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Dilemmas Between Freedom of Speech and Hate Speech: Russophobia on Facebook and Instagram in the Spanish Media

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Abstract

On March 11, 2022, Russia opened a criminal case against Meta, the parent firm that owns Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. It alleged that Facebook had modified its community standards, broadening its concept of freedom of speech to allow alleged hate speech against Russian citizens, amid the conflict in Ukraine. Reuters (2022, para. 1) refers to a "temporary change in the company's hate speech policy," according to confidential Facebook documents. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights called the change "worrying" ("Rusia y Ucrania," 2022, para. 11). In this context, this article addresses two objectives: (a) to explore and comment on the state of the art on freedom of expression in social networks and its deontological limitations to prevent hatred against nationalities (EU legislation, scientific research, Twitter, and Instagram deontological limitations); and (b) to study the emergence of possible cases of Russophobia, in a mediatized form, through the news of Spanish media and the comments they generated on their Facebook and Instagram sites. A triangular methodology is used: analytical and longitudinal commentary on EU definitions and standards on hate speech; quantitative analysis of news items in Spanish media on Russophobia, on Facebook and Instagram, published between January 1, 2022, and October 20, 2022; and mixed analysis of the engagement of these news items, thanks to the Fanpage Karma tool. The media coverage of Russophobia is scarce, with an average of one news item per media and, exceptionally, with two news items in very few cases. It is also striking that in such a long period, only six hashtags are used.

Issue

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1. Introduction

On March 11, 2022, Russia opened a criminal case against Meta, the parent company that owns Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. It alleged that Facebook had modified its community standards, broadening its concept of freedom of speech to allow alleged hate calls against the Russian citizenry, in the heat of the war against Ukraine. The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation described Meta as an "extremist organization" ("Rusia abre una causa," 2022). And the Tverskoy court in Moscow, through a communiqué on Telegram, banned the activity of the US multinational in the federal territory ("La Justicia rusa," 2022).

After learning the news, Meta did not want to make statements about the accusation, nor about its inclusion in the Rosfinmonitoring or Federal Service for Financial Monitoring list as "organizations and individuals about which there is information about their involvement in extremist activities or terrorism" ("Russia's financial monitoring agency," 2022, para. 4). However, two weeks after the opening of the criminal case, a Meta

spokesperson unofficially stated that Facebook had only temporarily relaxed its rules on political speech, allowing some words and comments that previously would have been censored ("Rusia abre una causa," 2022).

The United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) described the change as "worrying" ("Rusia y Ucrania," 2022, para. 11) even though "freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (OHCHR, 2022, para. 1). The main reason for this concern is not an attack on Russian leaders, but attacks on those born in that country, even if they reside elsewhere in the world. It is Russophobia or irrational fear or hatred of Russia or Russian citizens. Russian identity is put in the bull's eye (Correyero-Ruiz & Sánchez Martínez, 2022; Soto Ivars, 2022) and this cancellation generalizes and harms the same Russians who protest against the war in Ukraine.

In Spain, this Russophobia materialized against some Russian companies, products, and citizens (Gómez Díaz, 2022). According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2022), on January 1, 2021, there were officially 79,485 Russian citizens living in Spain (52,829 women and 26,656 men). There are no subsequent official data, as they are published only at the beginning of each new year. Catalonia, Valencia, and Andalusia are the autonomous communities with the most Russians per inhabitant, in decreasing order: 25,093, 22,264, and 14,172, respectively (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2022). The president of the Casa de Rusia in Alicante, Aleksandr Chepurnoy, denounced Russophobia in schools, in an intervention in the TV show Noticias 8 Mediterráneo (Osuna, 2022). Ximo Puig, president of the Generalitat Valenciana, defended any blockade of Putin without falling into Russophobia (García, 2022). In the cultural aspect, the Russian Museum of Malaga remains open but does not renew its exhibitions (RNE, 2022) and the Teatro Real de Madrid canceled the performances of the Bolshoi Ballet, scheduled for May 2022, due to "the war conflict unleashed by Russia in Ukraine, which is causing a serious crisis in the world and a painful humanitarian emergency" (Teatro Real, 2022, para. 1).

