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# MINORITY LANGUAGE MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIETAL INTEGRATION IN ESTONIA

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**ABSTRACT** *The article focuses on the role of Russian-speaking journalists and the potential of Russian-language media in advancing societal integration in Estonia. As a consequence of socialist colonization during the Soviet regime a quarter of Estonian population today is Russian-speaking. The two main language communities have different informational spaces separated by a language barrier. Integration can only be successful if there is unhampered communication between minority and majority groups, and equal opportunities for individuals and groups to participate in the public sphere. First, we discuss the concept of minority language media and the position of Russian-language media in the context of societal integration in Estonia. Using a quantitative survey we depict the current professional status of Estonian Russian-speaking journalists, and display their perceptions about their role in integration. We conclude that Russian-speaking journalists perceive themselves as mediators between Estonian and Russian communities, but are not positive about the possibilities of Russian-language media to fulfil their task as representatives of the minority.*

## KEY WORDS

MINORITY LANGUAGE MEDIA, ESTONIA, SOCIETAL INTEGRATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Many European countries currently experience an increase in ethnic minority populations as a consequence of immigration from other parts of the world. Estonia's Russian ethnic minority population emerged differently: through Soviet colonization in the post-WWII era. The integration of this minority into Estonian society became a socio-political challenge since the country regained its independence in 1991. During the period of radical political, social and economic reforms in the 1990s, the status of the large, mostly Russian-speaking non-titular population (in 1989, 38.5 %) had to be determined. During Soviet rule, there was no need for integration between Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking populations, a single citizenship existed in the Soviet Union – the Soviet one – with Russian as a shared official language throughout the Soviet empire. Soviet migration policy resulted in Estonian and Russian-speaking communities living side by side, using different information channels and having little in common.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russophone residents of Estonia and Latvia (unlike those of Lithuania) were not granted citizenship but were offered passports of non-citizen residents. Furthermore, the first Citizenship Act in 1992 reinforced the division of society along ethnic lines: all ethnic Estonians became citizens, while 85 % of the Russophone population were non-citizens (for more see Lauristin and Kallas, 2008). In the 1990s integration policy focused primarily on increasing the knowledge of Estonian among the non-titular population but failed to address many other problems. Only as late as 1998, was the first minority policy document issued (for more see Lauk and Jakobson, 2009). Although the knowledge of Estonian has remarkably improved, 16 % of the Russophone population still claim that they do not understand any Estonian (Vihalemm T., 2011: 115). Research has repeatedly confirmed that the main sources of information for non-Estonian speakers are Russia's media channels (Kirch M., 1997; Jakobson, 2002; Hallik, 2006; Vihalemm P., 2004, 2008, 2011; Lauristin et al., 2011). However, up to 71 % of Russophones also regard Estonian produced Russian media as important sources of information on Estonian issues (Vihalemm P., 2011: 159). Therefore, the state integration strategy document for 2008–2013 (EL 2008–2013) specifically emphasized the significance of media and journalists as agents of societal integration in Estonia. The first state integration strategy *Integration in Estonian Society 2000–2007* defined integration as harmonisation of society and as an opportunity to preserve ethnic differences offering ethnic minorities “opportunities for the preservation of their cultural and ethnic distinctiveness” (Riiklik Programm 2000–2007: 5). To diminish the gap between the two language and cultural communities, the promotion of “linguistic-communicative integration in society” was strongly emphasized, meaning “the re-creation of a common sphere of information and Estonian-language environment in Estonian society under conditions of cultural diversity and mutual tolerance” (*ibid.*: 6). Integration is regarded as a two-way process that requires efforts on the part of the majority and minority alike, and is based on the mutual acceptance and respect of various social groups (Integration in Estonian Society, 2014).

Sara Signer et al. (2011: 421–422) argue that although mass media cannot be considered a core agent of integration on par with the educational system, the media still contribute to intercultural integration in two important ways: 1) minorities working in journalism contribute to media diversity by introducing minority-specific issues; 2) the use of mainstream media by minorities is considered important for their intercultural integration.

