat to the profession of journalism.<sup>23</sup> Since the beginning of the war, it has become even harder, because here a question has been raised by society, and they are rather harsh about it: They want to know, after all of it, whose side are you on? Society and politicians implore journalists of the necessity to take someone’s side. The questions were raised, is it necessary to uncover problems in your army? Is it necessary to criticize [the government] during a time when the war was very active in the east in 2014-2015?”

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<sup>23</sup> Legislation passed by the Ukrainian parliament and signed into law by former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich on January 17, 2014, became known as the “dictatorship laws.” The legislation was a package of 12 laws that restricted freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. Protests against the legislation led to the repeal of nine of the laws on January 28, 2014 (Kramer 2014).

Burdyga said that he understood his decision to remain objective would be criticized by politicians and society, but the criticism has also come from his colleagues. “Over the past few years of my career, I very often encounter, well, in the end it comes down to the fact that the professional circle [of journalists], the community of professionals has been divided and fractured over the question, ‘Why are you doing this? Why are you writing about this? Is it because your media organization controls you? Are you controlled by the hand of your leader [the head of a given media organization], or the hand of an oligarch, or the hands of people who want to destabilize the situation? From the other perspective, for me, the same kinds of questions can be asked of many of my colleagues: Why are you doing such complimentary interviews with the leadership of the security services? Is it not because your media organization, in the end, is bought by the government, or something like that?’” This debate, he added, has hurt the efforts of journalists to develop authority and credibility with the audience.

Andrii Bohdanovych, the 42-year-old editor at 1+1 Media, was also among those journalists who believe that, if the press in Ukraine wants to be credible and trusted when presenting information to the public, then journalists must maintain a neutral and unbiased position when reporting the news. “We were taught the standards of the BBC, we were taught that we are observers, that we are supposed to watch only. Our job is to provide a balanced picture for everyone, to provide complete information for people, and then the viewer should decide what happens next. This is their right to make decisions,” Bohdanovych said. “But now everything is being done [by journalists] to deliver that idea that is important for the head or

owner of a television channel.” Bohdanovych’s comment a few minutes later in the interview was emblematic of the harsh criticism that some journalists have of television news channels in Ukraine. “I really believe that a time will come when people will get tired of watching all of these lies [on television]. They’re going to watch the truth. But, in order to watch the truth, it has to exist. It needs to appear on at least one channel.” The researcher asked whether Bohdanovich really believed there wasn’t a single news channel in the country reporting the truth. Without pausing, he answered, “I believe it doesn’t exist.”

Though it may perhaps sound extreme, Bohdanovych’s belief that just about all television news in Ukraine is heavily biased and used to manipulate information in favor of the ownership of that particular channel was a perspective that came up repeatedly throughout the interviews. Oksana Piddubna, the journalist who worked for Espresso TV before moving to the BBC in Ukraine, said that this perspective is even shared by much of the audience of television news in Ukraine. She was asked whether people in Ukraine start to disengage with television news if they just don’t think what they see is objectively true. “I think they think, yeah, I give up. I don’t want to watch this TV anymore. I don’t believe anyone. I don’t know what truth is, so they get confused, they get angry. They see that some people are just trying to manipulate them. So they just turn off the TV, and that’s all. And all of our job, all of the work journalists did is gone because people just don’t believe what they see.” Piddubna, however, pointed out that some people in Ukraine are media literate and know who owns which television channels, and they watch those channels because what they see on the news is what they already believe and want to hear. “Of course

there are people who know what TV is owned by what person, and they just watch TV channels they like, they prefer, they believe in. So, we cannot say that 100 percent don't like TV and they don't watch it because they don't trust it.”

Piddubna also added that many journalists in Ukraine are able to carve out spaces where they know they can report on and write about the news without being influenced by ownership of their organization pushing them to present a very biased picture of the news. The key, she said, is to make sure that her work doesn't conflict with what the ownership of a media organization wants to have broadcast. “I think on every channel we have this problem where journalists are really doing a very good job, even though these TV channels are owned by these people. I mean, we have this freedom to make our own investigations, and we are not scared of being killed,” she said, referencing the assassination of journalist Pavel Sheremet, who was murdered by a car bomb in the heart of the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, in 2016. “But from my own perspective, I don't feel that I have some topics which I cannot cover,” Piddubna said, who added that one major priority for the press in Ukraine now is the creation of more independent news outlets for journalists who do want to work objectively and not feel that they are limited in what they can report on. “That's why journalists have to cover what really their editor tells them to cover. I mean, sometimes they have their own censorship. Like, ‘oh, ok, I'm working for the TV channel which is owned by a guy from that party, so I cannot say anything bad about this party.’ But, at the same time, I have the freedom to cover everything else. So they just try to find other topics not related to that party. So, I mean, they [journalists] have freedom, but it's not the whole freedom. It's not 100 percent.”

This topic of censorship and placing restrictions on journalists who strive to present an objective picture of the news in Ukraine came up repeatedly during the interviews conducted for this dissertation research. But it is also a subject that the researcher has discussed with journalists in Ukraine as far back as 2005, during time spent covering the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Back then, such censorship was very direct and came in the form of what were known in Ukraine as “темники.” These were physical documents given to the editorial leadership of Ukrainian mass media organizations, and they provided direct, written instructions on not only what to cover, but how to cover certain topics. The word “темники” was taken from the title of these documents: “Теми тижня” [themes of the week]. The practice of issuing these direct orders largely stopped in late 2004, during the lead up to the Orange Revolution, when many journalists in Ukraine openly revolted against their media organizations and called on all journalists in the country “to stop the lies” (Українська Правда 2004).

The journalists interviewed for this dissertation research said that such direct orders no longer exist, but they are given a clear understanding of what topics or people are off limits. Pressed to explain how she knew which topics or people can not be written about, and how specifically such censorship is now applied in Ukraine, Piddubna said, “It’s a feeling. I don’t know. ... It’s just a feeling that you know that you cannot do that. For example, I worked at Espresso TV channel, and it’s owned by a guy from the party People’s Front – a portion of the channel is owned by his wife, a second part is owned by our former prime minister, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, and a third part is owned by the wife of the minister of internal affairs [which oversees the police

in Ukraine]. So you cannot say anything bad about police, or make any investigations that are bad about the police, or whatever is related to internal regions [of Ukraine].”

Though Piddubna was among those journalists who said that the press should be neutral and unbiased, she also later in the interview spoke about certain limits to complete objectivity. As the conversation turned back to the topic of representing all of the different perspectives in Ukrainian society, and to the question of whether the press in the country has a responsibility to objectively represent perspectives that are undemocratic, Piddubna sought to walk a fine line between being neutral and unbiased, on the one hand, and limiting such extreme, undemocratic voices, on the other hand. “I think we have to not make these small minorities popular because it’s not a good thing to, I mean, we have to cover of course these views of these people as well,” she said. “But we have to make sure that we are not popularizing them. ... I don’t know. Objective journalism is giving a voice to different groups but we cannot make the bad things look better. ... Of course we have to show their voices, of course we have to cover what’s going on in the occupied territories because our people are living there as well, and some people don’t support these Russian ideas.”

With the country at war and fighting to ensure that it remains a democratic society governed by the rule of law, journalists are actively debating whether they should be neutral observers of events, Piddubna said. By deciding how much publicity to give to different groups in society, the press can limit the growth of extreme, undemocratic, or populist movements. “We are really wondering is it too far? Where does objectivity stop? Because it cannot go all the way, because we might wake up one day and we see that these small minorities that support Russia, that they

now occupy Kyiv as well. You know what I mean? I'm just afraid that these small minorities who support Russia, they're going to get power, and they're going to destroy everything we've built since 2015. And journalism sometimes helps bad people win, and we have to face this as well."

Piddubna wasn't the only journalist who worked for Espresso TV that said certain politicians and oligarchs were off limits for the television news channel. Andrii Suslenko, who worked as a television news host for Espresso TV and later Channel 5, also said he was told not to cover Arseniy Yatsenyuk. "When I was working for Espresso TV, some people from the People's Front party, they own it, basically Arsen Avakov, who is the minister of internal affairs, and his group, when I worked for them, sometimes we didn't have to cover someone, let's say, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, because it's just, we cannot do this on the People's Front channel, because it's his channel, basically." Suslenko said that journalists are no longer explicitly told what to report or how to report. Instead, certain people are simply not allowed on his show as guests. "Some people are persona non grata at certain television stations. And that's something that I faced. ... Let's say Sakashvili [the former president of Georgia who later became governor of Odessa Oblast in Ukraine]. Since his fight with Poroshenko [the president of Ukraine], I wanted to approach him, but I couldn't, because he wouldn't be aired," Suslenko said.

Oksana Kundirenko, a journalist who worked for the television channel Inter TV and spent 11 years working for the BBC in Ukraine, also raised the issue of censorship and selective coverage of different people and events in the country. Asked whether journalists are told by editors what to cover, and also how to cover

events, she said, “Sometimes they are, but it’s like, semi-silently, because sometimes the editor will say, ‘You’re a smart girl. You realize we can’t say that.’ Something like this. And we also have some, I don’t know, key words. So we have a word, I’ll tell you, in Ukrainian or Russian it is called OBZ, which means *обязательно*,” Kundirenko said, using the Russian word. “Do you understand? *Обов’язково*,” she said, using the Ukrainian word [In English, the word is “required”]. “And sometimes, you know when we have these daily meetings, they read the headlines for tomorrow, for example, and they say, ‘This is OBZ, so we’re sending a journalist to cover this rally under the city administration of that town because their mayor is a bad guy, and our guy is organizing this rally.’”

Another journalist, who asked to remain anonymous, said that the motivation for such selective coverage was not a desire to push or suppress a particular political ideology. Rather, the goal of biased news coverage in Ukraine is mainly about business. The journalist, who previously worked as a reporter for a major Western and several national media organizations in Ukraine, said that the leadership of most mass media organizations in Ukraine use their journalists to attack the business interests of competing oligarchs, and selectively focus on positive news about the financial interests of their organization’s owners. “Censorship divides in two ways,” the journalist said. “It is censorship from our government and it is censorship from our tycoons, because most media are privately owned, and that ownership influences much, of course, because nobody wants his business to harm himself. Everybody will want his business to help himself, because it is business. It is different from Russia. Much. Because their media is mostly influenced and censored by government. And in

Ukraine, our media is censored by government, first, and then also by tycoons. And those tycoons, they can be friends one day with one tycoon, and the next day they can change their views to another tycoon, and maybe even to the government. That's why there is an instability of views that can be changed every time."

There is an important distinction that journalists repeatedly made here. This "instability of views" regards issues that are internal to Ukraine, that involve the different business interests of the country's oligarchs, and that are not linked to particular political ideologies. When journalists talked about reporting on these interests, they noted that, when looked at in aggregate, the audience can see a pluralism of different viewpoints, though they are not presented objectively by journalists at media organizations controlled by oligarchs. There is, however, one major issue that does seem to have galvanized much of the country. The war with Russia has pushed most Ukrainians to become much more patriotic, and to take a very clear position on being either pro-Ukrainian or pro-Russian. And it has had the same effect on those journalists who put qualifications on the press being completely objective. The same anonymous journalist said that this was a change for Ukrainian journalists, and one that began well before the war started. "When maidan [Euromaidan revolution of 2014-2015] started, everything changed for Ukrainian journalists – well, many things changed. That was a point when everybody made his or her choice how to report. And for those who chose to have Ukraine, let's say, to live in this country, they chose patriotic side. And for those who are working on Russian media, they are working on the other side. It's not possible to have a gray zone." This same journalist, who herself said the press should be objective, said there

is a huge question regarding the place of “Ukrainian patriotic speech, let’s say, in our media.”

It is a quite difficult question, but every journalist has to make a choice in Ukraine. If you are not working for international media, you must make a choice whether to speak patriotically or whether to make Russian propaganda. And this division is quite strong, and it is quite non-negotiable. ... If it is not an international media company, that media company will never be neutral. It is not possible. If you are living in this country, it is your destiny, it is your home. You cannot be neutral if you’re not working for international media. Of course you will be putting your opinion inside, let’s say. Editorial policy will have opinion. Opinion I mean, in most Ukrainian media it is pro-Ukrainian opinion because those editors and media managers they understand that we are building a state. And they must, somehow, support people who are fighting.

Other journalists were also asked whether they thought the press could be objective during a war in their own country. Andrii Bohdanovych said that adhering to journalistic standards, particularly being neutral and unbiased, is what distinguishes Ukraine from its aggressive neighbor. “If we’re not going to talk this way [objectively], then we’re going to behave like Russia, unfortunately. The war is not straightforward for us. It’s a hybrid war,” he said, referring to both the physical war on the ground in eastern Ukraine, and the information war between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian combatants. “And how should a journalist work in this situation? There have been several conflicts for us when the [Ukrainian] army won’t allow journalists to investigate this or that topic. They hide behind the war. Everything gets covered

up,” Bohdanovych said. “I’m for the idea that we should objectively report on the war. We should be showing this – the what, and how, and all the rest.”

