

HOW PUBLICATION TYPE, EXPERIENCE, AND OWNERSHIP
AFFECT SELF-CENSORSHIP AMONG MOSCOW NEWSPAPER JOURNALISTS

by

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This thesis examines how social and economic factors shape the behavior of Russian journalists. Although the state does not practice legal censorship today, Western experts compare Russian media with the Soviet period, and Russia is commonly ranked in the bottom 10% of all countries in terms of press freedom. While scholars identify free press as a necessary condition for a democratic society, Russian media are influenced by flak directed at editors and reporters, which results in self-censorship. The central question is: What is the relationship between the ownership structure of the media, a reporter's experience, and the occurrence of self-censorship?

A random sample of 40 journalists was drawn from ten prominent national newspapers. Interviews focused on instances when reporters had been asked to remove facts critical of the government. The data show that self-censorship is significant in Russian journalism; it comes both from the editors and from the journalists themselves.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Post-Soviet Russia has often presented a puzzle to Western analysts and their theories of social transformation. At the time of the Soviet collapse, it was widely held that incipient elections would lead to the construction of a democratic state and that the elimination of state ownership and creation of free prices would lead to the development of capitalism.¹ These predictions proved at best only partially correct, and substantial theorizing has attempted to explain what happened instead and why.

An equally puzzling element of the transformation has been the legal abolition of state censorship in 1991. Newspapers are now in the hands of private owners and legal censorship has been outlawed, yet it is routine for analysts to describe press freedoms as under the direct control of the state apparatus in a way that is detrimental to free speech. In 2009 “Reporters Without Borders” ranked Russia 153rd out of 175 countries in their “Index on Censorship,” after Venezuela, Afghanistan and Iraq.²

This thesis aims to empirically measure censorship and self-censorship among print journalists in contemporary Russia in an effort to understand the current state of

¹ Anders Åslund, *Building capitalism: the transformation of the former Soviet bloc* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Daniel Treisman, *After the deluge: regional crises and political consolidation in Russia* (Ann Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Adam Przeworski, *Sustainable democracy* (Cambridge, [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

² Reporters Without Borders, “Obama effect in US, while Europe continues to recede Israel in free fall, Iran at gates of infernal trio,” *Press Freedom Index 2009*, <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2009,1001.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

affairs and how the press might be controlled in the absence of formal state governance. I also have a personal motivation for choosing this particular topic. For eight years I worked as a journalist in Russia, first for the weekly magazine *Ogonek*, then for Esquire (Russian edition), a monthly publication. My articles focused primarily on social and socio-political issues. Although I do not agree with the assumptions of many of my Western colleagues that being a journalist in Russia is exceptionally dangerous, I did feel certain limitations in the choice of topics that I could cover. The question of what was allowed and what was not allowed to write about was always there, but the mechanism of content regulation worked on a much subtler level than is often portrayed by Western journalists and human rights activists. The claim that freedom of speech does not exist in Russia undermines the efforts of thousands of journalists who criticize the Russian government on a daily basis. However, it cannot be said that the level of freedom in the printed press is equal to that in the West, or even that what constitutes as an understanding of freedom of the press is the same in Russia as it is in the West.

The central research question is: What is the relationship between, on the one hand, ownership, editorial control and governmental flak, and, on the other, self-censorship on the part of Russian journalists? Are journalists obeying “the rules of the game” and acting on informal norms and their interpretation of the political atmosphere, or do owners and their editorial staff directly limit journalist writings on politics?

Research questions

While pursuing the goal of measuring and identifying the significance of editorial and self-censorship in the contemporary Russian printed media, this thesis examines a number of questions:

1) What is the extent of self-censorship in the contemporary Russian printed press? That is, how often do journalists from the ten most popular Moscow-based newspapers report self-censorship?

2). What factors shape the phenomenon of self-censorship among Russian journalists?

3). Are journalists who started their careers during the Soviet period more likely to practice self-censorship than later generations?

4). To what extent does censorship originate from the editors of the newspapers and how significant is the extent of self-censorship that the journalists practice on their own initiative?

5). Are articles that are deemed too critical of the state published elsewhere, such as in online publications?

Before answering these questions in Chapter V, I examine the current state of the media laws in Russia and look back at the history of the printed media starting with the early nineties, particularly 1991, when censorship in Russia was officially outlawed.