By increasing the availability of information on Estonian issues and events in Russian and providing more of the same information in Russian that is provided in Estonian, Russian-speaking journalists may potentially bridge two informational spaces and thus, contribute to integration and societal coherence. Agreeing that the key aim of the media in a minority language is cultural and political self-representation (Cormack, 2007:10), we suggest that Russian-speaking journalists have a potential to express the views and expectations of the Russophone minority. Therefore, it is important to explore Russian-speaking journalists' professional attitudes and aspirations and their position in the context of societal integration in Estonia.

So far, only one – unpublished – study exists that deals with these questions (Jufereva, 2006). Overwhelmingly the studies dedicated to media and integration issues focus on media contents in both Russian and Estonian, and on the coverage of interethnic relations and political inclusion/exclusion (Kirch A. et al., 1993; Jakobson, 1996, 2002; Kirch M., 1997; Vetik, 1999; Kõuts, 2004; Hallik, 2006; Pettai, 2006; Vihalemm P., 2008, 2011; Lauk and Jakobson, 2009; Vihalemm T. and Jakobson, 2011; Aidarov and Drechsler, 2013; Jõesaar et al., 2014).

In contrast, our study focuses on Russian-speaking journalists' perceptions of their role in the context of societal integration in Estonia. The main research questions of this study are: 1) How do Russian-speaking journalists position themselves as professionals in the media field? 2) What are Russian-speaking journalists' perceptions of their role as agents of integration? We also discuss some contextual aspects: the concept of minority language media and the place of Russian-language media in societal integration in Estonia. We conclude with analysing the intersection of Russian-speaking journalists' professional values with the contextual conditions of their media environment.

## CONCEPTUALISING MINORITY LANGUAGE MEDIA

In this study, we use the term minority language when speaking about Russian in Estonia, referring to the definition given in the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992). According to the Charter, minority languages are "traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population". The Charter distinguishes among five categories of minority languages. Russian in Estonia represents the fourth category: "languages spoken in communities constituting a minority in the nation state where they live that are majority languages in other countries". Mike Cormack (2007) fairly criticizes

this definition as inadequate. As he claims “the concept of a linguistic minority is essentially a political one” – it is the nationalism of the majority group that creates the situation where “one community is constructed by the other as a minority” (Cormack, 2007: 1) and marginalized by the majority community. The Russian language is not threatened with disappearing in Estonia because of a large number of native speakers, the geographic proximity of Russia and easy access to Russian language media both locally produced and from Russia. The Russian-speaking minority forms a distinct minority language community in Estonia. There also seem to be strong links between citizenship and the sense of belonging to Estonia: 80 % of Russian-speaking Estonian citizens and two thirds of all Russian-speaking residents regard themselves as being Estonian people (Vihalemm T., 2011: 134–156).

Various labels are used in scholarly literature for the media produced in minority languages: minority media, ethnic media, diasporic and minority language media. A common consensus does not seem to exist about the meaning and use of these attributes. For example, Anne-Katrin Arnold and Beate Schneider (2007) use the terms ethnic media and ethnic journalists to distinguish the media of large immigrant communities from mainstream media. Matthew Matsaganis et al. (2011: 8–9) define ethnic media as media produced by and for (a) immigrants, (b) ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities, and (c) indigenous groups living in various countries across the world. Mark Deuze (2006: 262) does not distinguish between ethnic and minority media, he understands ethnic or minority media as media produced by and for minority groups, living in the host country. Valeria Jakobson (2002) who studied the Russian-language media’s role in societal integration in Estonia used the terms ethnic minority media and Russian language media. We use the term minority language media adopting it from Cormack who argues that the status of a language in a state is crucial in forming identities and values, and also that official languages of one state may be minority languages in another, such as Russian in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, or Arabic in France (*ibid.*: 1). In Estonia, we find media and journalists that belong to and work for the Russian-speaking minority community and also a huge range of easily accessible Russian media produced in Russia. This situation is complicated in terms of societal integration and the coherence of Estonian society, as Russian media largely serve the Russian state’s policy of “protecting Russian minorities abroad”, even at the expense of aggression. This situation clearly makes the role of Estonian produced Russian-language media even more important in supporting integration and social cohesion.