2. Methodology

In this context, this research work addresses two main objectives: (a) to explore and comment on the state of the art on freedom of expression in social networks and its deontological limitations to prevent hatred against nationalities (EU legislation, scientific research, Twitter, and Instagram deontological limitations); and (b) to study the emergence of possible cases of Russophobia, in a mediatized form, through the news of Spanish newspapers and the comments they generated on their Facebook and Instagram sites. This second objective is related to the first one, as we want to show a tangible and real case study, whose successes and errors serve as an exemplary study that can be extrapolated from

Spain to other countries in Europe and the world. A triangular methodology is employed: analytical and longitudinal commentary on the definitions and community standards on hate speech; quantitative analysis of news in Spanish media, on Russophobia on Facebook and Instagram, published between January 1, 2022, and October 20, 2022; and mixed analysis of the engagement of such news, thanks to the Fanpage Karma tool.

For the first step (a longitudinal, analytical, and synthetic literature review), we studied the concepts of freedom of expression, hate speech, and deontological limitations in social networks. The term "longitudinal" is understood as the chronological bibliographic analysis, from the appearance of the concept or of the first research, in reverse chronological order, up to the present day. The term "analytical" comes from decomposition, which moves from the whole to the parts, seeking a detailed analysis of all the above-mentioned terms. Coming from the philosophical current of the same name, it emphasizes the importance of precision in language. The term "synthetic" refers to reasoning analysis that seeks the essential, reintegrating all the investigated parts, abstracting what is important (found in the analytical part), and updating it.

The literature review has been carried out through first-level bibliographic sources, and with articles of maximum impact and prestige, from publications indexed by the Journal Citation Reports and Scimago Journal & Country Rank. As a literature review, it seeks to describe the qualities of the context in which this research is framed to support the validity of the sample and period chosen. The aim is not to prove to what degree a certain quality is found in this study context, but to discover as many qualities and orientations as possible, based on the most recent and prestigious studies (Rodríguez-Vidales & Padilla-Castillo, 2018). Therefore, it pursues in-depth understanding, rather than the accuracy of purely quantitative research, as the context of social networks is rapidly changing in terms of data (Bernárdez-Rodal et al., 2021; Caldevilla-Domínguez et al., 2021a, 2021b; Díaz-Altozano et al., 2021; Padilla & Rodríguez, 2022). Precisely because of the longitudinal, analytical, and synthetic review, any literature review on social networks can quickly become outdated if it focuses on descriptive, quantitative, or situational aspects. For this reason, we opt for research that does not focus solely on quantitative aspects, but rather on the search for the profound reasons that give rise to these numbers or situations.

For the second step, which addresses the objective of studying the emergence of possible cases of Russophobia—in a mediatized form, through the news of Spanish media and the comments they generated on their Facebook and Instagram sites—the Fanpage Karma tool is employed. It was founded by Nicolas Graf von Kanitz and Stephan Eyl in 2012, in Berlin, Germany (Fanpage Karma, 2022), and is one of the most comprehensive platforms for social network analysis. It offers four solutions for social media work and analysis:

analytics, engagement, publishing, and discovery. This research has only employed discovery, which allows studying trends, topics, and influencers, on Twitter and Instagram, with unlimited analysis of profiles (Fanpage Karma, 2022). It offers top posts, the posts with the most interaction on the two mentioned social networks, top influencers with the most active profiles, and a precise search by region, language, category, keyword, and hashtag, in eligible and customizable periods, from the last hour to the last year.

The validity of Fanpage Karma rests on three pillars relevant to the objectives of this work: It collects only public information, meaning that there is no concern about confidential data or privacy violation (Gmiterek, 2021; Trunfio & Della Lucia, 2019); it has a quantitative nature by using data, although it offers common characteristics that allow to compare, establish origins, and consequences (Martínez-Sánchez et al., 2021); and only analyses business or professional social media profiles (Barrios-Rubio & Pedrero-Esteban, 2021; Manca et al., 2022), which ensures that the publications obtained come from official media accounts. Specifically, only accounts that Fanpage Karma categorizes as "media" or "news" were used. It also allows filtering by language (for this work, the Spanish language was chosen), by country (the search was only in Spain), and by date (for the sample to be valid, the period of the first 10 months of the year, between January 1, 2022, and October 20, 2022, was chosen to collect comments before and during the conflict).