Journalists interviewed for this work said that developing a tradition and reputation for being impartial and unbiased is necessary in order for the press in Ukraine to gain the public’s trust. One factor that hampers this effort is that politicians take up positions as journalists in Ukrainian media organizations. Bohdanovych said that every time this happens it hurts those journalists who are working to build a reputation for being unbiased and credible. “Our Ukrainian politicians crawled into television screens and became television news hosts. This, as a professional news anchor, this outraged me. They’re killing my profession. I’ve spent 20 years working to get the television audience to trust me, because this is the most important thing for a news anchor. If they don’t trust you, they might watch you for a few minutes, and then that’s it, they’ll change the channel. And here politicians came in and became news anchors and they ... how, how can I trust a politician when he’s completely not objective? Or when they’re just pushing their own messages? And believing politicians, well,” Bohdanovych paused and began laughing, “well, this just isn’t possible. This outrages me still.”

Bohdanovych said that it’s not only politicians who became journalists. “In Ukraine, many journalists became activists, and many activists became journalists. And now, it seems to me, this gets in the way, when a journalist, instead of shining a light on information and giving voice to all of the different viewpoints, he stands on the side of one perspective and he already becomes an activist, he reports information his way, even with emotion. You can feel this, and it’s also a big problem.”

This activism, Bohdanovych said, is often done with good intentions, though he also cautioned that such activist journalism can also be used in a way that harms society. “A number of journalists [in Ukraine] decided that all of the responsibility for the country rests on them,” Bohdanovych said. That only their perspective, not even their perspective, but the perspective that they’ve agreed with, should be the perspective of the audience. This is bad because, again, this can go in the other direction. Other journalists will come in and they’ll tell the audience, ‘listen to this,’ and this can even start a civil war.”

Journalists also highlighted that there is an older generation of reporters in Ukraine who are, to some extent, still affected by the Soviet legacy. “There are two or three different generations [of journalists] in Ukraine now,” Bohdanovych said. One generation lived totally in Soviet times. Another generation remembers the Soviet Union, but, nonetheless, it’s still stuck in their heads. It’s even in me, who was born in 1975. I know that this [Soviet legacy] is still stuck in my head. And there’s nothing I can, well, I do something with this. I study, I learn, I try, but this legacy still rings in my head. I think, ‘oh, good evening, the Soviet Union is here [in my head].’” He said there is another generation of journalists who are younger than 25 years old and never lived in the Soviet Union. But, he said, the problem is that this younger generation is still learning from the older generations of Ukrainian journalists who are still affected by a Soviet legacy in which objectivity and balance were not important. “For the younger generation, advancing up the ranks in journalism is most important, and they see that you’re not going to advance by being balanced. ... They don’t believe in this

[objectivity]. They believe in entertainment. There should be a show and there should be earnings, and that's it.”

Dmytro Vlasov, the Associated Press journalist, said there is a tradition in Ukraine that gives a great deal of editorial license to the most famous journalists in the country. The younger generation of reporters saw their celebrity colleagues use this fame to take sides on issues and sway public opinion in their favor. It's as if the norms of journalism in the United States gave Walter Cronkite or Tom Brokaw the leeway to regularly cross the boundary between journalistic objectivity and editorial opinion, and to do so without making any attempt to distinguish between the two. “There is such a tradition here,” Vlasov said. “Every journalist who started to work, he works hard doing every bullshit story. But, in a few years, he thinks, ‘oh, ok, I work too much. Everybody knows me. My neighbors know me. The bus driver knows me. And people at the bus stop. So I can present not just objective news, but I can include my private opinion.’ I think this came from the 90s, when there weren't so many journalists, and they became superstars. ... They did whatever they wanted. This tradition came after that.”

Television channels in Ukraine have also begun developing news shows that are entirely subjective, said Bohdanovych, the 42-year-old editor at 1+1 Media. The audience, however, is conflating the opinions they hear on such talk shows with objective facts. “There are programs emerging on news channels called ‘subjective news with ...’ and then, for example, you fill in the name, Nadiya Savchenko.<sup>24</sup> Or,

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<sup>24</sup> Savchenko was captured by pro-Russian forces in 2014 in eastern Ukraine. She was a military pilot in the Ukrainian army at the time and Russia accused her of having directed artillery fire that killed two Russian state-television journalists in eastern Ukraine. She became an icon in Ukraine after

‘subjective news with Vadim Rabinovych,’ or with someone else. A person appears in the studio, this is a politician, and that person will comment on the news from their perspective. And this isn’t news. But for the audience, they’ve already switched these concepts [of what is news and what is a subjective opinion]. They see a perspective, but they’re not getting news. And now they perceive this as news. But this is really just propaganda, and this is killing journalism, this substitution of editorial and news. We’re moving in that direction when, really, people are going to watch television and they won’t understand that this is not news,” Bohdanovych said, adding his concern that television news channels are themselves slowly dropping the distinction between a news program and an editorial show. “You can call it a news show. And then later you can take away the word show and you can call it a news program. That’s it.” Bohdanovych’s criticism of news organizations in Ukraine may sound harsh, but it is also emblematic of the fierce debate in the country regarding objectivity, and, more broadly, the practice of journalism itself.

### Countering Russian Propaganda, Fake News, and Misinformation

The researcher asked journalists whether they thought there was something they should or could do to counter propaganda and false information in Ukraine, and whether they should maintain their objectivity in the face of purposeful disinformation being pumped into the country. “I’ll put it this way,” Bohdanovych said. “We have to push that rock aside. Despite it all, we must deliver [the news] with balance. Despite it all, we have to keep banging our heads against this wall. ... And,

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spending twenty months in Russian detention. During her imprisonment she was elected to the Ukrainian parliament.

like I said, pull the audience toward us. And we can pull them only if we get them to think about the role they play, when they realize that their behavior determines what happens in the country.”

In raising this issue, Bohdanovych was then asked if the audience in Ukraine is dissatisfied with what they see on television news programs, and whether they are inflamed by and, nonetheless, drawn to emotional, sensational, and subjective news. There was no hesitation before he asked, “You haven’t thought about interference?” He paused, and added, “For us, Russian interference in propaganda and information has been absolute. And for you [in the United States], the way I understand it, something like this exists.”

Earlier in the interview, the researcher raised the example of the CNN current events debate program *Crossfire*, which the network cancelled after comedian John Stewart appeared on the show in 2004 and famously criticized the hosts for contributing to the degradation of the tenor and tone of civil discussion and debate in the United States. “It’s hurting America. Here is what I wanted to tell you guys: Stop. You have a responsibility to the public discourse, and you fail miserably,” Stewart told the hosts.<sup>25</sup> A few months later, then-CNN President Jonathan Klein cancelled the show and said the move was made in part because of Stewart’s appearance on *Crossfire* (Carter 2005).

The researcher discussed this example with Bohdanovych, and told him that *Crossfire* eventually returned to CNN, largely because attempts at doing a show where participants engaged in a civil debate on political topics simply didn’t get the

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<sup>25</sup> *Crossfire*, CNN, accessed via YouTube on March 19, 2018, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=601&v=aFQFB5YpDZE>.

same ratings that Crossfire generated. Bohdanovych referred to this example as he talked about the problem of relying on television ratings as an expression of the audience's preference for emotional and sensational television news. What's more, he said it seemed clear that Russia understood it could use this desire to further inflame and divide democratic societies. "It's an interesting example with CNN. They try to do a calm news show and their ratings fall. But other shows are more emotional, and their ratings grow. If I was Russia, and I wanted to exacerbate this situation – in America, in Ukraine, wherever – I would play on these emotions. The more radical the mood of the people, the easier it is to divide society, the easier it is to manipulate people. And I see that this is possible, this kind of situation, that, over the course of 10 years, or 15, or even 20, Russia, which strives one way or another to inflame, can then easily manipulate a Trump, or some other politician, or for us a Poroshenko [the president of Ukraine] or some other politician. Why not?" Interestingly, this interview with Bohdanovych took place two days before news broke that Russian operatives ran incendiary advertisements on Facebook that were designed to exploit divisions in American society in the run up to the 2016 presidential election.<sup>26</sup>

The spread of Russian disinformation in Ukraine was also a theme throughout the interviews. It raised the question of whether the press should be objective in the face of purposeful attempts by Russia to spread lies in Ukraine. Yevhen Fedchenko, the director of the Mohyla School of Journalism at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and colleagues at the journalism school launched the Internet news site Stopfake.org, which received international attention for its work battling against

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<sup>26</sup> Frenkel, S., & Benner, K. (2018). To Stir Discord in 2016, Russians Turned Most Often to Facebook. *The New York Times*. February 17, 2018.

the spread of fake news in Ukraine (Kramer 2017). According to the organization's website, "initially the goal of the project was to verify and refute disinformation and propaganda about events in Ukraine being circulated in the media. Eventually the project grew into an information hub where we examine and analyze all aspects of Kremlin propaganda."<sup>27</sup> The project airs a weekly news program in which editors examine a particular story being circulated throughout Ukraine. If they can find the evidence to convincingly disprove the story, they put it on air in an attempt to, as the project's name implies, stop fakes from propagating throughout the country.

Fedchenko, who previously worked as the head of the international news department at the television station STB, also stressed that developing credibility was a crucial step for the press in Ukraine. "I can see how, sometimes, faith in journalism as an institution changes, from the perspective of the audience. And, to the extent that journalism has now fallen under the influence of fake news, this really corrupts journalism as an institution in the eyes of the audience. This is sad to see, and it's one of the reasons why I decided that we needed to do StopFake, so that this faith would return. Because journalism cannot exist without faith, and this is a key principle."

Fedchenko said that this faith in the press as agents of information has also been affected by social media, and he added that the public's need for some group to fulfill this role is necessarily affected by the stability of a given society. "This question of the role journalists play arises because, if a society is stable, it perhaps knows everything about this society and it doesn't need intermediaries. But, if there appears some kind of instability, then right away there develops a demand for people

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<sup>27</sup> Accessed online at <https://www.stopfake.org/en/about-us/> on March 24, 2018.

who can explain, because the audience gets frustrated as a reaction to a world that is changing. And they can't explain it on their own, and then they want to find, or delegate to, someone [this role]. And, in Ukraine, for example, it was the same thing when the seizure of Crimea, and later the war in Donbass, created a very big vacuum, and Ukrainians did not know where to get information. It didn't matter who it was, just that someone could explain things for them. And, to the extent that the government from one side didn't do this because it didn't have the capacity to do it or the experience, then from one side propaganda started to fill this vacuum and from the other side there appeared people who provided some explanation.”

It is this vacuum, Fedchenko said, that gave Russian propagandists the chance to flood Ukraine with disinformation and fake news. His response, both to the question of whether the press should be objective and the question of how it should respond to propaganda, begins by first acknowledging that complete objectivity is not possible. Next, he said, the press can be transparent about its work – it can take the audience to where the facts originate. And then it can stand on those facts, and determine what is true by doing its fundamental job of doing the on-the-ground, grassroots reporting. Fedchenko said that each individual journalist has a responsibility to call the facts as they see them, particularly if that means saying Russian troops are on the ground in eastern Ukraine when the Russian foreign minister says there are no Russian troops in the country. “We can't be objective, but we can be transparent about our sources, and our position, and we can show from where, and what, and how we got our information. And this is what makes it more attractive to the audience, rather than having us try to be objective, and not be,

because this is not possible. But it is possible for us to be transparent.” He said that a global problem for the press in the Internet age is one of adequate resources. Most journalism organizations simply lack the staff to thoroughly fact check what they publish or broadcast. And, moreover, because they don’t have enough journalists, they often need material, which they pull from dubious sources.

It is this same call for more transparency regarding how journalists come to the facts that they report that also mirrors the call for pragmatic objectivity discussed by Ward (2015, Chapter 8) in the literature review chapter of this work. While Fedchenko was among several journalists who talked about transparency as an answer to the problem of objectivity, it is important to recall that the other camp of Ukrainian journalists interviewed for this work believed in objectivity without qualifications. For them, the effort to adhere to objectivity was fundamental to what it meant to be a journalist. It is this debate among journalists in Ukraine that was prominent throughout the interviews. Although many reporters saw this as a problem for Ukrainian journalism – they believe that at a time of war and threats to the country’s sovereignty the press should be united and they should not argue among themselves – it is also significant that the press is having this debate. It is perhaps a positive sign that journalists in Ukraine are discussing and deciding the future of their own profession and figuring out which journalistic norms they believe their democracy requires. In an effort to provide a contrast and comparison of these beliefs, the following chapter explores the perspectives of American journalists regarding the roles they believe the press should play in the United States.

## Chapter 7: Normative Beliefs of American Journalists

In July 2016, New York magazine published an article under the headline, “The Case Against the Media. By the Media.” Journalists at the magazine interviewed 41 prominent American reporters, editors, and media figures (and surveyed another 113), among them Soledad O’Brien, Daniel Okrent, Dean Baquet, Bill Keller, and Bob Woodward. The interviewers asked what journalists thought the press was doing wrong, but also what it was doing right, and what they thought journalism should do in the United States. It was, the magazine’s editors wrote, a project to “turn our journalistic operation in on itself to investigate just how bad the media really is. We were less interested in bad actors – the Jayson Blairs and such – than in the structural dilemmas of the media trade.”<sup>28</sup>

Editors of the magazine put the transcripts from the interviews up on their website, “so you can see for yourselves how we’ve cherry-picked the quotes – and also because reading each of the commentators at length makes for almost an entirely different (and much deeper) exploration of the subject,” the magazine wrote in its introduction to the story.<sup>29</sup> In an attempt to get at just such a deeper and more systematic look at what the journalists said, the researcher of this dissertation took the text of those transcripts, uploaded them into the qualitative data analysis software program MAXQDA, then coded and analyzed them using the same techniques for coding and analysis described in the methods chapter of this work. The findings from

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<sup>28</sup> Accessed online at <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/07/case-against-media.html> on March 29, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

these interviews are presented throughout this chapter, and they offer a contextual comparison with the beliefs of Ukrainian journalists presented in the core findings chapters of this dissertation. The transcripts of the New York magazine interviews – which were conducted by Nick Tabor, Gabriel Sherman, and Jeff Wise – can be found on the magazine’s website.<sup>30</sup> The researcher downloaded the transcripts from the New York magazine website on September 13 and 14, and November 16, 2017.