In his seminal article *Minority Language Media in Western Europe* (1998) Mike Cormack suggested seven conditions necessary for the successful emergence and development of minority language media: number of users of the language; mass campaign for media; leadership and organization; political culture; political weakness of the central government; symbolic status of the language and international trends. Cormack restricted his study to the Western European minorities of Celtic languages and the regional languages of Spain. Later, he further developed minority language media studies (Cormack, 2004, 2005, 2007) defining, among other issues, their core concerns such as the status of media in the context of a specific language and culture, and the economic basis of minority language media.

Enrique Uribe-Jongbloed (2014) critically examined Cormack's seven conditions within the non-European context of Colombia and concluded that with slight modifications, the factors proposed by Cormack are also applicable in (comparative) research on minority language media outside Europe. However, we do not attempt to make another test of Cormack's seven conditions by examining them in the context of Estonia's Russian-language media. Instead, we use this framework for explaining the media environment in which Estonian Russian-speaking journalists operate. As Cormack argues, "in any discussion of minority language media careful attention needs to be given to the specific context", and that "central to any discussion to these media must be consideration of the political environment" (1998: 48–49).

## RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE MEDIA AND TWO INFORMATIONAL SPACES

The historical and political contexts of Russian-language media in Estonia differ from those of Western European countries that are discussed more frequently in literature. During Estonia's independence between 1918 and 1940, only 8.2% of Estonia's population were ethnic Russians. The Russian-language press emerged in Estonia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in the inter-war period, over 100 titles of newspapers and magazines existed for shorter or longer time. However, during the nearly five decades of post-WWII Soviet regime, the proportion of Russians increased to 30.3% and that of other minority nationalities to 8.2%. The shared language of those of non-Estonian origin was Russian as this was the only language in which they were educated in Estonia. In addition to the Russian-language newspapers and broadcasts produced in Estonia, media existing throughout the Soviet Union were widely distributed and consumed.

After Estonia regained its independence in 1991, Soviet subsidies stopped along with changes in media ownership, and the Russian-language media of the Soviet period did not survive. The new private investors faced economic difficulties, which led to the dramatic decline of Estonia's Russian-language press during the economic recession of the late 1990s and to its eventual collapse in the economic crisis of 2008–2011. While in 2001, 17 Russian language dailies existed, by 2011 only one daily newspaper and nine weeklies survived. Even the single remaining Russian language daily (*Postimees na russkom jazyke*) reduced its appearance to three times a week in June 2013.

The emergence of news portals to some extent compensates for the lack of available newspapers in Russian. Since 2005, several on-line versions have been created on the basis of surviving newspapers (*Postimees na russkom jazyke*, *Den za Dnjom*, *Delovyje Vedomosti*, *MK-Estonija*, *Stolitsa*). The first Internet portal in Russian (*Rus.delfi*) emerged in 1991 and now has 200,000 unique readers per week, followed by *Rus.postimees.ee* with 90,000 weekly readers (Современные русскоязычные СМИ Эстонии). In addition, the public service broadcaster *Eesti Rahvusringhääling* (ERR) launched the internet-portal *Rus.err.ee* in 2007. The Tallinn city government has run their Russian language portal *Stolitsa.ee* since 2008.