3. Freedom of Expression in Social Networks and Its Deontological Limitations

Social media has grown exponentially in the number of users, during and after the international socio-health confinement (Abuín-Penas & Abuín-Penas, 2022; Demuner Flores, 2021), as well as in influence (Martínez-Fresneda Osorio & Sánchez Rodríguez, 2022). Studies conducted during 2021–2022 point to an unprecedented increase in the use of social networks and in the number of users who use them. Major reports from IAB Spain (2022), Statista (2022), The Social Media Family (2022), and We Are Social (2022) highlight Instagram and TikTok as the fastest-growing networks. According to the data, society would tend to be informed about a topic, for much longer, on social networks before traditional media (Calderón-Garrido et al., 2019; Gong et al., 2022; Hernandez-Cruz, 2021; Padilla-Castillo & Rodríguez-Hernández, 2022; Ryzhova, 2022; Segura-Mariño et al., 2020).

These social networks should not evade the legislation under which information is disseminated in traditional media. Because information, whatever its platform, has an ethical nature and its extreme complexity can carry perverse stereotypes, including those towards certain nationalities (S. Chen et al., 2019; Y. Chen et al., 2021; Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021; Rodríguez-

Pérez et al., 2022; Tsuriel et al., 2021). Hate crime in Europe has been ethically contemplated for several decades (Padilla-Castillo, 2020). According to the original classical Greek definition, legislation will be understood as part of ethics, following the treatises of Socrates and Descartes. Deontology, on the other hand, is a part of ethics, which deals with the rules for the practice of a profession or with the rules laid down autonomously, when it includes the community rules of social networks. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 1966), in its Article 2, dictates the importance of respecting and guaranteeing to all individuals the recognized rights, without distinction as to race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth, or another status. Its Article 18 refers to the freedom of thought, Article 19 refers to the freedom of opinion, and Article 26 protects non-discrimination (United Nations, 1966). And the internet has become a kind of fertile breeding ground for maliciously altered information (Almendros & Rojano, 2022; Quintana-Pujalte & Pannunzio, 2021).

In 2000, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was ratified. In Articles 1, 10, 21, and 47 it was established that the EU guarantees the right to human dignity, freedom of conscience, religion, thought non-discrimination, and the protection of an impartial judge (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000). The next milestone after the European Constitution was the 2003 constitutional treaty, which was signed in Rome by the heads of government of the member countries and ratified by the European Parliament in 2005. Part II of the European constitution deals with the fundamental rights of the EU and names: dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizenship, and justice (Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, 2004).

Following EU legislation, it is essential to comment on Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of October 25, 2012, establishing minimum standards on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime, that replaced Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA. It specifies that hate crime encompasses any violence directed at another person, because of their "property, birth, disability, age, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, residence status, or health" (Directive 2012/29/EU of 25 October 2012, 2012, p. 2, para. 9). It is also important to mention the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Helsinki Final Act (1975), as the outcome of the third phase of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe. Today, the OSCE brings together 57 states from Europe, North America, and Central Asia and "provides support, assistance and expertise to participating States and civil society to promote democracy, rule of law, human rights and tolerance and non-discrimination" (OSCE, n.d., para. 1).

In 2022, the European Commission opened a public consultation, claiming that "recent developments in

some EU countries affecting the ownership, management, or operation of certain media point to increasing interference in this sector" (European Commission, 2022, p. 2, para. 1). This consultation, open between January 10 and March 25, 2022, wanted to "ensure a better functioning of the EU media market by increasing legal certainty and removing obstacles to the internal market" (European Commission, 2022, para. 2). The Commission's proposal for regulation, published on September 16, 2022, is in the process of receiving comments as this article is being published. Until then, we know that one of its central thrusts is to protect freedom of expression, where the role of the media as actors in democratic systems based on the rule of law is developed (European Commission, 2022).