Literature review

Censorship and freedom of speech in Russia have been widely debated in the fields of journalism, public policy, history, in politics, as well as within the rubric of civil society.³ However, previous research – both Russian and Western – have not adequately explored the problem of self-censorship. The relative brevity of the post-Soviet period, combined with the Russian media’s unstable and rapidly changing state, partly explains this lack of attention. At the same time, it is common for both Western and Russian analysts to refer to the Russian media as censored and to compare it to the media of the Soviet period.

Western analysis of the Russian press frequently refers to the *Four Theories of the Press*,⁴ which classified the world media into four types: “authoritarian,” “libertarian,” “social responsibility” and “Soviet-totalitarian,”⁵ and subsequently turned into a very popular theory.⁶ The authors of the book offer a geo-political view of the world’s media

³ For the thorough analyses of the contemporary Russian press structure, see Alex Lupis, “Increasing Press Repression in Russia.” *Nieman Reports* 59, no. 22 (2005); Kaarle Nordenstreng, Elena Vartanova, and Iassen N. Zassurskii, eds. *Russian media challenge* (Helsinki: Aleksanteri Institute. Kikumora publications, 2001); Birgit Beumers, Stephen C. Hutchings, and Natalia Ryleva, eds. *The post-Soviet Russian media: conflicting signals* (London: Routledge, 2009); H. De Smaele, “Limited Access to Information as a Means of Censorship in Post-Communist Russia.” *Javnost – The Public* 11, no. 2 (2004); David Dudge, *Silenced: International Journalists Expose Media Censorship* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2005); V.R. Firsov, *Tsenzura v Rossii: Istorii i Sovremennost’: sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Sankt-Peterburg: Rossiiskaia natsionalnaia biblioteka, 2001).

⁴ Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press: the Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*.

⁵ Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press: the Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*, 2.

⁶ Myung-Jin Park, and James Curran, eds., *De-Westernizing media studies* (London: Routledge, 2000), 3.

as divided into three camps: the “free world of the liberal democracy”⁷ (America, Great Britain, European countries), the Soviet-totalitarian sphere (USSR) and the third world, or “authoritarian societies”⁸ (Fascist Germany, some Latin American countries, etc.) Although the USSR has ceased to exist, the definitions established by the *Four Theories* are still being referred to in journalistic research. However, in recent years several scholars such as James Curran, Myung-Jin Park,⁹ John C. Nerone, and others¹⁰ have questioned the validity of such definitions.

It is common for the Western press to publish articles that highlight the atrocities committed by the Russian government in an effort to control the press. For example, *The New York Times* frequently writes about the dangers of working in Russia as a journalist, the vindictiveness of Putin’s administration¹¹ and the horrors of the Russian censorship,¹²

⁷ Myung-Jin Park, and James Curran, eds., *De-Westernizing media studies*, 4.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.; Myung-Jin Park, and James Curran, eds., *De-Westernizing media studies*.

¹⁰ John C. Nerone, ed., *Last rights: revisiting four theories of the press. The history of communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

¹¹ Clifford J. Levy, “Putin’s Iron Grip on Russia Suffocates Opponents,” *The New York Times*, February 24, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/24/world/europe/24putin.html> (accessed April 29, 2010).

¹² David Carr, “A Most Dangerous Profession in Russia,” *The New York Times Media Decoder Blog*, entry posted on September 15, 2009, <http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/a-most-dangerous-profession-in-russia/?scp=1&sq=Russia%20press%20censorship&st=cse> (accessed April 29, 2010).

comparing its intensity to the one in Communist China,¹³ and claims Russia to be “the third most dangerous country for the press, after Iraq and Algeria.”¹⁴

Not only newspaper articles contribute to the creation of a neo-Soviet image of the contemporary Russian media. Numerous reports published in specialized journals also support this idea. Alex Lupis in his article “Increasing Press Repression in Russia” writes about the “Kremlin’s growing authoritarianism”¹⁵ and “press repression”¹⁶ that provokes the dismissal as well as murder of journalists.¹⁷ H. De Smaeli in “Limited Access to Information as a Means of Censorship in Post-Communist Russia” states that the contemporary Russian press is “very much like Soviet Press”¹⁸ and cites a report from Freedom House,¹⁹ in which the status of Russian mass media was lowered from “partly

¹³ David W. Dunlap and James Estrin, “Press control — censorship — is something that happens in Communist China, in Russia,” *The New York Times Blog* by David W. Dunlap and James Estrin, posted on September 23, 2009, <http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/23/archive-5/?scp=2&sq=Russia%20press%20censorship&st=cse> (accessed April 29, 2010); Clifford J. Levy, “Russia’s Leaders See China as a Template for Ruling,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/18/world/europe/18russia.html?scp=20&sq=Russia%20freedom%20of%20speech&st=cse> (accessed April 29, 2010).