According to Cormack (1998), the number of language speakers is one of the factors for assessing the potential success of minority language media. He suggests that one million could be the minimum size of a population to maintain the full range of modern media. The overall estimated size of the Russian-language media market in Estonia is about 300,000 people. According to *Integration Monitoring 2011*, 71 % of Russophone population listened to the Estonian public service channel Radio 4 (Vihalemm P., 2011: 162) and over 80 % of the Russophone population regularly watched PBK (*Pervyi Baltijski Kanal/ First Baltic Channel*), which is available in all Baltic states. In addition to re-transmitting government controlled Russian TV channels (NTV-Mir and REN-TV), PBK also produces a daily newscast in each country. Along with PBK, other Russian TV channels are the main information source for 75 % of the Russophone population (*ibid.*: 165). These channels are also deemed most trustworthy by Estonia's Russian-speaking population. Estonian media channels are regarded as much less trustworthy by the majority of their total Russian-speaking audience (Vihalemm P., 2011: 162). There is very little interest in newspapers, the circulation of the most popular Russian-language national weekly *Postimees in Russian* is about 8,000 to 9,000 (EALL, 2014).

As the Russian-speaking audience has always been more oriented towards Russia's media channels rather than those of Estonia there has not been a "mass campaign for media" (Cormack, 1998). Although some Russian politicians have raised the issue, no substantial pressure exists from the audience for establishing and maintaining the full range of Russian-language news media in Estonia. However, the development plan *Integrating Estonia 2020* identifies the Estonian public service broadcaster (ERR) as an important actor in promoting a common media field (Report, 2014: 16). After a long and lively debate in the media and among politicians the government decided to launch a Russian-language television channel as a part of ERR at the end of 2014. This is not a sign of the "political weakness of the central government" and willingness "to concede power to regions" as Cormack's fifth factor declares (Cormack, 1998: 41), but an additional attempt to expand the common informational space. The channel will begin broadcasting in autumn 2015. According to a survey, about 66 % of Estonia's Russian-speaking population are potentially interested in watching the new channel (Kuul, 2014).

The results of a range of national studies (Kirch A. et al., 1993; Jakobson, 1996; Kirch M., 1997; Vetik, 1999) have demonstrated that Estonian and Russian language media produce different and separated semantic fields and informational spaces. In her study on Russian-language media and integration Jakobson concludes that in the 1990s, the Russian-language press mostly performed as a constructor of social barriers between the Russian population and Estonians, as well as a creator of distrust towards the Estonian state and societal institutions (Jakobson, 2002). As several studies confirm, no significant progress has yet been achieved in developing a common informational space for the two linguistic groups (Vihalemm P., 2008; Vihalemm T. 2011; Vetik, 2012). Therefore, producing and distributing information on Estonian affairs in Russian and through Russian-language media continues to be very important. An experienced journalist interviewed by the authors of this article (male, 56) emphasized this:

*The two communities live separate lives. I think the Russian community is better informed but not about the life of the Estonian community but about Estonian political life. The Russian community knows very little about the lives of ordinary Estonian people. And Estonians know nothing about how the Russians live. They cannot even name the top ten celebrities of the Russian community.*

Arnold and Schneider point out some important interrelations between media consumption and integration, such as “diffusion of information and knowledge about values, meanings and identity [...] and reduction/ alteration of social distances and cultural prejudices” (2007: 119). Hence, “an essential part of the study of any minority language media is the role of intellectuals and cultural producers” (Cormack, 1998: 49), which journalists certainly are. By supplying the discourse through which the world is understood and defining the world in the minority group’s terms they contribute to “empowering the group and its identity” (*ibid.*: 45).

## DATA AND METHOD

A survey, using a standardized questionnaire was conducted among Estonian Russian-speaking journalists in January and February 2011 – the year of the latest integration monitoring report that was used to prepare the new *Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia* (for 2014–2020). In 2011, more than half of Russian-speaking journalists worked in online outlets. Most of them worked in the capital of Tallinn (where the majority of Estonian mass media are concentrated) and in northeast Estonia, where 78 % of the population is Russian-speaking. The questionnaire was hand-delivered to all 140 journalists who worked full time in the editorial offices of Russian-language media outlets (the press, news portals, radio and television) with a 71 % response rate. The SPSS programme was used for data analysis. For comparison, some results of a 2006 survey of 120 Russian-speaking journalists are used. Additionally, from January till March 2012, in-depth interviews were conducted with 11 journalists with different work experiences and lengths of careers.