Reviewing the deontological or community standards of the two studied social networks, created and modified according to the use and abuse of users (Segado-Boj et al., 2020), we see that Twitter says in its safety chapter: "Violence: You may not threaten violence against an individual or a group of people. We also prohibit the glorification of violence"; "Terrorism/violent extremism: you may not threaten or encourage terrorism or violent extremism"; and "Hateful conduct: You may not promote violence against or directly attack or threaten other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, caste, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or serious disease. We also do not allow accounts whose primary purpose is inciting harm towards others on the basis of these categories." (Twitter, 2022, paras. 2–6). However, numerous studies focus on criticizing the social network, which would allow hateful tweets (Eriksson, 2018; Jacobs et al., 2020; Wang & Ding, 2022), shielding behind the fact that "the purpose of Twitter is to be in the service of public conversation" (Twitter, 2022, para. 1).

For its part, Instagram offers two fundamental lines for this research: "There is no place on Instagram for people who support or praise terrorism, organised crime or hate groups" (Instagram, 2022, para. 11)

and "We remove any content that includes credible threats or hate speech, content directed at individuals for the purpose of humiliating or embarrassing them, personal information used to blackmail or harass someone, and repeated unwanted messages" (Instagram, 2022 para. 14). However, like Twitter, it receives criticism for not censoring some posts in the interest of being a "a diverse and positive community" (Instagram, 2022 para. 14). Numerous articles have analyzed how Instagram has focused too much on censoring supposedly erotic photographs (for example, female nipples, breastfeeding, breast cancer surgery), rather than pursuing quasi-pornographic, violent, or covert advertising posts (Chung & Wihbey, 2022; Ging & Garvey, 2018; Kermani & Hooman, 2022; Savolainen et al., 2022).

4. Results

Following the methodology, the second objective of the research is to study the emergence of possible cases of Russophobia, in a mediatized form, through the news of Spanish media and the comments they generated on their Facebook and Instagram sites. In accordance with the triangular methodology, after analytically commenting on the definitions and community standards on hate speech, we proceed to the quantitative analysis of news about Russophobia in the Spanish media, which was published on their official Facebook and Instagram accounts, in the 10 months covered by the study. The quantitative analysis, under the spirit of the research, is completed with a mixed analysis of engagement, thanks to the Fanpage Karma tool (likes, comments, sharing, and reactions).

The first search focuses on "media," which are official Spanish and Spanish-language media accounts. Table 1 collects the name of the account, the number of "likes," the number of public comments, the number of times the post was shared, and the number of overall reactions (the sum of "like," "love," "haha," "sad," "angry," and "wow," in the case of Facebook; and "like" in the case of Instagram).

Table 1. Spanish media posts about Russophobia on Facebook and Instagram.

Order of priority	Account	Number of "likes"	Number of comments	Number of times shared	Number of total reactions
1	*El País*	2008	1000	186	3194
2	*20minutos.es*	2372	431	296	3099
3	*ABC.es*	920	413	33	1366
4	*La Vanguardia*	735	501	65	1301
5	*El País*	941	224	76	1241
6	Telecinco	446	362	24	832
7	*La Voz de Galicia*	320	480	16	816
8	*Público*	315	420	30	765
9	*20minutos.es*	468	246	15	729
10	*El Mundo*	353	267	34	654
11	*Ultima Hora Mallorca*	225	209	16	450
12	*Público*	124	259	20	403
13	Antena 3 Noticias	241	132	8	381

Table 1. (Cont.) Spanish media posts about Russophobia on Facebook and Instagram.