The interviews with American journalists were conducted at a time – leading up to the 2016 U.S. presidential election – when “the only institutions Americans have less faith in than television news (21 percent) and newspapers (20 percent) are Congress and ‘big business,’” the magazine wrote. “People love to shoot the messenger, and these days especially, in an era of proverbial cable-news shoutfests and clickbait journalism, the messenger probably hasn’t been doing itself many favors. But the presidential candidacy of Donald Trump has seemed to usher us into a whole new season of media loathing. And self-loathing: A candidate who built his campaign in part on attacking, mocking, belittling, and dismissing the press has inspired a massive wave of journalistic self-recrimination.”<sup>31</sup>

The individuals interviewed by the magazine represent a wide range of figures within, as the editors wrote, “the media” in the United States. “Let’s just pause to acknowledge that throughout this project we’re committing a cardinal media sin of conflating for convenience, since the ‘media’ we’re describing lumps in The New York Times, TMZ, reporters, pundits, 24-hour cable news, and ourselves – vastly

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<sup>30</sup> <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/07/case-against-media.html>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

different entities, but ones seen, or described, by the public as a monolith,” the editors said.

In their synopsis of the interviews, editors of the project identified the factors that often limit journalists from living up to the normative ideals of the press’s role in democratic society. These factors also conformed with the core hypothesis used to conduct this research. That hypothesis said that the press – in the case of this dissertation, the press in Ukraine – would deprioritize the normative goal of providing a journalistic pragmatism that represents the full spectrum of voices and perspectives found in a plural democratic society. The editors wrote, “we heard much about deals cut with anonymous sources, the pressure for speed and easy hits that squeezes the nuance out of complicated stories, editors who knowingly simplified stories past the point of accuracy and publishers who spent resources on subjects they believed were trivial rather than those they felt were important.” The concern over simplification of complicated news stories was also a core research question in this work. That question asked whether journalists believe they should do as Rorty suggested and provide thick description of the details of peoples’ lives in an effort to ease the tension found in a plural society. Simplification of complex news stories is precisely what Rorty didn’t want.

Before proceeding to the findings on U.S. journalists, it is important to make a brief point here regarding the questions used in those interviews. While the interviews sought to explore what American journalists thought was wrong with the press, the narrower approach with each individual interviewee tailored the discussion to the particular specialization of that participant. For example, when an interviewer spoke

with a journalist who covers a technology beat, the questions focused mostly on the intersection of technology as well as press norms and practices. An interview with an entertainment reporter focused on what that particular journalist thought was wrong with entertainment journalism, while an interview with a foreign correspondent focused mainly on issues relevant to what the press is doing right and wrong in covering international affairs.

All of this is simply to say that, as the central topic of each interview varied, it could be difficult to find overriding themes that cut across the interviews, either with regard to what journalists thought is wrong with the media or on their normative beliefs regarding the role the press should play in a democratic society. Their responses, as one might expect, were a function of their specialty within the field. Nonetheless, certain topics did come up more than others. Current U.S. President Donald Trump – who, at the time of the interviews, had not yet become the Republican nominee, though it was becoming clear he was a front-runner for the nomination – was a frequent topic of conversation. With President Trump came discussion of truth, propaganda, and the impact of fake news via the Internet and social media, particularly on Facebook. Journalists also expressed concern about the future of their profession, about the role click rates and Internet traffic play on editorial decisions, and about finding a viable business model and revenue stream that would allow independent journalism to survive in the digital age. They said that all of these concerns – particularly the business and funding of journalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – have affected journalists' ability to live up to the ideals and norms ascribed to the press in a democratic society.

In talking about what they are doing wrong and right, the individuals who took part in these interviews also provided their thoughts on what the press in the United States should be doing for American democracy, and what they think the press in the Internet age should do to gain the public's trust. As the editors wrote, "In the media market, like any market, that loyalty is earned, one presumes, by giving the audience what it wants. But what does it want? Is the media there to excite or to inform? To challenge or to reassure? To be objective or partisan?" What follows is an exploration of those normative beliefs. The first section examines what reporters think about a journalistic pragmatism that represents the different beliefs, perspectives, and voices in society, and it explores whether journalists thought the press in the United States has played some role in political polarization in the country. The following section examines journalists' normative beliefs on objectivity. The last section focuses on what journalists' think is wrong with the press in the U.S., and on the impact that financial concerns have had on the different roles journalists believe they should play. Throughout the chapter the views of American journalists are compared and contrasted to the views of the Ukrainian reporters on the same topic. A central theme throughout this chapter is the impact that the Internet has had on the business of journalism, and the subsequent steps that media organizations have taken to generate revenue while still trying to live up to the normative roles that the press is meant to play in a democratic society.

### On Journalistic Pragmatism in the United States

A central premise of this work was that the press in the U.S., particularly the major cable news networks and talk radio programs, seemed to be using sensation and

emotion to attract viewers, and that, in doing so, they were also contributing to a polarization of society along ideological lines. This dissertation asked journalists in Ukraine whether the press bears some responsibility for inflaming and dividing society in their country, and whether the press thought they had a responsibility to mitigate the tension found in a plural, democratic country. But, as the findings in Chapters 4-6 demonstrate, the role of oligarchs who own most major media organizations affects their answer to this question. Many of those journalists acknowledged that emotion and sensation are used in Ukrainian media, but they said the press did not need to use sensationalism to engage the audience because much of their funding comes from the country's oligarchs. And, moreover, because adherence to political ideology in Ukrainian politics was almost nonexistent, the press does not emphasize an ideological divide that further polarizes the public, they said. Politicians switch parties regularly, and something that resembles the split in the United States between Republican and Democrat just doesn't exist in Ukraine, the journalists there said. There is, however, a division in Ukraine between those people who are pro-Ukrainian and those who are pro-Russian, but on most other issues Ukraine seems to have a plurality of different opinions, the journalists said. It was hypothesized in an earlier chapter of this dissertation that the press does use emotion and sensation, and, in doing so, plays on the division between established political ideologies – in the United States, it appears to be a deeply emotional and easily stereotyped rupture between Republican and Democrat.

David Auerbach, a former technology writer for Slate, was asked explicitly what made it so appealing for the press in the United States to produce content

“geared primarily to rattle someone’s cage.” Auerbach said this technique was not a new development, and it was an effective tool that the press has long used to attract attention. “There you’re looking at cortisol production,” he said.

There’s no more powerful force in human history than tribalism. You see this everywhere, that these outrage stories produce tribes. There’s nothing that gets people to band together more than a perceived common enemy. And it doesn’t matter what the perceived common enemy is. But if you can generate a story that gets the reaction, ‘This is an outrage, I must tell my friends about this,’ and my friends will then feel pressured themselves to read the story, express their outrage, condemn people who do not agree with them in their outrage, and share it further, then you’re going to do better than just some random feel-good story that will be shared by a smaller percentage. Every indication shows that the most shared stories are of two types: On the one hand you have these outrage stories. On the other hand you have things like ‘The Dress’ [The one that looked blue and black to some people and ... you remember.] The problem is that no one can figure out how to manufacture Dress stories on demand. Outrage, however, has more of a formula to it.

Several journalists said that there were other factors responsible for polarizing the American public. They said that cable television news and talk radio propagate stereotypes and that they are actually more interested in staging battles between individuals who represent the two major parties in the U.S. than they are in fulfilling journalism’s mission to provide the public with credible and reliable information. “It’s crazy to see Obama or Hillary Clinton described as a socialist. Certainly the conservative media presents those very inaccurately. It misses all those gradations.

And it also leads people to believe in these stereotypes,” said Daniel McCarthy, editor at large of *The American Conservative*. “I think one of the problems of the media, both on the left and on the right, is that it tends to want staged battles. I mean, it really is like professional wrestling, where you have one good guy – the face – and one bad guy – the heel – and it’s meant to be very sharply defined. If a media figure, a writer for example, goes on television or radio, there’s a tendency for producers to expect that person to present a party line, and to present a contrast with other guests that will be best for – again, a staged fight, a sort of professional wrestling match. And not actually have views that will be orthogonal to what’s expected, and create a more interesting and perhaps more informative discussion.”

This more nuanced discussion that acknowledges “all those gradations” in the world, as McCarthy said, is also what Richard Rorty and many other pragmatist thinkers have tried to nurture in democratic societies. They wanted to show the disadvantages of viewing the world through stereotypes and generalizations that greatly oversimplify the complexities and details found in the particulars of life. Solutions to problems, they argued, come from the details of a given situation, not from the generalizations and stereotypes around that issue. Credulous, uncritical acceptance of political party ideology – as well as an inflexible belief in a given stereotype despite contradictory, factual information – is a central concern for pragmatists and journalists. In the United States, it is a concern that this reliance on stereotype and generalization has helped deeply polarize the political landscape, and has pushed people into oppositional camps in which reasonable, rational public discourse grounded in an objective, nonpartisan discussion of information is less and

less likely. One central concern of this dissertation is the question of whether journalists think they bear some responsibility for catalyzing this polarization. The findings in Chapters 4-6 show that Ukrainian journalists interviewed for this work believe that the people in their society – politicians, citizens, and the press – do not bind themselves to a given political party or ideology. Journalists in the United States, however, said that adherence to a political ideology has increasingly come to define media organizations in the country.

Asked when he thought this first started in the United States, Daniel Okrent, the former public editor of *The New York Times*, said it began after the American public started getting its news from a much broader spectrum of media organizations. “The simplest answer is the breakdown of the network broadcast system,” Okrent said, echoing what Steven Brill described as an oligopoly of three main network news broadcasts in the United States. “America got its news from ABC, CBS, and NBC, overwhelmingly,” Okrent said. “If you look at the ratings numbers, the total audience for the national news broadcasts, say in the 1980s – I’m not exactly sure of the numbers, but it was something like 40 million per night. And today it’s under 20 million a night. And the limited supply of news put everybody on the same page – we’re all listening to [Walter] Cronkite, we’re all listening to [David] Brinkley, so we all have something in common. With the advent of cable news and then the Internet, it breaks up into a thousand suppliers, so we don’t have a set of facts in common any longer.” Asked whether he thought the disappearance of network news had a larger effect on fragmenting the public than the innovation of the Internet, Okrent said there is really little difference between the two. “I think it’s the same thing,” he said.

“Network news becomes the fractured, atomized news of cable news and the Internet. Cable’s the best illustration of it. The world I live in, and I imagine you live in – what did Rachel Maddow say last night? If I’m watching the election returns, I’m watching it on MSNBC. But the guy in the house next to me is watching them on Fox.”

Michael Hirsh, the former national editor at Politico, agreed that the Internet helped give voice to a much broader range of perspectives with competing conceptions of truth. This has helped diminish the credibility of established, traditional journalism organizations. “I see this in some ways as the tail end of a long arc of history, of 30 or 40 years where we started out in the pre-internet age with a few authorized outlets that really spoke authoritatively; you had Walter Cronkite, you had three major networks, you had The Times, you had Washington Post, Newsweek magazine, which I worked for for many years,” Hirsch said. “And that’s largely gone with the wind. The Times and The Post are still around, but there’s a question of how much they really dictate the agenda in the way that they used to. And, in the meantime, of course, you have this phenomenon where 10,000 weeds have bloomed, if you will, on the internet, non-truth sites where like-minded people gather, where they get a lot of their information, much of it just garbage, and there’s no direction home anymore. There’s no real anchor. And of course a guy like Trump comes in and exploits that to the hilt.”

Ben Smith, the editor-in-chief of BuzzFeed, agreed that having only three nightly network newscasts had the effect of connecting society to shared narratives. But for Smith, it was this particular period that was historically unique. “There was obviously this period in the ‘60s and ‘70s when Americans watched one of three

nightly newscasts that represented a kind of consensus. But that's obviously wildly outside the historical international norms. And I think the partisan media has always – elsewhere, and usually here, although not for that period – been really vibrant, and the dominance of cable news, which is now fading, was probably the peak of that. It's always frustrating and distressing to talk to people who have chosen their facts, but I don't really think it's a contemporary phenomenon.”

It is this very same phenomenon that was addressed in the preface of this dissertation – a phenomenon in which people choose their facts and decide that the world is a certain way with little regard for some kind of objective, shared truth. Information that contradicts their worldview is discarded, while news that confirms their worldview is retained and even emphasized. Several journalists said the rise of cable news has fueled this behavior and it has given people from either side of the political spectrum a place to find perspectives that echo their worldviews.