¹⁴ Clifford J. Levy, “Press Group Seeks Inquiry Into Killings in Russia,” *The New York Times*, September 16, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/16/world/europe/16russia.html?scp=42&sq=censorship%20Russia&st=cse> (accessed April 29, 2010).

¹⁵ Alex Lupis, “Increasing Press Repression in Russia.” *Nieman Reports* 59, no. 22 (2005): 118.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 118-120.

¹⁸ H. De Smaele, “Limited Access to Information as a Means of Censorship in Post-Communist Russia,” *Javnost – The Public* 11, no. 2 (2004): 66.

¹⁹ Freedom House is an international non-governmental organization based in the United States that conducts research and advocacy on conceptions of human rights and political freedom. For more information about Freedom House, see <http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=265#3> (accessed May 2, 2010).

free” in 2002 to “not free” in 2003.²⁰ Lucas Edwards in his article “The Big Squeeze”²¹ writes that Putin’s regime “has destroyed, castrated or sidelined all the institutions that might have been a check on its greed and ruthlessness: the courts, the civil service, civil society, political parties, the legislature, local government and the institutions of the outside world.”²² He continues, “Putin and his ex-KGB friends have systematically closed down the independent media that matters – national television – and bullied and browbeaten the rest.”²³

On the other hand, there are authors who question the conventional Western approach towards Russian media. Thus, in the books *Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*,²⁴ *Vladimir Putin and the New World Order: Looking East, Looking West?*²⁵ and *Putin: Russia’s Choice*,²⁶ the authors, speaking of the press, state that there are still some Russian outlets that are independent from the government. At the same time they acknowledge that Russian media remains “semi-muzzled,”²⁷ with Putin controlling most of it. They claim that, as opposed to Gorbachev’s *glasnost*, Putin’s

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Edward Lucas, “The Big Squeeze,” *Index on Censorship* 37, no 1 (2008): 26-34.

²² Ibid., 26.

²³ Ibid., 27.

²⁴ Dale R. Herspring, *Putin's Russia: past imperfect, future uncertain* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

²⁵ J. L. Black, *Vladimir Putin and the new world order: looking east, looking west?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield 2004).

²⁶ Richard Sakwa, *Putin: Russia's choice* (London: Routledge, 2004).

²⁷ J. L. Black, *Vladimir Putin and the new world order: looking east, looking west?*, 346.

Russia exists in a state of *neglasnost*'.²⁸ The authors give only a partial explanation for how exactly the independent media outlets function within this system.

Some authors, such as Peter Baker and Susan Glasser in *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution*,²⁹ while analyzing contemporary Russian media, prefer to discuss only Russian television, which is controlled by the Russian authorities to a greater extent than any other media. They draw their conclusions about the freedom of the Russian press using data regarding only one media, which happens to be the most rigorously censored.

Russian publications that reach a wide audience in the West are, as a rule, ones that are written by oppositional writers and journalists. Although they contain factual information about today's Russia, they are frequently based on the personal experiences of the writers, such as Paniushkin,³⁰ Politkovskaia³¹, Pozner,³² Tregubova,³³ Kolesnikov,³⁴ who are famous journalists with unique backgrounds that differ from those of the majority of everyday Russian journalists. These sources do not enable us to

²⁸ Ibid., 106.

²⁹ Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *Kremlin rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the end of revolution* (New York: Scribner, 2005).

³⁰ V. A. Paniushkin, *Mikhail Khodorkovskii: Uznik tishiny: Istoriia pro to, kak cheloveku v Rossii stat' svobodnym i chto emu za eto budet* (Moskva: ZAO Izdatelskii dom "Sekret firmy," 2006).

³¹ Anna Politkovskaia and A. L. Tait, *A Russian diary: a journalist's final account of life, corruption, and death in Putin's Russia* (New York: Random House, 2007).

³² Vladimir Pozner, *Parting with illusions* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990).

³³ Elena V. Tregubova, *Baiki kremlevskogo diggera* (Moskva: Ad Marginem, 2003).