Order of priority	Account	Number of "likes"	Number of comments	Number of times shared	Number of total reactions
14	Cuatro	209	144	11	364
15	ABC.es	134	162	15	311
16	Antena 3 Noticias	129	155	7	291
17	La Razón	206	43	0	249
18	elDiario.es	119	72	23	214
19	El Mundo	78	119	9	206
20	RTVE	102	69	3	174
21	El Independiente	132	15	27	174
22	Levante-EMV	147	18	7	172
23	elDiario.es	100	50	8	158
24	Público	98	28	21	147
25	infoLibre	56	61	26	143
26	Crónica Global	38	74	5	117
27	20minutos.es	36	77	0	113
28	El Confidencial	50	50	13	113
29	Público	24	59	6	89
30	elDiario.es	57	16	9	82
31	La Nueva España Digital—LNE.es	59	15	2	76
32	NAIZ	53	11	9	73
33	Gigantes del Basket	30	22	1	53
34	laSexta Noticias	15	27	0	42
35	Espejo Público	6	21	1	28
36	Diario de Avisos	17	5	3	25
37	El Español	11	14	0	25
38	Esquire Spain	13	3	4	20
39	La Opinión de Murcia	9	6	2	17
40	Larazon.es	4	12	0	16
41	Más Vale Tarde	6	8	0	14
42	El Periódico de Aragón	3	5	2	10
43	La Voz de Galicia, Edición Lugo	2	4	0	6
44	Diario Córdoba	3	2	0	5
45	RTVE Noticias	4	1	0	5
46	Informacion.es	3	1	0	4
47	El Periódico Extremadura	4	0	0	4
48	Larazon.es	0	2	2	4
49	El Día	3	0	0	3
50	Diario de Sevilla	2	1	0	3
51	Diario de Navarra	1	2	0	3
52	El Periódico Extremadura	1	2	0	3
53	eldiariocv.es	2	0	0	2
54	Leonoticias Diariodigital	2	0	0	2
55	El Periódico de Aragón	2	0	0	2
56	The Objective	1	0	1	2
57	The Objective	1	1	0	2
58	EC Cultura	1	0	1	2
59	Larazon.es	2	0	0	2
60	Crónica Global	0	2	0	2
61	eldiariocv.es	1	0	0	1
62	Leonoticias Diariodigital	1	0	0	1
63	Diario SUR	0	0	1	1
64	La Opinión de Zamora	1	0	0	1
65	Huelva Información	0	0	0	0
66	Economía Digital	0	0	0	0
67	El País Cat	0	0	0	0

Table 1. (Cont.) Spanish media posts about Russophobia on Facebook and Instagram.

Order of priority	Account	Number of "likes"	Number of comments	Number of times shared	Number of total reactions
68	*Crónica Global*	0	0	0	0
69	La 8 Mediterráneo	0	0	0	0
70	*El País Cat*	0	0	0	0
71	Madridiario.es	0	0	0	0
72	*El País*	2008	1000	186	3194
73	*20minutos.es*	2372	431	296	3099

Note: Own elaboration based on data from Fanpage Karma.

A total of 73 publications were obtained for the period studied. For space reasons, it is not possible to transcribe all of these publications, but they are placed in the Supplementary Files, with the complete post of each publication. These media publish only on Facebook, except for post number 17, from the newspaper *La Razón*, which was made on Instagram. There are national newspapers that are disseminated in print and digital (*ABC, El Mundo, El País, El Periódico, La Razón, La Vanguardia*), those that are published only in digital (*El Confidencial, El Español, infoLibre, Público, The Objective*), and those that have regional circulation (*El Periódico de Aragón, Diario Córdoba, Diario de Navarra, Diario de Sevilla, Diario SUR, El Día, El Periódico de Aragón, El Periódico Extremadura, Huelva Información, La Opinión de Murcia, La Opinión de Zamora, Levante, La Voz de Galicia, Madridiario.es*, etc.). There are also television channels (Antena 3, Cuatro, La Sexta, RTVE), which publish posts from their news programmes and, in the case of Antena 3's Espejo Púbic, also from their TV shows. In the free press, *20minutos.es* stands out, with several publications on social media, and as for the magazines, only *Esquire Spain* and the *EC Cultura* supplement of the digital newspaper *El Confidencial* have a presence in social media.

Regarding the content of the posts, we found seven quotes in the headlines from interviewees referring to that Russophobia: two quotes from Putin; two opinion letters or editorials; and three allusions to expressions, in quotation marks ("social justice," "political formula," and "evil Russian"), referring to television fiction, specifically to the stereotypes in the Netflix series *Stranger Things*. Furthermore, there were only five hashtags (from most to least engagement):

#TrincheraCultural, #Hearstforpeace, #Esquireforpeace, #pensamiento, and #opinión.