During a discussion with Daniel Okrent, the New York magazine interviewer pointed out that CNN, the first cable news channel in the United States, did not begin as a partisan outlet. Even after the founding of more polarized cable news channels, CNN was still for some time “a reliable and trusted middle-of-the-road news source on cable,” the interviewer said. Okrent, who served as the first public editor of The New York Times in the wake of the Jayson Blair scandal, said, “I think I understand this one. Let me try my theory on you. In a pre-Fox universe, news was a neutral blob. But once Fox sets up on the right, everything to its left is the Left – it's no longer neutral. By very definition, if I'm not Fox, I'm by definition Left, if I'm not buying what Fox is saying. And what's most notable about this to me is how small

Fox's audience is – their ratings are ridiculously small, in terms of the voting population of the country. But they are definitional. They are the ones who have defined the ideological shape of the American news media.”

Dean Baquet, the executive editor of The New York Times, said that, while he's “not a hundred percent convinced” that he accepts the pervasive distrust in the media by the public, he does think “cable television has done us all a little bit of damage.” Asked by the interviewer why that is, Baquet pointed to a pervasive criticism of cable news, though it has also generated greater ratings. “I think that the talking heads, screaming, fighting, and some of the faux-journalism practiced by people like O'Reilly has got to turn people off,” Baquet said. “There's a cynicism to that kind of coverage. CNN's hiring Donald Trump's former campaign manager as a commentator looks cynical to the viewer or the reader. It looks not serious, and it fuzzies up the definition of journalism. And that has done some damage to all of us. There's some good things going on. We're much, much more aware of the reader and our audience. I think that we were not in the past. In a weird way, we were sort of arrogant about our readers, and it's been healthy for us to get a better sense of what people read and what people like, but the notion of this broad-brush mistrust of media, I'm skeptical about. As I said, cable news has dragged us all down a little bit.”

In addition to considering the role journalists believe they should play amid a society of people who seem to selectively pursue news and information that suits their worldviews, this work also argued in previous chapters that there is a divide between how political theorists think about reason and rationality in society and the way that the press wants to believe that people think and use the work they produce – that is to

say, the factual information that journalists spend considerable time and effort finding, verifying, and publishing.

“It’s a progress narrative,” said Jeff Sharlet, a contributing editor for Harper’s and Rolling Stone. “We want to imagine progress, and we want to imagine what progress is, and we want to imagine a kind of a triumph of reason. If you’re in the business of finding out facts and reporting on things ... you still have, especially in the American press, a kind of pseudo-religious commitment to this as the best way of knowing. And you’re also not in a position to understand that there are people who reject it, not because they’re stupid, but because they understand it and very consciously reject that as the best way of knowing.”

Sharlet’s description of the role reason plays in our conception of progress – and that some people consciously reject reason as the best way of knowing – is a topic that was also addressed in the preface of this work. It is also at the heart of Rawls’ description of the problem of political liberalism. Namely, that people with reasonable, though different moral, philosophical, or religious beliefs will see the world in different ways. While journalists, as Sharlet noted above, are still committed to the idea that facts and reason are the best ways of getting at truth, some people consciously reject this as a way of knowing the world, “not because they’re stupid, but because they understand it and very consciously reject that as the best way of knowing.”

This is exactly the dilemma that Rawls identified as the problem of political liberalism. It is also a problem for a profession tasked with finding and reporting those facts. Based on the American and Ukrainian interviews in this work, there is a

notable difference in how journalists from either country deal with this problem. When American reporters discussed what's wrong with the press in the U.S., their comments in the interviews suggest that they are, to a degree, resigned that they've lost some agency as journalists. This is because the demand for higher click rates or page views largely dictate what stories they will report and because people seem more willing to reject what the press reports if it does not conform to their beliefs. Although journalists in Ukraine face similar problems, they seem more optimistic that facts and truth will win out over propaganda and misinformation. It is precisely because they believe in facts and truth that they are willing to discard objectivity as it can lead to false equivalency. Ukrainian journalists said their job is to report the facts as they see them, and, despite the difficulties noted above, they believe these facts will ultimately win out over propaganda. For one camp of Ukrainian journalists, this means letting go to some degree of the norm of journalistic objectivity.

### On Journalistic Objectivity in the United States

The literature review chapter of this work addressed the topic of objectivity. It noted that different academic work has challenged the traditional notion that reporters should or can be neutral and balanced. The interviews conducted with Ukrainian journalists revealed that the question of whether the press in the country should be objective has been a source of great debate in Ukraine. The interviews with American journalists indicate that reporters in the United States are also moving away from the goal of objectivity and they believe fairness is a more attainable goal for the press. Okrent, the former public editor of The New York Times, said this movement from objectivity to fairness has taken place over the past two decades. "I think there's been

a pretty sizable movement in the last 10 to 15 years away from the goal of objectivity to the goal of fairness. And they are two different things. And I do believe that the much-loathed mainstream media are concerned about fairness. Whether they achieve it is a different question. But I think that's what they see as their goal today, because the attacks on false balance are deeply influential and deeply appropriate," Okrent said.

When discussing the topic of objectivity, many of the American journalists talked about the problem of false equivalency in the traditional notion of journalistic objectivity. Margaret Sullivan, the media columnist for The Washington Post and a former public editor for The New York Times, said such equivalency is harmful to the public's best interests. "Really, what you ought to be trying to do is serve the interest of the news consumer, rather than try to be objective. So if you switch your goal from trying to be safe and trying to look objective to what really serves the citizen who's looking for information, then you get a different kind of result that isn't just 'Well, we're going to split it down the middle and call it a day.'"

Several American journalists noted that the culture within corporate media in the United States often tacitly pushes the press to remain objective even in the face of clear untruths. Many of the Ukrainian journalists interviewed for this work also talked about an implied censorship in their organizations. They said that the days when they are given very direct orders telling them what to do are largely in the past, but instead they are given suggestions about what can be covered and what should not be covered. In comments that sounded very similar to what Ukrainian journalists said about such censorship, Glen Greenwald said that corporate media encourage the use

of false equivalency. In trying to be objective, he said, the press is effectively censoring itself:

It's interesting, if you say to journalists who are at these organizations, and I know this because I've talked to a lot of them over the years about exactly this, they'll say, "Look, I've never once been told what to say. No one's ever written a memo saying, 'You must say this' and 'You cannot talk about this.' And they're totally telling the truth. But that doesn't really say much, because as adults, especially people who succeed at their careers, one of the things we're all really good at is coming to understand what our environment rewards and ... what will help us advance and what will hold us back. So you don't need memos if you're a big media organization, telling you to avoid certain things and certain perspectives, and to pursue others; you know exactly what that environment encourages and demands of you, and it's easy to comport with it.

The Ukrainian journalists interviewed for this research said that adhering to this norm that the press should be neutral and unbiased has also had consequences in Ukraine. They said that, precisely because of the war in Ukraine and the flood of propaganda and misinformation from pro-Russian sources, reporters in the country believe that the journalistic norm of objectivity is being used against them. They said that in the middle of a hybrid information war in their country, the pro-Russian side criticizes journalists for not being objective. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian journalists said that, while the norms of journalism call for them to be neutral and unbiased, the pro-Russian side of the conflict floods Ukraine with propaganda, misinformation, and fake news.

Several American journalists said the same problem exists in the United States and journalists in their country also question why they should be neutral and unbiased when the people they cover clearly lie. Kurt Bardella, who resigned as the spokesperson for Breitbart News in 2016, said the current political situation has pushed journalists to be more aggressive in the face of attacks. “The attacks on the institutions are so blatant and public and in their face. It’s no longer viable or plausible to try and say, ‘Oh, we’re just going to be objective.’ How could you not have an opinion at this point, when your reporter is sitting there and Donald Trump is calling him an idiot? It’s not believable. And I think that, at some point, the mainstream media – both rightfully so, and personally strategically – will have to shed that cloak of objectivity and say, point blank, ‘This is not a good person, this is not who should lead our country.’ Take a position on it at this point, because they’re handicapping themselves by playing by a set of rules that no one else is playing by anymore. And if they continue to cede that ground, their influence will continue to be diminished.” Journalists in Ukraine expressed exactly this same notion. They said that, in the face of clear lies, the press at some point must simply call true what their reporting shows to be true.

There are, of course, various pressures both in Ukraine and in the United States that prevent journalists from fulfilling journalism’s different normative goals in a democratic society. The previous chapters explored the different factors that Ukrainian journalists said restrict them from living up to these ideals. While they said that oligarchic ownership and the war in the east of the country have had the greatest impact on their performance, a different theme emerged when U.S. journalists

discussed the issues that limit their ability to fulfill the roles the press is meant to play in American democracy. The following section of this work explores those factors.

### “What’s Wrong With the Media?”

In discussing what’s wrong with the press in the United States, many of the American journalists who took part in the interviews in this work noted that editorial decisions in media organizations are now heavily driven by ratings, viewership, and the need to generate revenue. This was by far the dominant theme throughout the interviews with American journalists. They said it has resulted in more clickbait, sensational news stories, it has pushed the press to focus on stories that they believe will generate more clicks and views, and it has limited their ability to live up to journalism’s normative ideals. American journalists said that no topic has been more successful at grabbing the public’s attention than coverage of Donald Trump. MSNBC’s Matt Bradley spoke about the intersection of Trump, entertainment, audience ratings, and the business of journalism. Asked whether he thought the media bears responsibility for the candidacy of now-President Trump, Bradley said, “I suppose. Everybody can say, ‘Ugh, the media is just feeding us Trump and more Trump,’ right? Well, are you watching? Are you entertained? I am. I’m watching. I’m hanging on every word, and I consider myself to be a pretty savvy media consumer. So I could criticize, but, you know, you are giving people what they want. It is a business at the end of the day.”

Kara Swisher, a technology journalist and co-founder of Recode, was asked whether the old business model used by big media companies is even viable anymore. “Well, it’s really a hard time,” said Swisher, who previously worked for The Wall

Street Journal and The Washington Post. “You’ve got severe advertising issues. How do you make money? Should you do commerce? Should you do events, like we do? Do you make money from that? Is it sustainable? My kids get information through Snapchat, not through the newspapers. How do you reach them? It’s not that they don’t want information, it’s that they’re reaching it a different way, and that’s the difficult part.”

It is, then, perhaps a great irony that the Internet, which deeply undercut the traditional business model used by the press to generate revenue, has also given it the ability to see what the audience wants. It can do this now on a much more granular level than was possible before the Internet age, thanks in large part to various analytical tools that offer a real-time look at online click rates, page views, and time spent on the web page of any particular story. Many of the people interviewed by New York magazine spoke at length about using these different tools to attract readers and viewers, and to find new ways to generate revenue, since relying on income from advertising alone is not a long-term solution for most media organizations. Many companies, Swisher said, have had to diversify into unrelated businesses in order to ensure they have the revenue they need to continue operating.

Swisher said that dwindling advertising revenue has clearly been a problem for all media companies, but her organization doesn’t worry about it because Recode’s owner, Vox Media, secures the ads. “But I think about it,” Swisher said, referring to advertisements. In the past, traditional journalism organizations relied on a mixture of circulation and advertising rates to determine how much money they could charge for advertisements. As news organizations moved to the Internet,

companies tried to keep the same business model but use click rates to show advertisers how many people viewed the ads online. But this has also changed. “Everyone’s suddenly going on engagement instead of traffic. The metrics keep changing. It’s really confusing! But so what? It’s hard to do a small business in America. It’s hard to run a pizza joint. Suddenly tomatoes cost more. Journalists are not immune to business concerns, even if they sometimes act like they are,” Swisher said.

A number of people interviewed by the magazine, however, did talk in depth about the business of operating a media organization in the Internet age, and the impact this has had on the press, particularly in terms of how reliant journalism has become on using social media platforms, such as Facebook, to engage with the audience and then push them to their own websites. “The effects – the scale effects – that Facebook induced are also really significant for the economic situation. If you would go back and look at the size of websites in 2008, 2009, 2010, they’re much, much smaller than websites are now,” said Alexis Madrigal of Fusion, a television cable and satellite news and satire channel owned by Fusion Media Group.

Many sites have actually shrunk because – Matt Yglesias said this – it’s no longer really a traffic-maximizing strategy to have every writer write five times a day. ... The thing that I would say about that scale is that at first, people received it as a gift. “We’re growing; we have more ad inventory.” But as ad inventory grew, what advertisers were willing to pay for each ad declined. And you end up having to make more paid views to get the same amount of money, and that’s hard – right? ... And when you think about what that means, eventually the natural tidal

growth of Facebook stops, at least for American English-language publishers. And then – now what are you going to do? The pie got bigger, but it was like an expanding balloon, so everybody got bigger at the same time. And now you’ve just got to be producing way more page views than you were before. And that’s tough. That’s really tough. ... If you are fully dependent on a page-view banner-ad-driven model, it’s hard, ’cause you’re getting squeezed out of the attentional space that is the news feed.

Steven Brill – a journalist, lawyer, and entrepreneur who founded the media watchdog Brill’s Content and Court TV, which became TruTV – was also aware of why chasing clicks online would ultimately not be a successful strategy for media organizations in the U.S. “If you say, ‘Well, I’m not going to do long-form, I’m not going to do serious stuff, I’m just going to do clickbait.’ The thing about the Internet is, there is an infinite supply of page views. It keeps growing. And if there’s an infinite supply of something that keeps growing, economics 101 means that the price of that supply keeps going down. So the ad revenue you’re going to get from that goes nowhere.”