## STATUS OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING JOURNALISTS AS PROFESSIONALS

The majority (52 %) of Russian-speaking journalists are in their 30s or 40s, with careers spanning less than 20 years, which reflects the generational shift among journalists that took place in the early 1990s (cf. Lauk, 1996). Only 17 % of them have experience of working as journalists in the Soviet period and their number is decreasing. The younger generation is better professionally educated than the older one, about one third of them have a university degree in journalism. Also, female journalists are generally educated to higher levels than male journalists: 24 % of women have university education in journalism compared to 10 % of men, and 30 % of women hold a non-journalistic university degree as opposed to 20 % of men. Overall, the Estonian journalistic field seems to gradually feminize: currently there are 58 % female and 42 % male journalists. While in 2006,



parity existed between male and female journalists in Russian-language media, by 2011 the proportion had remarkably changed in favour of women (62 %). Interestingly, more women than men work in online media (22 and 12 %, respectively), and more men than women work in broadcasting (41 and 36 %, respectively).

The greater feminization among Russian-speaking journalists is probably one of the consequences of the economic hardships of the past six to seven years, which hit Russian-language media even harder than Estonian ones. As the Russian-language press has dramatically shrunk there are fewer well-paid jobs, and the majority of incomes after tax remain below €800 (75 %). More men have, probably, left the field because of low salaries. The salaries of Russian-speaking journalists are clearly lower than those in Estonian media. According to a survey of all Estonian journalists carried out in 2012–2013<sup>1</sup>, the proportion of those paid less than €800 is considerably lower than in Russian-language media (39 %), the share of those paid between €800 and 1,200 is 45 %.

Professional self-identification and commitment to the profession are relatively weak among Russian-speaking journalists. Many (36 %) see their journalistic job as temporary, only as a stage in their careers. Only 14 % of respondents answered a decisive “no” to the question whether they have considered switching to another field, while nearly one fifth answered a clear “yes” and another 21 % had seriously thought about it. About the same number of journalists thought they could easily lose their current job and only a little more than a third (36 %) had a more positive view of the future. The majority of Russian-speaking journalists (83 %) are not members of the Estonian Journalists’ Union, whereas those who are, belong to the generation aged 50 and above. Perhaps, the fact that the Union does not have much authority among Estonian journalists in general (Harro-Loit and Loit, 2014) partly explains this situation. However, Russian-speaking journalists have not established their own organisation either.

A code of ethics is another important element of journalists’ professional self-identification. However, nearly one third (30 %) of Russian-speaking journalists are not familiar with the Code of Ethics of Estonian Journalism. Another indicator of professional identity is a certain responsibility for one’s professional community and for one’s own actions as a member of a “guild”. For the majority of Russian-speaking journalists, personal ambitions and loyalty to their employers seem to be more important than any sense of membership of a profession and responsibility for its operations (see Figure 1). Similar attitudes are also observed Europe-wide, in a survey of journalists in 14 countries in 2011–2012<sup>2</sup>, 95 % of respondents stressed responsibility for their own actions and conscience, and over 80 % for their publisher.

<sup>1</sup> The survey was part of the global project *Worlds of Journalism Study*: <http://www.worldsofjournalism.org/>.