Only half of the posts have significant engagement, as interactions decline to insignificance from post 40 onwards. Regarding the nature of these interactions, the most used is the "like," doubling and tripling the number of interactions per comment, in all cases. The number of times posts are shared is also strikingly low, and only in the first two posts is it more than a hundred. The most important post is from *El País*:

> It can't be that people here hate us just because we are Russians. The big problem is that they identify Russians with Putin and we are not to blame for his decisions. Least of all the children. The Russian community in Catalonia denounces insults against them and even death threats.

It refers to an article with interviews with several Russian people living in Catalonia, which, as mentioned, is home to the largest Russian community in Spain.

The second search focuses only on "news" and its results are collected in Table 2. Some posts coincide with those in Table 1 ("media"), but new ones are now incorporated as Fanpage Karma cataloged them exclusively as "news" and not as entertainment products. It is important to point out that we differentiate and use both categories—"news" and "media"—because "media" includes accounts dedicated to news, entertainment, analysis, and fiction, among others, while "news" refers only to accounts that disseminate information. Similarly to Table 1, the name of the account, the number of "likes," the number of public comments, the number of times the post was shared, and the number of

Table 2. News publications in Spanish and Spain, on Facebook and Instagram.

Order of priority	Account	Number of "likes"	Number of comments	Number of times shared	Number of total reactions
1	El País	2008	1000	186	3194
2	*20minutos.es*	2372	431	296	3099
3	*ABC.es*	920	413	33	1366
4	*La Vanguardia*	735	501	65	1301
5	El País	941	224	76	1241
6	*La Voz de Galicia*	320	480	16	816

Table 2. (Cont.) News publications in Spanish and Spain, on Facebook and Instagram.

Order of priority	Account	Number of "likes"	Number of comments	Number of times shared	Number of total reactions
7	*Público*	315	420	30	765
8	*20minutos.es*	468	246	15	729
9	*El Mundo*	353	267	34	654
10	*Ultima Hora Mallorca*	225	209	16	450
11	*Público*	124	259	20	403
12	Antena 3 Noticias	241	132	8	381
13	*ABC.es*	134	162	15	311
14	Antena 3 Noticias	129	155	7	291
15	*La Razón*	206	43	0	249
16	*elDiario.es*	119	72	23	214
17	*El Mundo*	78	119	9	206
18	RTVE	102	69	3	174
19	*El Independiente*	132	15	27	174
20	*Levante-EMV*	147	18	7	172
21	*elDiario.es*	100	50	8	158
22	*Público*	98	28	21	147
23	*infoLibre*	56	61	26	143
24	*Crónica Global*	38	74	5	117
25	*20minutos.es*	36	77	0	113
26	*El Confidencial*	50	50	13	113
27	*Público*	24	59	6	89
28	*elDiario.es*	57	16	9	82
29	*La Nueva España Digital*—LNE.es	59	15	2	76
30	NAIZ	53	11	9	73
31	*Gigantes del Basket*	30	22	1	53
32	*Diario de Avisos*	17	5	3	25
33	*El Español*	11	14	0	25
34	Esquire Spain	13	3	4	20
35	*La Opinión de Murcia*	9	6	2	17
36	*Larazon.es*	4	12	0	16
37	*El Periódico de Aragón*	3	5	2	10
38	*La Voz de Galicia*. Edición Lugo	2	4	0	6
39	*Diario Córdoba*	3	2	0	5
40	RTVE Noticias	4	1	0	5
41	*Informacion.es*	3	1	0	4
42	El Periódico Extremadura	4	0	0	4
43	*Larazon.es*	0	2	2	4
44	*El Día*	3	0	0	3
45	*Diario de Sevilla*	2	1	0	3
46	*Diario de Navarra*	1	2	0	3
47	*El Periódico Extremadura*	1	2	0	3
48	*eldiariocv.es*	2	0	0	2
49	*Leonoticias Diariodigital*	2	0	0	2
50	*El Periódico de Aragón*	2	0	0	2
51	*The Objective*	1	0	1	2
52	*The Objective*	1	1	0	2
53	*EC Cultura*	1	0	1	2
54	*Larazon.es*	2	0	0	2
55	*Crónica Global*	0	2	0	2
56	*eldiariocv.es*	1	0	0	1
57	*Leonoticias Diariodigital*	1	0	0	1
58	*Diario SUR*	0	0	1	1
59	*La Opinión de Zamora*	1	0	0	1
60	*Huelva Información*	0	0	0	0
61	*Economía Digital*	0	0	0	0

Table 2. (Cont.) News publications in Spanish and Spain, on Facebook and Instagram.