Journalists also did not mince words about the outsized role Facebook has played as an intermediary between the audience and the traditional press in the United States. “I think the most surprising thing is how thoroughly dominant Facebook became,” Madrigal said. “If you go back and look at when Facebook was making the transition to being primarily a mobile app and not a website ... you could see plausible paths to the kind of Facebook universe stopping expanding and then collapsing in on itself. I’m not going to say that I was necessarily rooting for that, but

I do think Facebook is the most powerful news-information gatekeeper the world's ever seen, and we don't know precisely all the ways that it's changing what people are seeing." This point about Facebook's role as "the most powerful news-information gatekeeper the world's ever seen" is important to bear in mind later in this work, as the influence of the social media site in spreading propaganda and misinformation was also a significant theme in the conversations with Ukrainian journalists. Moreover, several months after Madrigal spoke about Facebook, news broke that Russian agents were posting incendiary stories on the social media website in an attempt to stoke division and anger among the public prior to the 2016 presidential election in the United States.<sup>32</sup>

Dean Baquet, the executive editor of The New York Times, was also asked about Facebook's dominance in the distribution of news, and his answer also addressed the business needs of his organization, as well as what the Internet and social media have done to allow the press to better understand the audience and what they want from contemporary media. "Anytime anybody has that stunningly dominant role in the distribution of news, we should be wary and skeptical going in," Baquet said. "On the other hand, you also have to go where your readers are. First off, that's the economics of the business, but secondly, I don't have impact if I'm not read. And we're read now – we, the press – 20 times more widely than we were before, which people sometimes have a tendency to forget," Baquet said.

Precisely because Facebook has become so influential as a gatekeeper of information in the digital age, media companies have sought to find other ways to

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<sup>32</sup> Frenkel, S., & Benner, K. (2018). To Stir Discord in 2016, Russians Turned Most Often to Facebook. *The New York Times*. February 17, 2018.

publicize their content so that they are not so heavily reliant on the social media giant. Nearly all media organizations optimize their headlines and stories with certain key words so that they appear more prominently in the results of various Internet search engines, which use computer algorithms to prioritize the order in which results appear when searched online. Asked how much the media is now influenced by the use of these algorithms, Michael Wertheim, the chief operating officer at Fatherly, said, “I think they’re very, increasingly under the sway of the algorithms. I think every media company is trying to figure out ways to defend against the algorithms and also play along with the algorithms at the same time. I think you have to do both. You have to build other channels of traffic, and you also have to develop distributed content strategy, so that you’re not just dependent on what’s going on on your web sites.”

This “distributed content strategy,” as Wertheim put it, is an effort by contemporary media organizations to put their work in front of readers and viewers, who in the Internet age are less and less likely to do as their parents or grandparents did and rely directly on traditional journalism organizations for news and information. Instead of being published in a traditional news organization where people come to view or read information, journalism in the Internet age must increasingly be pushed to the audience who aggregate around popular social media sites. Many journalists said they were aware that they could no longer afford to simply publish information in their own properties. For many of the people who took part in the interviews, this means using Facebook’s newsfeed to draw the attention of readers who, in the digital age, largely expect information to find them on their social media sites. “It’s harder to get people to just go somewhere and discover,” said Wertheim, who previously

worked on the business side at both Entertainment Weekly and Time Inc. “I think what people are doing is in Facebook feeds, so you’re publishing most of the things to Facebook that will work really well, and once that page is engaged, then a story that’s quote-unquote important but would not necessarily work as well on Facebook as some others, they’ll still post that because it will get more reach than it would have otherwise.”

This desire by news organizations to publish stories that attract readers is, of course, nothing new. The press has long sought to find a balance between publishing stories that editors consider important for people to know, though they are not incredibly interesting, and stories that attract the public’s attention, but they might not be particularly important for society. This is a balance between journalism’s need to generate revenue and its editorial mission to inform the public in a democratic society. Since the innovation of the Internet, however, this balance appears to have shifted toward generating higher ratings, page views, and click rates, which in turn would bring in much needed revenue. While the Ukrainian journalists interviewed for this work did talk about ratings and click rates, they also said that journalism organizations in Ukraine are much less reliant on income from subscriptions and advertising. As the findings in Chapters 4-6 show, Ukrainian reporters say their media organizations get significant funding and support from the country’s oligarchs, who use their media organizations to fight one another or as public relations tools to make their own business interests look good. This is not to say that media organizations in Ukraine are immune from concerns over ratings and click rates. In fact, Ukrainian reporters say that the country’s oligarchs use this data to understand how much

impact their media have on the public in the country. But there is a clear difference between the way the U.S. journalists interviewed by New York magazine talked about ratings and click rates, and the way Ukrainian journalists discussed the issue.

Steven Brill also stressed that the Internet and all of the analytical tools that have come with it have given editors a much deeper understanding of both who their audience is and what they want to see. It is an understanding that simply wasn't possible before the Internet. While publishers and editors could previously see spikes in subscriptions or copies of newspapers bought at newsstands on given days, and while such spikes could be attributed to major events (the moon landing, a presidential election, etc.), they could not see how each individual story within a newspaper did with their readership. "I think, obviously, we are in much closer touch with our audience," Brill said.

Every reporter knows how many people are reading every story. I think the reality of a lot of those inside newspaper features is that nobody ever read them. They were stories that were pitched for A1 and then didn't clear the bar for whatever reason. The reporting didn't pan out, or an editor didn't like them because they were boring or the thesis didn't pan out, so they ended up on A7 with half the work put in. And probably nobody ever read those stories. And now we know! ... I think it's incredibly fun to know your audience and be getting that feedback loop from stats and social media all the time. I think for reporters, that's amazing. You're not just making widgets of a certain size and shape to fit into a print thing. I'm sort of the extreme of this, but I feel like we're in the ephemera business, and fundamentally, the value of a story is what it does, not being something you can hang on the wall. I think you

can really feel that and understand it much more quickly than you used to be able to do.

Some stories, of course, do both – they generate lots of attention from the public and they are also very important. The innovation of the Internet does not appear to have changed this relationship, though it has certainly given editors a better understanding of what the public wants by seeing what they click online and how much time they spend on each individual web page. Editors can then decide that, at a time when journalism organizations desperately need the revenue, they can give people more of what they seemingly want. And many of the journalists interviewed by the magazine said that Donald Trump was a remarkably good example of a topic that gives the public both important information, on the one hand, and sensation, emotion, outrage, and entertainment, on the other. “Whether you agree or disagree with him, what other politician, if you knew he was going to be talking live for five minutes right now, would you feel more compelled to watch than Donald Trump right now?” Brill asked. “The next time, if there are 17 candidates running for the Republican nomination, you can bet that four of them will decide they’re going to be Donald Trump.”

Many journalists said that Trump understood the media in this contemporary environment better than the press understood itself. While many editors and journalists believed that the press must still call Trump out on factual misstatements or outright lies, they expressed great concern that facts were now so readily in dispute either by Trump himself or by his supporters. Bill Keller, the editor-in-chief of The Marshall Project and a former executive editor of The New York Times, was asked if Donald Trump “knows the rules of journalism better than journalists do.” The

interviewer said that “there are the ostensible rules of journalism, and then there are the real rules of journalism.” Keller replied that, yes, there is a difference between understanding the nuts and bolts of practicing daily journalism, on the one hand, and understanding how to change the narrative, and how to dominate headlines and news cycles, on the other. “There’s the dynamics of journalism,” Keller said. “He understands the business of journalism. He understands that it’s like journalists can be like a school of fish: They all turn in formation really fast, chasing the bright shiny lure.”

And journalists said that Trump had a remarkable way of saying things publicly – or privately which are later revealed publicly – that would have been a death knell for most any other politician. He not only survives these situations, journalists said, but he feeds the press other sensations that then distract the public from the previous issue. “He changes positions on everything,” said Steven Brill. It’s almost as if any single one of 20 different things would have been a disqualifier for anybody else. So that probably says something about the cynicism of a big chunk of the population, which just thinks that the country’s not working anymore and they might as well try something different. His press conferences will be good for a lot of laughs for four years. ... There are very few people I’ve come across who will just absolutely lie, who will absolutely say, ‘It is snowing out right now.’ They’ll typically think of some way to kind of get you to where you think it’s snowing but be able to say, ‘I never said it was snowing.’ Reporters and their editors have a tough time dealing with someone who just makes things up.” The interviewer added that Russian President Vladimir Putin seems to be doing the very same thing. “You can do that in

a place where there isn't a free press," Brill said. "If you go back to the Cuban Missile Crisis, Adlai Stevenson confronted the Soviet representative to the U.N., who said, 'Missiles? What missiles? We don't have any missiles in Cuba.' But it's really unusual to see that happening with a prominent figure in the United States who isn't some guy who's peddling a penny stock and goes to jail for it."

There have historically been two broad categories of journalism organizations in the United States, Brill said. There have been those that take their normative role as a critical and independent check on power in a democracy to be a priority, and there have been organizations that were concerned, first and foremost, with being a business that makes money. But, Brill said, "the two types are blurring [into] the type of journalism that depends purely on eyeballs, or at least eyeballs at the moment, Trump is pretty irresistible, certainly in television. The simple fact is, if you're walking past a television set in your living room and you notice it's Trump giving a speech or having a press conference, you're going to stop and say, 'Gee, what the hell is he going to say next?' It's like watching a car accident. You know you shouldn't rubberneck, but you do rubberneck. In television, that translates into pure dollars and cents. It is really easy for anyone on Morning Joe or the Today show to calculate, 'If I have Donald Trump on versus I don't have Donald Trump on, and even if he's on the telephone, how many more eyeballs am I going to get, and how is that going to affect my CPMs [Cost Per Thousand, which is a marketing term used to denote the price of 1,000 advertisement impressions on one web page] for the rest of the month?' Not my CPMs, but my revenue; my CPMs will stay the same, but my revenue will go up

because I'll have more Ms [M in CPM is used to represent the Roman numeral for 1,000].”

Other journalists expressed frustration that truth and factual information now seem to be so readily in dispute by an ideologically polarized public. They said that Trump's disregard for truth and facts has fueled the situation and provided an example for others to follow, and it has deeply undercut the press's authority and credibility. “It's just that he [Donald Trump] ran roughshod over a traditional media that still sees itself as the voice of authority, the platform for authoritative news, and we're used, we're depended upon less and less for that,” said Michael Hirsh, the former national editor at Politico. “This is someone who has no respect whatsoever for the truth or facts, and it's only helped him, because of his mastery of the media, and the strange nature of the internet that was theoretically supposed to supply us with more information, and only has supplied us, or mainly has supplied us, with bad information. It's not the information age, it's the misinformation age.”

The interviewer asked Steven Brill whether it was possible for journalism to do a better job living up to its normative ideals given the current media environment. Brill was asked whether all of the incentives for the press now push journalism to do whatever it needs to do to attract viewers and make money. “Right. But they've always in some way cut the other way,” Brill said, referring to those incentives. “Lurid headlines, fighting, always attracts more attention. The question is, how fortified is the press to be responsible? And it's just in a macro way increasingly less fortified. Less protected. When CBS, ABC, and NBC were an oligopoly doing the news at 6:30 at night and had 91 percent of all the eyeballs in the country between

them, there was no way that someone was going to say, ‘Look at these ratings for the missing airplane, let’s do the first 15 minutes with the missing airplane.’ There was no way that was going to happen. They didn’t have to; they were subsidized by the fact that the network was rich because it was an oligopoly. And so if NBC beat them by a little bit, or lost by a little bit, it didn’t matter.” This, again, is an important point to keep in mind when considering the responses by journalists in Ukraine who said that most major media organizations in their country are funded by oligarchs, and not by advertising or circulation revenue. They are, to some extent, insulated from the pressure to run sensational stories that are only meant to attract the audience. Instead, they said there is pressure to either run stories that sling mud at competing oligarchs, or to do stories that portray their owner or the different business interests of that owner in a positive light.

While journalists discussed the business and technical aspects of managing a journalism organization in the digital age, they also said that their organizations nonetheless understand and are committed to the normative mission of the press in a democratic society. Ben Smith, the editor-in-chief of BuzzFeed, was asked how the business model at the organization – and, in particular, how the wealth of data now available to BuzzFeed about its readership – affects their news gathering operation. “We try to write stories that people are interested in and headlines that make people want to read them,” Smith said. But journalism must still maintain a commitment to the ideals of the profession.

Are there other organizations that feel differently? I think if you don’t understand how reporting works, you can certainly overoptimize.

Because beat reporting is the core of how we’re organized and the core

of most journalism, and lots of beat stories are incremental, and aren't going to get huge traffic, and are building blocks of a bigger story or how you get to the huge story. Sometimes that's because you're focused on one small thing and you have to write about it ten times to start getting people's attention. Sometimes it's because you're learning the beat. Sometimes it's because you need to be in the mix. And we deeply understand the structure of that kind of reporting and that not every story is optimized for views.

Smith, who previously worked as a reporter covering the crime beat for The Indianapolis Star, also stressed that the metric news organizations now use to measure their success has shifted from looking at click rates or using search engine optimization to a focus on engagement, which he said only reaffirmed BuzzFeed's decision to move away from the use of sensational headlines that attract viewers. "I think this is now a four- or five-year-old story: the question of the shift from search to social. I think, like, a homepage and a tabloid at a newsstand, and certainly search, incentivize a kind of headline that is very, very focused on people clicking. The thing is, if you want people to share it, the story actually has to deliver on the headline. So I actually think social has generated a sort of explicitness about what is in the story and an importance that stories live up to their promise," Smith said.