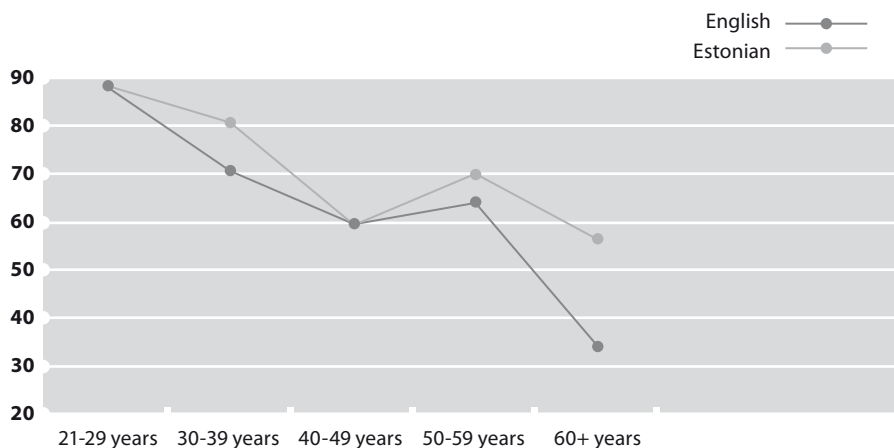
<sup>2</sup> Online survey conducted in 2011–2012 as part of a EU-funded research project “Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe (MediaACT)” among journalists in 12 European countries (Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland) and two Arab countries: Jordan and Tunisia; with a total of 1,762 respondents. The project’s homepage: [www.mediaact.eu](http://www.mediaact.eu).

The instability and economic difficulties of the Russian-language media sector have an obvious impact on journalists' job security. Job insecurity is reflected in journalists' mobility on the job market (see Figure 1): almost a quarter (24 %) of journalists had been employed in four to nine different newsrooms, whereas 53 % had had two to three jobs during their careers. It also appears that men change their jobs more often than women – among those with four to nine employments, 36 % were men and 19 % were women.



▲ *Figure 1.*  
Job stability among Russian and Estonian journalists  
(% of respondents)  
 $N_E = 278, N_R = 100$

The mutual comprehension of the other group's language forms the basis of interethnic communication. For Russian-speaking journalists, knowledge of Estonian is an indispensable skill, as the majority of their sources are Estonian. Indeed, 92 % of the respondents admitted that Estonian is very important or quite important in their work. Although Estonian is the official language of the country and its everyday linguistic environment, only a quarter of the respondents stated that they were completely fluent in Estonian. Another 54 % said they could understand and speak Estonian. Journalists in their 30s and 40s have the best Estonian skills (67 and 89 % of the respective age group are good or fluent in Estonian). In comparison, 72 % of respondents declared they are sufficiently good in English (see Figure 2). The younger generation's command of English seems to be even better than that of Estonian (89 % of those in their 20s and 71 % in their 30s reported being good or fluent in English). One can speculate that the quality of English language teaching in Russian language schools has been higher than that of Estonian (which is true at least for the Soviet period). However, it also seems to be a matter of attitude and motivation – knowledge of Estonian is not valued as highly as that of English.



▲ Figure 2.  
Command of Estonian and English in different age groups  
(% of the age group)  
N = 100

There was, still, a substantial group (19 %) of those whose knowledge of Estonian was passive (understanding to a degree but not speaking) or non-existent. This group has diminished since 2006, when about a third of Russian-speaking journalists did not communicate in Estonian.

It seems, however, that the self-assessment of knowledge of Estonian is somewhat misleading. When asked additionally about the root of difficulties in their work, 31 % mentioned insufficient knowledge of Estonian (as the fourth difficulty after lack of time, insufficient knowledge of the topic and high levels of stress).

## RUSSIAN-SPEAKING JOURNALISTS LIAISING BETWEEN ESTONIAN AND RUSSOPHONE COMMUNITIES

Journalists in Estonia had to redefine their professional roles and tasks after the cessation of censorship and ideological surveillance over the media. Russian-speaking journalists had been in the position of the “official voice” of the ruling power even to a larger extent than Estonian journalists, as they represented the media in the language of pan-Soviet communication. The transformation from an ideological opinion-maker to an information provider occurred quite quickly in the early 1990s. Russian-speaking journalists have clearly adopted the role of information transmitter (98 %) and did that to a greater extent than the role of a “watchdog” (77 %). They regard the role of a mediator between the two linguistic communities as even more important. They emphasize discussing and explaining the problems of Estonian society in Russian-language media (94 %), reporting on Estonian culture and history (84 %) and helping the Russophone

population to feel that they are part of Estonian society (83 %) as the most important tasks for them as journalists. One of the interviewees, a former editor of a weekly (female, 32) expressed it in following way:

*The task of a Russian journalist is to identify the problem, to make the ethnic majority aware of it, to explain what its essence is and its possible consequences for Russian-speakers, and to suggest a solution or a compromise. Journalists should invite experts, public opinion leaders and people from different sections of society to a public discussion.*

The journalists mentioned economic difficulties and unemployment (95 % in both cases) as the most urgent problems of the Russophone population, which, although common throughout Estonian society, have a greater impact on the Russophones. As specific problems of minorities, 86 % of respondents mentioned unequal job opportunities and 75 % unequal treatment by officials in state institutions. The journalists also pointed out the importance of the Russian-language media in publicly discussing and interpreting these problems but they were dubious about the media's ability to improving the existing situation. Furthermore, 88 % of respondents thought that Russian-speaking journalists and media have no influence whatsoever on political decisions that are made in Estonia. In 2006, during the implementation of the first *Integration Programme* (2000–2007), more journalists (14 %) believed that they could influence politicians' actions and decisions. Indeed, the degeneration of the Russian-language news media in Estonia since the mid-2000s and the fact that the Russian-speaking population prefers watching Russia's television channels, plays a role here. Journalists do not think that local Russian-language journalism can substantially support integration and social cohesion in Estonia, and this attitude has not changed since 2006 (48 % of respondents of both surveys thought Russian-language media do not promote integration). On the other hand, 85 % of them believed that people generally trust Estonia's Russian-language media, although sociological studies do not support this optimistic view.

Interestingly, the level of knowledge of Estonian plays a significant role in how journalists see and interpret the integration process. 80 % of those completely fluent in Estonian supported the idea that local Russian-language media should help Russian-speaking people to integrate into Estonian society. The majority (71 %) of those able to communicate in Estonian regarded reporting about joint integration activities and projects involving both Estonians and Russians as important.

Also, education seems to influence attitudes towards the potential of Russian-language media in promoting integration. Journalists with a non-journalistic university degree were the most sceptical (53 % declared that the media do not promote integration). The most positive attitude appeared in the group with university degrees in journalism, 45 % of whom believed that Russian-language media support integration. However, another 45 % of those in the same group were of the opposite opinion.

According to Arnold and Schneider (2007: 118), the "representation of ethnic minorities in the media points to mass media's ability to influence integration through the way it portrays social groups". Russian-speaking journalists feel a strong affiliation with the

Russophone community: 78 % of them see expressing and defending the interests of Russian speakers as very important or important in their professional work. This attitude has actually strengthened since 2006, when only 38 % emphasized this task as important. Journalists try to reduce tensions in society by informing both their audiences about Estonian issues, and the Estonian-speaking audience about the issues of the Russophone community.

67 % of surveyed Russian-speaking journalists regarded the translation of websites, television and radio programmes and other media material into Russian and English as important. Our survey results reflect Russophone journalists' positive attitudes to their role in building social coherence in Estonian society and bridging between the two communities. The same attitude appears in some of our interviews. A television journalist with 20 years of professional experience (male, 53) put it in the following way:

*Our apparent role is to connect the two communities. We are sitting on two chairs simultaneously. On the one hand, we have to keep an eye on what is going on in Russia, and we should tell people about that. On the other hand, it is necessary that we observe how the Russian-speaking community interacts with the Estonian speaking one. How realistic this role is, is another issue.*

The 2011 Integration monitoring report confirmed that the majority of both Estonian and Russian-speaking people expected Russian-language media to cover life in Estonia in more depth and breadth and to better explain the context of events (Vihalemm P., 2011: 166). However, the interviewed journalists did not see the picture as encouraging and pointed to several disturbing moments, such as insufficient communication between Estonian and Russian-speaking journalists; the attempts by both sides to cover up negative facts about the other; lack of interest in each other's culture or history etc.

## CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Both Cormack (1998, 2005, 2007) and Uribe-Jongbloed (2014) emphasize the relevance of political culture as a condition for the development of minority language media. In addition to everyone's right "to freely disseminate ideas, opinions, beliefs and other information by word, print, picture or other means" (Art. 45), the Estonian Constitution provides minority groups with the right "to establish self-governing agencies under such conditions and pursuant to such procedure as are provided in the National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act" (Art. 50). Estonia's Public Broadcasting Act defines transmitting "programmes which [...] meet the information needs of all sections of the population, including minorities" (Art. 5 (8)) the task of the public service broadcaster ERR. No legal act or procedure exists to prevent the development of minority language media, neither are there any restrictions on access to various media. However, Russian-language media are not typical minority media which aim to maintain the language and cultural traditions of a minority, since Russian is the official language spoken by millions right across the border, and satellites make a variety of Russian television channels available. In addition to the economic problems of Estonia's Russian-language media, the audience's consumption habits weaken the opportunities that Russian-speaking journalists have to influence

the process of integration. Estonia's Russian-language media are unable to compete for an audience with the flow of information and entertainment from Russia, including propaganda that is hostile to the Estonian state. As our research indicates, within the existing Estonian media environment Russian-speaking journalists have difficulties in positioning themselves simultaneously as professionals and as representatives of the Russophone community.

According to our results, journalists working in Russian-language media are not too positive about their ability to promote the interests of the Russophone minority. Instead, they are more oriented towards general professional standards and their role as mediators between Estonian and Russian communities within existing possibilities. However, Estonia's Russian-speaking journalists are aware of their audience's needs for more information on everyday life in Estonia. They are also aware of the importance of diminishing the distance between the two linguistic communities and contributing to the development of a common information space for both communities. As professionals, Russian-speaking journalists do not have a strong professional identity, they are not organized and are therefore more exposed to unfavourable employment conditions. In addition, a limited command of Estonian by many of them restricts their range of sources and possibly, their ability to explain issues facing the Estonian society to their audience. We can conclude that professional qualities and contextual conditions that are necessary in order for minority language media to represent a minority's needs and interests and to contribute to their integration in the host society, are only partly present in the case of Russian-language media in Estonia.

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## MEDIJI NA MANJINSKIM JEZICIMA I NOVINARI U KONTEKSTU DRUŠTVENE INTEGRACIJE U ESTONIJI

Maria Jufereva :: Epp Lauk

**SAŽETAK** *U fokusu ovog članka jesu uloga novinara koji govore ruski jezik i potencijal medija na ruskom jeziku u unaprjeđivanju društvene integracije u Estoniji. Posljedica socijalističke kolonizacije za vrijeme sovjetskog režima jest ta da četvrtina estonskog stanovništva danas govori ruskim jezikom. Te dvije glavne jezične zajednice (estonska i ruska) imaju različite informacijske prostore koje dijeli jezična barijera. Integracija može uspjeti samo ako postoji nesputana komunikacija između manjinskih i većinskih skupina te ako pojedinci i skupine imaju jednaku mogućnost sudjelovanja u javnoj sferi života. U članku se prvo bavimo konceptom medija na manjinskim jezicima te ulogom medija na ruskom jeziku u kontekstu društvene integracije u Estoniji. Koristile smo metodu ankete kako bismo doznale kakav je trenutni profesionalni status estonskih novinara koji govore ruski jezik te kako oni percipiraju svoju ulogu u procesu integracije. Zaključile smo da novinari koji govore ruskim jezikom sebe doživljavaju kao posrednike između estonske i ruske zajednice, ali i da nisu sigurni da mediji na ruskom jeziku mogu ispuniti zadaću da budu predstavnici manjine.*

### KLJUČNE RIJEČI

MEDIJI NA MANJINSKIM JEZICIMA, ESTONIJA, DRUŠTVENA INTEGRACIJA

*Bilješka o autoricama* \_\_\_\_\_

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