Order of priority	Account	Number of "likes"	Number of comments	Number of times shared	Number of total reactions
62	El País Cat	0	0	0	0
63	*Crónica Global*	0	0	0	0
64	El País Cat	0	0	0	0
65	Madridiario.es	0	0	0	0
66	El País	2008	1000	186	3194
67	*20minutos.es*	2372	431	296	3099

Note: Own elaboration based on data from Fanpage Karma.

overall reactions (the sum of "like," "love," "haha," "sad," "angry," and "wow," in the case of Facebook; and "like" in the case of Instagram) are collected.

A total of 67 publications were obtained for the period studied. For space reasons, it is not possible to transcribe all of these publications, but they are placed in the Supplementary Files, with the complete post of each publication. As in Table 1, the media publish only on Facebook, except for post number 15 (post number 17 in Table 1), from the newspaper *La Razón*, which was made on Instagram (an opinion article titled "The nonsense of Russophobia"). Just as in Table 1, there are national newspapers that are distributed in print and digital, those that are published only in digital, and those that have regional circulation. As for the television channels, this time only posts from their news programs and not from other entertainment shows were considered.

About the content of the posts, we find four quotes in the headlines from interviewees referring to that Russophobia: two quotes from Putin and two allusions to expressions in quotation marks (again, "social justice" and "evil Russian"). There are also six hashtags, although not entirely the same as in the first table (from most to least engagement): #TrincheraCultural, #Hearstforpeace, #Esquireforpeace, #pensamiento, #opinión, and #madridiario.

Only about half of the posts have significant engagement, as interactions decline to insignificance from post 39 onwards. Regarding the nature of these interactions, the most used is once again "like," always multiplying the number of interactions per comment. The number of times posts are shared is also low, although the first five posts exceed one thousand reactions. When compared to Table 1, the news stories generate more engagement than entertainment products. The most important post is the same that occupied the first position in Table 1, from *El País*. The second and third most important posts are also the same. The one from *20minutos.es* is a Facebook Watch post, with a video (1 minute and 10 seconds long) of Putin presented with the text "Putin's tough message to the West about sanctions that harm Russia." *ABC*'s is a Facebook post with the text "The French brand, after the closure of its stores in Russia, has blocked the marketing of its products to Russian customers who intend to take them to their country," two photographs of Russian women smashing a Chanel bag, and the link to the arti-

cle of the same newspaper, with the headline "Russian influencers smash their Chanel bags of 8,000 euros after the ban on sale: 'This is Russophobia.'"

5. Conclusions and Discussion

The first objective of this research was to explore and comment on the state of the art on freedom of expression in social networks and its deontological limitations to prevent hatred against nationalities (EU legislation, scientific research, and Twitter and Instagram deontological limitations). The analysis was divided between a detailed study of European legislation, as the geographical and political scope of the corpus of the work, and the most recent and cutting-edge research on the ethical problems of Twitter and Instagram, the two social networks owned by Meta. Regarding European regulations, the wide tradition of directives, recommendations, and institutions, with more than 80 years of experience, before and after the European Constitution, has been identified and commented on. Considering the dynamic and changing nature of communication and new technologies, the range is closed in a consultation of European citizens, currently awaiting their comments and in the spirit of continuing to ensure a pluralistic, transparent, and democratic media spectrum in the countries of the European Union (European Commission, 2022). It is clear that, although the legislation is numerous and has a long tradition in time, it needs more speed to adjust quickly to changes and social problems, and that more institutional and media publicity is also needed, so that the public, of all strata, is aware of it and does not comply with the hatred that continues to exist in social networks.