Taken together, the findings on U.S. and Ukrainian journalists show that reporters in both countries are aware of their normative responsibility to represent the different perspectives and beliefs in their society. They also both raise problems with the norm of journalistic objectivity. But there are different pressures on reporters in either country. While journalists in the United States are deeply influenced by the

need to increase click rates and page views in an effort to generate revenue, journalists in Ukraine face pressure from oligarchs who control and fund their media. The final chapter of this work offers a more detailed analysis of the findings, discusses possible implications of those findings, and presents a conclusion to this dissertation.

## Chapter 8: Conclusions and Discussion

This dissertation began by highlighting a potential problem that exists in any plural, liberal democratic society. As the American political philosopher John Rawls put it: "... the problem of political liberalism is: How is it possible that there may exist over time a stable and just society of free and equal citizens profoundly divided by reasonable though incompatible religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?" (Rawls 2005, p. xviii) This research viewed the problem through normative journalism theory and the pragmatism of Richard Rorty. The latter argued that journalism can work to alleviate division in a plural society by providing thick description of different peoples' lives, while normative journalism theory states that the press should represent the full spectrum of voices and beliefs that exist in any democracy. The literature review chapter of this work argued that these two journalistic roles are analogous to one another. Subsequently, this research asked journalists in Ukraine whether they believe they should represent the spectrum of voices in their democratic society. The literature review chapter also showed that there is a need for research that examines the role conceptions of journalists in post-Soviet, emerging democracies. And, more specifically, the review of literature conducted on journalism in the United States and on the press in transitional democracies showed that there is a need for research that compares and contrasts the beliefs of journalists in Ukraine with Western normative journalism theory.

This research contributes to that literature as it examined the normative beliefs of journalists throughout Ukraine, and it specifically asked reporters in the country whether they believe the press should represent the different voices and perspectives

that exist in their society. It asked these questions of journalists at a time when emotions in the country are heightened and when there is great concern over Ukraine's sovereignty and safety. The country has endured war with pro-Russian forces in the east and the annexation by Russia of the Crimean peninsula not long after the Euromaidan Revolution of 2013-2014. Since that time Ukrainians have faced a barrage of misinformation, propaganda, and fake news largely meant to split their society and sow discord in a country that is still making the transition to democracy. Consequently, the journalistic norm of objectivity has also been a subject of great debate among journalists in Ukraine. In conducting research on the normative beliefs of Ukrainian journalists, this work also explored reporters' different beliefs on the specific goal of journalistic objectivity. It asked reporters what they believe the press should do to confront propaganda, misinformation, and fake news. In doing so, this work also contributes to the literature on journalistic objectivity.

Three core themes emerged from the interviews conducted with journalists in Ukraine. Put simply, those findings highlighted in Chapter 4 show the following: First, journalists in Ukraine do acknowledge a normative responsibility to provide a voice for the various citizens that make up their society, although there is disagreement regarding the extent to which journalism actually is fulfilling this goal. In asking journalists in Ukraine to discuss their views of the different normative roles the press should play in the country, nearly every journalist said they should strive to be a voice for people's different beliefs and positions. In fact, many even used a phrase that is well known among western reporters. They said the press should be a voice for the voiceless, and they spoke in terms analogous to Rorty's desire for a

pragmatic journalism that presents a broader, richer description of the world. And they noted that simple stereotypes and dichotomies, particularly in the east of the country where war has already inflamed public discourse, could further polarize society. In many instances, reporters acknowledged a journalistic pragmatism without priming from the researcher, and in a handful of cases they said so in response to the first question of the interview. Among other factors that affect the ability of the press to fulfill this normative goal of a representative, pragmatic journalism, Ukrainian reporters said that it is their particular media environment in which oligarchs play an outsized role controlling what the press in Ukraine can and can't do that has the greatest influence on journalistic norms in the country.

The second set of findings, presented in detail in Chapter 5, regards the question of the broader journalistic norms and standards in Ukraine. Nearly every participant in this study said that journalists in Ukraine should work according to western norms and standards, and many said that journalists in Ukraine should work according to the standards of the British Broadcasting Corporation. In some cases, interview participants even talked about universal norms for journalism and pushed back strongly when the researcher suggested that perhaps there were some norms that were uniquely Ukrainian. The in-depth, semi-structured interviews revealed that journalists say a dominant influence on both the practice and standards of journalism in Ukraine is the role played by non-ideological Ukrainian oligarchs, who own many of the country's news organizations and use these media to fight one another. In discussing their work in this uniquely Ukrainian media environment, journalists did discuss one role that seemed different from western standards. The participants in this

research often said that journalists in Ukraine should work to identify problems in their society and the press should then work to solve those problems.

The third core theme of the findings emerged organically from the semi-structured format of the interviews. In talking broadly about norms in Ukraine, it became evident that the concept of journalistic objectivity is now the subject of an active, at times heated, debate among journalists in the country. Moreover, while Ukrainian journalists presented nearly uniform agreement on the two central themes in Chapters 4 and 5 – journalistic pragmatism and the broader set of norms for the press – they were split on the subject of objectivity as a norm, particularly when their country confronts war with Russia in the east. Roughly half of the journalists questioned why the standard of objectivity should apply to the press when citizens in the occupied territories and in Crimea – who have extremely limited access to Ukrainian media – face a constant barrage of Russian propaganda and fake news meant to inflame and divide their society. Some journalists questioned whether the press should be objective in the face of blatant Russian propaganda and what some said was a clear intent on the part of Russia to use the democratic tools of free speech to purposefully muck up and inflame public discourse.

The question of whether the press should report objectivity also confronts those journalists who cover the war and the Ukrainian army. Many journalists questioned whether the press in Ukraine has an obligation to support pro-Ukrainian positions and their own government during war, and therefore to not report objectively on their own military. Those reporters who said the press must remain objective also noted that the best way for journalists to battle against propaganda,

fake news, and alternative versions of truth was for journalists to do objective reporting and, in essence, “call a spade a spade.” For these journalists, both objective reporting and a sense of individual responsibility in calling true what grass roots, on-the-ground reporting finds to be true were the main tools the press could and should use to fight against propaganda, misinformation, and fake news.

How do these results answer the research questions that were asked in the first chapter of this work? What explanation can be provided for results that diverged from the hypotheses offered in this dissertation? And, moreover, what implications can be drawn from these results? The first set of research questions sought to explore whether journalists in Ukraine are aware of the problem of division in a plural society, whether they thought journalists should play a role in alleviating this tension, and whether they believed that among the press’s different normative roles reporters should work to represent the spectrum of voices and beliefs in their society. And the second set of research questions asked if the norms that exist for journalists in Ukraine diverge from western normative theory and whether there are norms in the country that may be culturally unique to the media environment that exists in Ukraine.

It was hypothesized that Ukrainian journalists would deprioritize journalistic pragmatism in their normative beliefs, while prioritizing war-time reporting that polarizes society, primarily because of three factors: the business needs of the press, war in Ukraine, and the legacy of Soviet culture on journalistic norms. But the findings from Chapter 4 on journalistic pragmatism show that all of the journalists in this work are aware that they should represent the different perspectives and beliefs in

their society. Because this was a qualitative work, it is difficult to say just how much priority they place on this role. However, as was discussed in the findings in Chapter 4, there were a number of journalists who acknowledged a journalistic pragmatism after the very first question of the interview and without priming from the researcher. The other side of that hypothesis stated that journalists would prioritize war-time reporting that polarizes society for three reasons: war typically polarizes society into an “us” versus “them” mentality, the business needs of the press would push journalism to sensation and stereotypes, and the legacy of Soviet journalism simply didn’t include a normative goal in which the press should accurately represent the full spectrum of beliefs and positions. In fact, Soviet norms for journalism actually called for the very opposite of this role: the press’s sole function was to represent the position of the Communist Party and nothing else.

What explanations can be offered for these results? First, it is difficult to understate the impact that Russia’s annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the war with pro-Russian forces have had on the question of identity in Ukraine. As Plokhyy (2015, p. 353) notes in his history of the country, “there can be little doubt that the experience of war not only united most Ukrainians but also turned the country’s sympathies westward.” Many of the journalists interviewed in this work said the same thing. Ukraine, therefore, does not appear to be polarized on this big question of Ukrainian identity. On this issue, the press in Ukraine is not polarizing society into an “us” versus “them” framework. Several journalists even noted in the interviews that there have been specific efforts made by the press to not demonize the average Russian or pro-Russian Ukrainian. Another significant factor offered as an

explanation by journalists themselves was that the war for almost all Ukrainians has become something that is happening “out there, in the east,” while life has gone on in the rest of the country.

What this means, in essence, is that there are two broad categories of the press in Ukraine. There is one that covers the war and those journalists present a singular pro-Ukrainian picture of events. That is to say, it is a picture that does not split society into “us” versus “them.” The second type of journalism covers everything else in the country, and it does so without using a framework that splits society into two ideological camps. For example, political ideology among citizens is strong in the United States, and news in America can easily be viewed and presented through the ideology of the two major political parties. Journalists in Ukraine, however, noted that such political ideology simply doesn’t exist in Ukrainian politics. This may provide another explanation for why journalists said polarization is not an issue in Ukrainian journalism.

The powerful role played by oligarchs in Ukrainian journalism also provides an explanation for the findings. First, there are multiple oligarchs who own various mass media. While it is true that the press is told by their bosses what they can and cannot cover, it appears that, so long as they abide by the dictates of what they can and cannot report on, those stories that fall outside those lines are fair game for the press. Moreover, for various reasons Ukraine and its journalists are now more exposed to the western world. Many reporters discussed doing journalism trainings in Germany, Poland, or the United Kingdom, and they clearly understand the different normative roles the press should play in a democracy. If these two points are

combined – reporting that doesn't threaten oligarchic interests and an understanding of the norms of western journalism – it is not surprising that reporters may want to pursue human interest stories that represent the different types of people in their society. These stories both fulfill a normative role and they don't threaten oligarchic interests.

And there are possible explanations for the findings on objectivity in Ukraine. Because all of the journalists interviewed acknowledged that the press should adhere to the western norms of journalism, they also understand that the press is expected to be objective. The camp of journalists who believe that journalists must be journalists above all else, say that this includes being unbiased and neutral, and they believe that it is the job of the press to report both the good and the bad as impartially as they are able to. The second camp, though they are just as familiar with western norms, raises various objections to complete objectivity. Some are concerned that reporting on the problems in the Ukrainian military would hurt the war effort, while others questioned why the press must be unbiased and neutral when various pro-Russian groups push propaganda, misinformation, and fake news into Ukraine. On the question of battling against propaganda, many journalists said that doing the on-the-ground, grassroots reporting is an effective, though difficult and time-consuming solution to showing the audience what is true and what is fake.

Taking all of these findings together generates broader implications for journalism in Ukraine. First, though oligarchs control most major media organizations, it is also the case that they do not fall into two simple political ideologies. If journalism in Ukraine is viewed broadly, it appears that the press

presents a plurality of different perspectives, albeit perspectives that are controlled by those oligarchs. But this may provide another explanation for why the country does not appear to be deeply polarized on various internal issues not related to the war. The second implication of the findings taken as a whole involves a sense of individual responsibility among Ukrainian journalists. Throughout the interviews there was a noticeable optimism voiced by journalists. Many said that, despite the different challenges and difficulties faced by reporters in Ukraine – whether battling against propaganda or working under oligarchic media owners that restrict their editorial independence – they felt a deep sense of responsibility to work as journalists in an effort to strengthen Ukrainian democracy.

These results also pose several implications for the two theories used in this work. First, with regard to Rorty's call for a journalistic pragmatism, this research did not attempt to see if his potential solution to the problem of division does actually ease the tension and emotion in a plural society. The first step was to see if journalists themselves acknowledge a journalistic pragmatism among the different normative roles the press should play in Ukraine. If journalists didn't acknowledge such a role, even after prodding from the researcher, or if they went a step further and acknowledged the role but said the press should actively not represent citizens in their society, then Rorty's theoretical solution to the problem of division couldn't even be a possibility. As it stands, journalists in Ukraine did acknowledge the role and they said that journalists should represent the spectrum of voices and perspectives in society. Therefore, Rorty's proposed solution should not be taken off the table just yet; it

should be investigated more thoroughly to see if such thick description of the lives of different people could help alleviate the tension in a plural society.

And what are the implications of these findings for normative journalism theory? Journalists in Ukraine uniformly agreed that the press should adhere to western norms, and they named all of the major roles described in the literature on normative journalism theory. When pressed to consider whether there were any norms that might be uniquely Ukrainian, several journalists pushed back and said they believed that the roles the press should play in a democracy are universal. This would seem to indicate that the literature on normative journalism theory applies even in a transitional, post-Soviet society such as Ukraine. However, journalists also discussed different factors that limit their ability to fulfill these normative ideals. The biggest factor they discussed was ownership of most media organizations by oligarchs who use the press either as a tool of public relations or as a weapon to sling mud at competing oligarchs. In the literature on normative journalism theory, Scammell and Semetko noted that too much of the work in contemporary media studies addressing journalism's role in society assumes a singular form of democracy: "In theory there are a variety of models of democracy to choose from, yet one – the classic liberal model – predominates above all and provides the premises and touchstone for virtually all avenues of inquiry" (Scammell and Semetko 2000, p. xii). Indeed, journalism in Ukraine operates in a type of democracy that differs from the classic liberal model. While journalists acknowledge western norms, the actual practice of journalism in Ukraine is deeply affected by a different model of media ownership, which itself is shaped by Ukraine's political environment. Thus, the

implication of what journalists in Ukraine said about norms and the struggle to adhere to those norms in their society supports the argument made by Scammell and Semetko that normative theory of journalism's role in democratic society should not be based on a singular form of democracy.