Regarding Twitter and Instagram, the main lines of their community rules have been commented on, citing freedom of expression and hate speech, although, in parallel, the two networks openly state their desire to promote dialogue and freedom (Instagram, 2022; Twitter, 2022). At the same time, the academic tradition of the last five years focuses on certain forms of unnecessary censorship, especially on Instagram, which would unfairly allow certain inappropriate posts and censor publications. Progress on this censorship comes from social denunciation and originates advances, albeit slow, in social networks, which would still need more monitoring and surveillance by Meta, and more digital

literacy on the part of users so that they detect hate and can proactively denounce and expedite these changes (Bernárdez-Rodal et al., 2021; Díaz-Altozano et al., 2021; Kermani & Hooman, 2022). This theoretical analysis also shows a broad, rigorous, and adequate academic tradition to the problems of each moment: Academic texts do cover many problems and details, even before ethics or legislation. But academic texts also recommend, in many of their conclusions, a greater monitoring by social networks, that, under the guise of promoting dialogue, sometimes allow hateful publications that no one denounces and that should not exist.

The second objective of the work was to study the emergence of possible cases of Russophobia, in a mediatized form, through the news of Spanish media and the comments they generated on their Facebook and Instagram sites, thanks to the digital analysis platform Fanpage Karma. The results have been offered in two tables (Tables 1 and 2), one on "media" and the other on "news," in Spain and Spanish, published between January 1, 2022, and October 20, 2022. The resulting posts have been very similar and it is striking that for such a long period, the number of posts on Russophobia did not reach a hundred units. Accordingly, and considering the number of media analyzed, the media coverage of Russophobia is scarce, with an average of 1 news item per media, and with 2 news items in very few cases. One might think that this coverage does not help to raise awareness of the problem, thinking quantitatively, in terms of the number of news items. However, given the public's trust in the regional media, this idea would require another full in-depth study just to address this issue. The reason for the potential value of such a study is the ample existence of news and testimonies in Spanish regional media. According to Instituto Nacional de Estadística's (2022) official data, the Russian population in Spain is mostly divided between Catalonia, Valencia, and Andalusia, and numerous media from these communities do appear in the two tables, showing a greater commitment than the national media.

Analyzing the posts in-depth, it is also striking that in such a long period, only six hashtags are used. This circumstance leads us to conclude that the contents of the posts are very similar, in their language, to the news or article they refer to. Only in exceptional cases does the post innovate compared to the informative content that it intends to share and that has been previously published in a newspaper, television channel, or magazine. This being so, and thinking about Facebook's audience, it can be guessed that the media targets an audience of adult generations (millennials, generation X, and boomers). The centennial and alpha generations, as digital natives, consume and write publications with more hashtags and emojis, and these barely have a place in the Facebook posts detected and analyzed. Thus, these posts are designed for young adults and adults, and the language is adapted to their uses and customs. This fact is backed by the unique appearance of a single post on Russophobia on Instagram (from the newspaper *La Razón*), while all the others are from Facebook.

As for limitations and prospects in this study, there are numerous possibilities that this work cannot cover because it is framed within specific spatial and temporal guidelines. The first limitation comes from the Fanpage Karma tool, which only allows the analysis of the last year at the time of access. It would therefore be interesting to compare this analysis with another study from years before 2022, to detect whether the problem of Russophobia already existed and, if it did, it received media coverage at the time. Another limitation is that Fanpage Karma only offers its free Discovery tool for analyzing Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Only with a professional account, with a high paid fee, can one access the analysis of more social networks, including TikTok. However, this analysis of more social media is only offered on the profiles of the account holder or owner of that social media, while Discovery allows for the analysis of accounts that are not owned by the searcher, i.e., public accounts, as also discussed in the methodological framework. This limitation could lead to other prospective research, comparing the results of this work with other research that would also analyze YouTube and TikTok. However, as these social networks more typically target alpha and centennial audiences, it can be argued that their sample would still be much smaller.

Another limitation refers to the reality of Russophobia in Spain. This article has dealt with how Russophobia appears in the Spanish media, but it would be very interesting to know whether this Russophobia does exist and what crime rates are involved.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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