The findings from Chapter 6 also have implications for theoretical work on journalistic objectivity. The reporters interviewed for this work were split on the question of whether the press should be neutral and unbiased in the middle of a violent conflict in their country and in the face of what many called a hybrid information war in which propaganda, misinformation, and fake news are wielded as weapons. The fact that journalists in Ukraine are split over the question of whether their reporting should be neutral and unbiased strengthens work that challenges traditional journalistic objectivity. But more than that, the findings show that one of the key methods journalists in Ukraine use to battle against propaganda and misinformation is to discard an objectivity of false equivalency, and replace it with an individual responsibility to call true what their reporting shows to be true. Several journalists talked about the role that transparency plays in strengthening reporters' claims to truth. In other words, by showing the public how reporters came to the facts that they report the press has a stronger claim to the truth as they see it. This echoes Ward's call for a pragmatic objectivity (Ward 2015, Chapter 8) and lends support to the theoretical literature in which the focus of journalistic reporting shifts from objectivity to fairness.

This research also has implications for the practice of journalism in Ukraine. In taking all of the findings together, it is evident that Ukrainian journalists are clearly

familiar with established western journalistic norms, and they want to work in an environment that allows them to adhere more closely to the roles they believe the press must play in their country. And while many talked about journalism as more than just a job, they also said they are left with little choice if they want to work in journalism in Ukraine. More than likely, they must work in an environment that forces them to adhere to an internal set of expectations imposed by oligarchs that dictate what reporters can and cannot do. While this is certainly problematic for the development of independent, high quality journalism in the country, it is important to note that the reporters interviewed for this work were aware that there are higher standards for journalism. Moreover, if given the freedom to work independently, they expressed a deep commitment to doing the kind of journalism that would benefit their democracy. In essence, the findings show that Ukrainian journalists know what they need to do and they want to do it, but they need more organizations that would allow them to work independently. Or, to put it another way, Ukrainian journalists show a great maturity regarding their role in democracy despite risks, challenges, and difficulties. They just want the chance to work independently and to follow their normative instincts as journalists in the global sense.

This dissertation research sought to explore whether journalists believe they should represent the different perspective and voices in their society. It also sought to explore the broader normative beliefs of journalists in Ukraine. Comparing and contrasting those findings with the findings from the interviews with American journalists reveals several notable differences in the factors that affect the ability of the press in either country to fulfill their normative roles. Journalists in both countries

believe they should be a representative voice for their society, and they largely agree that the press should adhere to western norms. They also have similar perspectives regarding the norm of journalistic objectivity, and similar views on the question of whether objectivity is a useful goal for the press in an era of misinformation and fake news. And while reporters in the United States have more editorial freedom than journalists in Ukraine, editorial decisions in the U.S. are heavily influenced by the need to generate revenue. Journalists in Ukraine, on the other hand, say that oligarchs in their country provide their organizations with the money they need to operate, but those same oligarchs dictate their editorial decisions.

### Limitations of This Research

In addition to conducting research that explored the different roles journalists believe they should play in their post-Soviet, transitional democratic society, this work also gave voice to journalists in Ukraine. As Creswell notes (2009, p. 4), qualitative research provides a deeper understanding of participants' motivations or meanings and it allows the researcher to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups – in the case of this research, journalists in Ukraine – ascribe to some social or human problem. Or, as Brennen (2013, p. 4) writes, qualitative research is interpretive and it uses “language to understand concepts based on people's experience, it attempts to create a sense of the larger realm of human relationships.” This work used the qualitative methodology of in-depth, semi-structured interviews in order to give voice to Ukrainian journalists, and to hear how they describe in their own words the different roles they believe the press should play in their democratic society. Qualitative research can be “insightful, enlightening,

emancipatory, and fascinating” (Brennen 2013, p. 1). Conducting this work and listening to Ukrainian journalists discuss their normative beliefs and describe journalism in their country supports Brennen’s view of the merits of qualitative research. But there are also limitations inherent in a qualitative approach, and those limitations are present in this work. Such a methodology often “does not provide us with easy answers, simple truths, or precise measurements. It can be controversial, contradictory, and ambiguous” (Brennen 2013, p. 1).

There are, of course, additional limitations in this research. The method used to recruit journalists in Ukraine relied mostly on a type of snowball sampling done via Facebook. If there are journalists in the country who don’t use social media or the Internet, perhaps their views might be significantly different from the views of the participants in this work. A larger and more significant limitation is that, in a country divided by war, this work only spoke with journalists on the pro-Ukraine side of the conflict. While there likely are people on the pro-Russia side of the conflict who can appropriately be classified as propagandists, and therefore not potential research participants in this kind of research, there are also journalists who are granted access to the region by the pro-Russian forces that control the occupied territories, likely in return for reporting that is decidedly supportive of that position. This work would have been richer with their voices.

## Future Directions

In a very broad sense, this dissertation began with an interest in the intersection of journalism and democracy. It was guided by an interest in trying to understand what contemporary democratic societies need from journalism, and

whether the press might play certain roles that harm or incite citizens in a democracy. In identifying a potential problem regarding the stability of such societies, this dissertation considered whether journalism further polarizes and inflames such division. It explored the different normative roles the press is expected to play and found that one, in particular, is analogous to a theoretical solution offered as a potential solution to the same problem. And while this dissertation focused on the press in Ukraine – a country in which violence and division are very real – the possibility that deep polarization and ideological difference can turn violent, or might even be purposefully inflamed, exists in any plural, liberal democratic society. This concern seems particularly relevant now in the United States, and further research might explore the role the press plays in the ideological polarization of American society, and whether and in what ways journalism in the United States might instead help a deeply divided society step back from the brink of violence. To what extent is the press responsible for polarization? Or does contemporary journalism merely reflect existing social divisions? If journalism can ease social tension, what kind of journalism is needed?

Further research could also explore what role, if any, cable news networks have played in pushing citizens to deeper polarization. Historical research could explore whether there are similarities between mass media in the Internet age and a cantankerous, emotional press that urged the American colonists to revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. And much more research should be devoted to developing media literacy programs that can combat the work of foreign actors who might purposefully

seek to inflame public discourse by pushing on existing social divisions or playing on harmful stereotypes and generalizations that spread virally via social media.

In addition, there are questions related to the financing of and business model used by contemporary journalism. Has the Internet indeed democratized mass media, thereby diminishing the ability of the traditional press to set both the agenda for public debate as well as the tone and tenor of such discourse? If the current model that is used to pay for independent journalism pushes the press to use sensation, stereotype, and emotion in order to attract an audience, could journalists even know when they've pushed a divided society too far?

In short, this dissertation explored only one small normative role that the press should play amid the tension that exists in any plural, liberal democratic society. If journalism truly is critical to democracy, and contemporary democracies can be inflamed and pushed to instability and violence, future work should explore what is a very complicated, broad, rich, and necessary vein of research.

## Appendix 1: Interview Questions

### *I. Questions that probe Ukrainian journalistic norms (an attempt is made to not prime participants)*

- 1) Can you think back to your first job in journalism? Tell me a little bit about that job. Where was it and what did you do?
- 2) I'd like you to think back to when you first became interested in journalism. Can you recall that moment? Can you describe it for me?
  - a. What first attracted you to journalism?
  - b. Does it still attract you?
- 3) What do you love about journalism, and what bothers you about it?
- 4) What would be your ideal job in journalism?
- 5) Are you happy with the state of journalism in Ukraine?
  - a. What is journalism in Ukraine doing well?
    - i. Do you think people in Ukraine are generally happy with journalism? Why?
  - b. And what, in your eyes, is the journalism not doing well?
    - i. What do you think causes those problems?
- 6) What do you think journalism should be doing in Ukraine? What roles should journalism play in Ukraine?
  - a. What roles do you think journalism should play in terms of Ukrainian democracy?
  - b. What roles do you think Ukrainian democracy needs journalism to play?

- 7) Are there things journalism does in Ukraine that you think hurts the country?  
What sorts of things should journalism not do in Ukraine?
- 8) Ukraine has been a democracy now for 25 years. What does democracy mean to you?
- a. How important are the rights and freedoms of every citizen in Ukraine?
  - b. How important is it for you that Ukrainian citizens have the freedom to express themselves?
  - c. And to express different beliefs?
- 9) What does pluralism mean to you?
- a. Does it help Ukraine? Why or why not?
  - b. Is pluralism a natural result of life in a democratic society?
- 10) How do you as a member of the press handle different beliefs or different perspectives of the truth?
- a. How should the press treat contrasting, deeply different beliefs?
  - b. Is solidarity in a plural society created or found? Does it need to be created, or is it already there in a given culture?
- 11) Do you think the press has a responsibility to represent all of the different beliefs and perspectives of the citizen of Ukraine?

*II. Questions comparing norms: Western vs. Ukrainian (these questions directly contrast Ukrainian journalistic norms with standard Western philosophical journalistic norms)*

- 1) It is fairly common in the West to hear that journalism is critical to democracy, and that, for democracy to survive, journalism must do the following: it needs to provide objective information to citizens; it must act as a watchdog, fourth estate, or be a check on government; it must represent and be a voice for the citizens of a democracy; and it needs to take part in public debate by advocating and persuading people to adopt its views.
  - a. Do these functions apply in Ukraine? Does Ukrainian democracy need journalism to perform these functions?
    - i. What other roles (not on this list) are important for the press to perform in Ukraine?
    - ii. In the west, when journalists discuss their role in democratic society among the roles they discuss is being a “voice for the voiceless.” Does this role mean anything for you? If so, what does it mean for you?
- 2) Considering all of these different roles we’ve just discussed, which are most important for Ukrainian democracy? And which are the least important (I can go through the list of press norms again, if you like)?
- 3) Is journalism in Ukraine a business, a public good, or something else?
  - a. What should it be?
  - b. Does journalism in Ukraine focus on difference, conflict, or discord among citizens in order to increase ratings, sell newspapers, or get more Internet clicks?

- 4) Some people believe that pluralism is a natural result of life in a free democratic society. If that's the case, and if you respect the right that each citizen has to freedom of speech and belief, what role do you believe the press should play in moderating deeply entrenched differences of opinion and belief among its citizens?
- a. Should it highlight those differences in order to increase ratings, sell newspapers, or get more Internet clicks?
  - b. Should it work to ease the tension? If so, how might it do that?
  - c. One suggestion to help ease this tension tasks journalists (among others) with the job of providing “thick description of the private and idiosyncratic ...”, of providing “detailed descriptions of particular varieties of pain and humiliation ...” in an effort to “see more and more traditional differences (of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation – the ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of ‘us.’” Is this a role the press should play in Ukraine? Why or why not?
  - d. If the press should fulfill this role, do you think it's actually doing the job in Ukraine? If not, why not?

*III. Journalism during times of conflict (questions ask journalists to consider whether distinctions are and should be made regarding journalistic norms during times of violence versus times of peace)*

- 1) How would you describe and label the conflict in Ukraine's east this past year?
- 2) What roles should the press play in covering the conflict?
  - a. To whom is the press responsible in covering the conflict?
- 3) Has the press done a good job representing the different beliefs and positions about the conflict?
- 4) How should the press balance the role of providing a single, truthful account of events versus representing different perspectives that Ukrainian citizens may have of the "Truth"?
  - a. Is there any value in presenting multiple perspectives of "Truth," particularly when there is violence in the country?

## Appendix 2: Consent Form – English

<b>Project Title</b>	Pluralism, the Press, and Rortian Pragmatism: Do Ukrainian Reporters Perceive a Normative Responsibility to Ease the Tension of Plural Democratic Society?
<b>Purpose of the Study</b>	Andrew Nynka at the University of Maryland, College Park, is conducting this research. You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a journalist who works in Ukraine. The purpose of this research project is to understand what roles you believe the press should play in democratic society.
<b>Procedures</b>	The procedures involve your filling out a demographic survey that should take roughly 10 minutes to complete, and then answering interview questions. Questions will include the following: What different roles do you think the press should play in democratic society? It is expected that the interview will last no longer than one-and-a-half hours. The interview will be audio recorded.
<b>Potential Risks and Discomforts</b>	There are no known risks to participating in this research. While we do not anticipate addressing any sensitive issues, if you feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions, you may refuse to answer or stop participating at any time.
<b>Potential Benefits</b>	There are no direct benefits from participating in this research. However, possible benefits include the dissemination of findings regarding what Ukrainian journalists believe should be their role in democratic society. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the different norms of journalists in non-Western societies and in post-Soviet societies.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	This study offers you the option of remaining anonymous or of possibly having your name used in a publication or conference presentation. If you choose to remain anonymous the researcher will make every effort to keep any of your identifying information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality: (1) your name will

	<p>not be included with any public presentation of the collected data; (2) a code will be placed on moderator notes and other collected data; and (3) only the investigators will have access to identifying information. This research project involves making a recording of conversations during the interview. The interviews will be digitally recorded, no identifying information will be recorded, and all information will be kept confidential. Prior to starting the interview, the investigators will record an identification number on the digital recording. The identification will be replaced with a pseudonym for transcription. Any recordings and transcriptions will be stored on the researcher's password protected computers. Only the investigator and the investigator's advisor will have access to any forms, recordings, and transcripts. Recordings will be destroyed (demagnetized/erased and discarded) within six years of the study. All other physical data (e.g., paper) related to this project will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the investigator's locked office. If a report or article is written about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if he/she or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</p> <p>If you choose not to remain anonymous, your name may be used in a publication or conference presentation.</p>
<p><b>Right to Withdraw and Questions</b></p>	<p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</p> <p>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:</p>

	<p><b>Andrew Nynka</b>  <b>1100 Knight Hall, Philip Merrill College of Journalism</b>  <b>University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742</b>  <b>Tel.: 00-1-301-314-2631 Email: <a href="mailto:anynka@umd.edu">anynka@umd.edu</a></b></p>	
<b>Participant Rights</b>	<p>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>University of Maryland College Park</b>  <b>Institutional Review Board Office</b>  <b>1204 Marie Mount Hall</b>  <b>College Park, Maryland, 20742</b>  <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:irb@umd.edu">irb@umd.edu</a></b>  <b>Telephone: 00-1-301-405-0678</b> </p> <p>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>	
<b>Statement of Consent</b>	<p>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</p>	
<b>Signature and Date</b>	<b>Do you wish to remain anonymous?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, please make every effort to keep my identity confidential.</li> <li>○ No. I understand that my name may be printed in a publication or used in a conference presentation.</li> </ul>
	<b>NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]</b>	
	<b>SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT</b>	
	<b>DATE</b>	

### Appendix 3: Consent Form – Ukrainian

<b>Назва проекту</b>	Плюралізм, преса, і прагматизм Річарда Рортія: Чи Український журналісти відчувають нормативну відповідальність полегшити напруженість плюралізм демократичного суспільства
<b>Мета дослідження</b>	Це дослідження проводить Андрій Нинка в університеті штату Меріленд, Коледж-Парк. Ми запрошуємо вас до участі в цьому дослідницькому проекті, тому що ви журналіст, який працює в Україні. Метою даного дослідження визначити ваше розуміння, яку роль повинна відігравати преса в демократичному суспільстві.
<b>Процедури</b>	Процедура дослідження включатиме заповнення вами анкети, яке триватиме близько 10-15 хвилин, а також відповіді на запитання у короткому інтерв'ю. Питання будуть наступними: які функції, на вашу думку, повинна виконувати преса в демократичному суспільстві? Інтерв'ю повинно тривати не довше ніж півтора години і має бути аудіозапис.
<b>Потенційні ризики та Дискомфорт</b>	Якщо запитання здасться вам некомфортним, ви можете відмовитися від відповіді або припинити участь у дослідженні в будь-який час. Дане дослідження не несе жодної небезпеки.
<b>Потенційні вигоди</b>	Немає прямих вигод від участі у цьому дослідженні. Проте, користь буде у поширенні результатів дослідження, які покажуть, якою повинна бути роль українських журналістів у демократичному суспільстві. Ми сподіваємося, що в майбутньому, інші люди зможуть отримати користь з цього дослідження шляхом поліпшення розуміння різних норм журналістів у пострадянському суспільстві.
<b>Конфіденційність</b>	Це дослідження пропонує Вам можливість залишитися анонімним, або, можливо, маючи ваше ім'я використовується в презентації публікації або конференції. Якщо ви вирішите залишитися невідомим співробітник зробить все можливе, щоб зберегти будь-який з ваших ідентифікуючої інформації конфіденційною. Щоб захистити конфіденційність: (1) ваше ім'я не буде включено в будь публічної презентації зібраних даних; (2) код буде розміщений на модератора ноти й інші зібрані дані; і (3) лише дослідники матимуть доступ до

	<p>інформації ідентифікації. Цей дослідницький проект передбачає створення запису розмов під час інтерв'ю. Інтерв'ю будуть записуватися у цифровому вигляді, що не ідентифікує інформація не буде записаний, і вся інформація буде зберігатися в таємниці. Перед початком інтерв'ю, дослідник запише ідентифікаційний номер на цифрового запису. Ідентифікація буде заміненій на псевдонім транскрипції. Будь-які записи і розшифровки будуть зберігатися на захищених паролем комп'ютерів дослідника. Тільки слідчий і радник слідчого матимуть доступ до будь-яких форм, записів і стенограм. Записи будуть знищені (розмагнічена / стерті, і відкидаються) протягом шести років дослідження. Всі інші фізичні дані (наприклад, папір), пов'язані з цим проектом буде зберігатися в закритому картотеці в закритому кабінеті слідчого.</p> <p>Якщо звіт або стаття написана про цей проект, ваша особистість буде захищена в максимально можливій мірі. Ваша інформація може бути передана з представниками університету штату Меріленд, Коледж-Парк або державних органів, якщо він / вона або хтось інший знаходиться в небезпеці або якщо ми зобов'язані робити це за законом.</p> <p>Якщо ви не хочете залишитися невідомим, Ваше ім'я може з'явитися у презентації публікації або конференції.</p>
<p><b>Право відкликати участь і питання</b></p>	<p>Ваша участь у цьому дослідженні є абсолютно добровільною. Якщо ви вирішили взяти участь у цьому дослідженні, Ви можете відмовитися від участі в будь-який момент. Якщо ви вирішили не брати участь у цьому дослідженні, або припинити участь в будь-який час, ви не будете дискваліфіковані для майбутньої можливої участі в подібних дослідженнях.</p> <p>Якщо Ви вирішили призупинити участь у дослідженні, якщо у Вас є питання, проблеми, чи скарги, або, якщо Ви хочете заявити про ушкодження, отримані в результаті проведення дослідження, будь ласка, контакуйте з наступною особою:</p>

	<b>Андрій Нинка</b> <b>1100 Knight Hall, Philip Merrill College of Journalism</b> <b>University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742</b> <b>Телефон: 00-1-301-314-2631 Е-пошта: <a href="mailto:anynka@umd.edu">anynka@umd.edu</a></b>	
<b>Ваші права</b>	<p>Якщо у Вас є питання щодо Ваших прав у якості учасника дослідження або хочете зголосити про збитки, будь ласка, звертайтеся:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>University of Maryland College Park</b>  <b>Institutional Review Board Office</b>  <b>1204 Marie Mount Hall</b>  <b>College Park, Maryland, 20742</b>  <b>Е-пошта: <a href="mailto:irb@umd.edu">irb@umd.edu</a></b>  <b>Телефон: 00-1-301-405-0678</b> </p> <p>Це дослідження було розглянуто радою з етики наукових досліджень людини в університеті штату Меріленд, Коледж-Парк.</p>	
<b>Заява про згоду</b>	<p>Ваш підпис означає, що вам виповнилося 18 років. Ви погодилися з тим, що прочитали у даній формі та маєте повне розуміння прочитаного. Відповіді на ваші питання повністю вас задовільняють і ви добровільно погоджуєтеся на участь у цьому дослідженні. Ви отримаєте підписану копію даної форми про згоду.</p> <p>Якщо ви згодні на участь, будь ласка, поставте підпис нижче.</p>	
<b>Підпис і дата</b>	<b>Ви хочете, щоб залишатися анонімним?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Так, я хочу залишитися невідомим.</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ні, я розумію, що моє ім'я може бути надрукований в публікації або використовуватися в презентації конференції.</li> </ul>
	<b>ІМ'Я УЧАСНИКА</b> <b>[Будь ласка, роздрукуйте]</b>	
	<b>ПІДПИС УЧАСНИКА</b>	
	<b>ДАТА</b>	

## Appendix 4: Consent Form – Russian

<b>Название проекта</b>	Плюрализм, преса и прагматизм Ричарда Рортия: ли Украинская журналисты испытывают нормативную ответственность облегчить напряженность плюрализм демократического общества
<b>Цель исследования</b>	Это исследование проводится Андреем Нинком в Университете штата Мэриленд в Колледж-Парке, США. Вы приглашены принять участие в этом исследовательском проекте, потому что Вы журналист, который работает в Украине. Цель данного исследовательского проекта--понять какую роль, на Ваше мнение, должна играть в демократическом обществе.
<b>Процедуры</b>	Процедуры исследования включают заполнение Вами опроса, что продлится около 10 минут. Потом Вы отвечаете на вопросы в формате интервью. Примерные вопросы: Какие роли Вы считаете Пресса должна играть в демократическом обществе? Интервью будет длиться максимум полтора часа и будет записываться магнитофоном.
<b>Потенциальные риски и Дискомфорт</b>	Не предпочитают никаких рисков с Вашего участия в исследовании. В любом случае, если Вы чувствуете себе неудобно, Вы можете отказаться от ответа или прекратить свое участие в исследовании.
<b>Возможная польза</b>	Участие не приносит непосредственной пользы. Тем не менее, косвенная польза составляет распространение выводов касающихся мнений украинских журналистов о роли СМИ в демократическом обществе. Мы надеемся, что в будущем, исследование принесет пользу людям лучшим пониманием журналистских норм в не-западных, постсоветских странах.
<b>Конфиденциальность</b>	Это исследование предлагает Вам возможность остаться анонимным, или, возможно, имея ваше имя используется в презентации публикации или конференции. Если вы решите остаться неизвестным сотрудник сделает все возможное, чтобы сохранить любой из ваших идентифицирующей информации конфиденциальной. Чтобы защитить конфиденциальность: (1) ваше

	<p>имя не будет включено в любой публичной презентации собранных данных; (2) код будет размещен на модератора ноты и другие собранные данные; и (3) только исследователи будут иметь доступ к информации идентификации. Этот исследовательский проект предусматривает создание записи разговоров во время интервью. Интервью будут записывается в цифровом виде, что не идентифицирует информация не будет записан, и вся информация будет храниться в тайне. Перед началом интервью, исследователь запишет идентификационный номер цифровой записи. Идентификация будет заменен на псевдоним транскрипции. Любые записи и расшифровки будут храниться на защищенных паролем компьютеров исследователя. Только следователь и советник следователя иметь доступ к любым формам, записей и стенограмм. Записи будут уничтожены (размагничено / стерты, и отбрасываются) в течение шести лет исследования. Все другие физические данные (например, бумага), связанные с этим проектом будет храниться в закрытом картотеке в закрытом кабинете следователя.</p> <p>Если отчет или статья написана об этом проекте, ваша личность будет защищена в максимально возможной степени. Ваша информация может быть передана с представителями университета штата Мэриленд, Колледж-Парк или государственных органов, если он / она или кто-то другой находится в опасности или если мы обязаны делать это по закону.</p> <p>Если вы не хотите остаться неизвестным, Ваше имя может появиться в презентации публикации или конференции.</p>
<p><b>Право отказаться и вопросы</b></p>	<p>Ваше участие в этом исследовании является полностью добровольным. У Вас остается право вообще отказаться от участия. Если согласились участвовать, можете отказаться в любой момент. Если вы решили не участвовать в этом исследовании или прекращаете свое участие, Вы не будете наказаны. Если Вы решили прекратить участие и остались вопросы, проблемы, или жалобы, или хотели сообщить о травме связанной с Вашим участием в исследовании, обращайтесь пожалуйста на следующий адрес:</p>

	<p><b>Андрей Нинка</b>  <b>1100 Knight Hall, Philip Merrill College of Journalism</b>  <b>University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742</b>  <b>Телефон: 00-1-301-314-2631, e-почта: anynka@umd.edu</b></p>	
<b>Права участника</b>	<p>Если у Вас есть вопросы о ваших правах или Вы хотите сообщить травмы связанных с исследований, пожалуйста, обращайтесь:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>University of Maryland College Park</b>  <b>Institutional Review Board Office</b>  <b>1204 Marie Mount Hall</b>  <b>College Park, Maryland, 20742</b>  <b>e-почта: <a href="mailto:irb@umd.edu">irb@umd.edu</a>, Телефон: 00-1-301-405-0678</b></p> <p>Это исследование было рассмотрено советом по этике научных исследований человека в университете штата Мэриленд, Колледж-Парк.</p>	
<b>Заявление о согласии</b>	<p>Ваш подпись указывает следующее: что Вам не меньше 18 лет; Вы ознакомились с этим документом; на Ваши вопросы получили удовлетворительные ответы; и Вы добровольно согласны участвовать в этом исследовании. Вам будет доставлено копия этой формы с Вашей подписью.</p> <p>Если Вы согласны участвовать, пожалуйста подпишитесь где указано.</p>	
<b>Подпись и дата</b>	<b>Вы хотите, чтобы оставаться анонимным?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Да, я хочу остаться неизвестным.</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Нет, я понимаю, что мое имя может быть напечатан в публикации или использоваться в презентации конференции.</li> </ul>
	<b>ИМЯ УЧАСТНИКА</b> [Пожалуйста, Печать]	
	<b>ПОДПИСЬ УЧАСТНИКА</b>	
	<b>ДАТА</b>	

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