³⁴ Andrei Kolesnikov, "Freedom of expression: for what? It's written in to the Russian constitution but no one takes it for real," *Index on Censorship* 32 (2003): 21-22.

evaluate the overall condition of the Russian press or to understand the significance of self-censorship among journalists. While mentioning the existence of self-censorship, and the fears that exist among Russian journalists, they do not attempt to measure this phenomenon or to explain how it functions on a daily basis. They do not explain how self-censorship is reflected in the texts of everyday Russian journalists. Various questions arise: Do all journalists who write about politics receive death threats? Are they unable to write anything without consulting the higher authorities? Are they all afraid of any critical comments about the government, or is criticism allowed? I will address these questions later in my analysis in the survey results.

In recent years, there have been several studies that provide a more complete and varied picture of the contemporary Russian press. For example, *The Post-War Russian Media: Conflicting Signals*³⁵ is a collection of essays dedicated to the post-Soviet press, television, and radio. The fragmentary structure of the book is explained by the fact that the Russian media itself can be better understood through an interdisciplinary approach; utilizing sociological, political, literary, and cultural-anthropological methodologies. Instead of claiming that Russian media is undemocratic, they answer the question: Why does the Russian media not fit into a Western concept of democracy? One of the contributing authors, Samuel A. Green, in his essay “Shifting media and the failure of

³⁵ Birgit Beumers, Stephen C. Hutchings, and Natalia Ryleva, eds. *The post-Soviet Russian media: conflicting signals*.

political communication in Russia,”³⁶ argues that one of the key puzzles in contemporary Russia is “the inability of the civil society to mobilize around (...) the massive common grievances.”³⁷ He states that the Post-Soviet media, although having enough freedom of expression, failed to play “the aggregating and galvanizing role described by Hume and de Toqueville,”³⁸ and to be capable of dropping “the same thought into a thousand minds at the same moment.”³⁹ Green sees the inability to communicate with the reader, not the governmental restrictions, as the most important problem of the Russian press.

In *De-Westernizing Media Studies*⁴⁰ the authors look at conventional Western theories of the press and argue that they were initially based on concepts that negated the significance of national cultures, history and the pluralistic character of the media system. The authors claim that, although free media exists in Russia, it faces certain limitations, such as the lack of “accumulated experience of objective or independent journalism,”⁴¹ mistrust of the audience, and “underdeveloped professionalism rather than dictatorial law.”⁴²

³⁶ Samuel A. Green, “Shifting media and the failure of political communication in Russia,” in *The post-Soviet Russian media: conflicting signals*, edited by Birgit Beumers, Stephen C. Hutchings, and Natalia Rulyova (London: Routledge, 2009), 56-70.

³⁷ Ibid., 56.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Park, Myung-Jin, and James Curran. *De-Westernizing media studies*. London: Routledge.

⁴¹ Ibid., 91.

⁴² Ibid., 91-92.

Andrei Rikhter, the director and founder of the Moscow Media Law and Policy Institute, and Professor at the School of Journalism at the Moscow State University, in his article “Post-Soviet Perspective on Censorship and Freedom of the Media”⁴³ sums up various types of “soft censorship” in Russia. In his work he refers to self-censorship as one of the most important factors in today’s media development. Various Russian journalists, media analysts and human rights activists also discuss self-censorship. Among them are Oleg Panfilov, the head of the Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations,⁴⁴ Andrei Piontkovkii, journalist and politician,⁴⁵ and Sergei Parkhomenko, journalist and editor.⁴⁶ These discussions, however, do not provide us with any evidence of self-censorship or any tool to measure it.

The primary sources referred to in this research can be divided into several categories.

First of all, I use Russian newspapers as sources of the articles that might be affected by self-censorship. The choice of the outlets was based on the rating of the printed press made by Ex Libris in the end of 2009 (this rating is discussed in detail in the methodology section below).

⁴³ Andrei Rikhter, "Post-Soviet Perspective On Censorship and Freedom of the Media," *International Communication Gazette* 70, no. 5 (2008): 307-324.

⁴⁴ Bishkek Press Club, “Otkrytaia Lektsiia Olega Panfilova: Tsenzura i Samotsenzura v Sovremennoi Zhurnalistike,” *BPC Events*, January 6, 2009, <http://www.bpc.kg/events/261> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁴⁵ Andrei Piontkovskii, “Samaya effektivnaia forma tsenzury – samotsenzura,” *Index. Dosie Na Tsenzury*, 20 (2004), <http://www.index.org.ru/journal/20/piontk20.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁴⁶ Radio France Internationale, “Sergei Parkhomenko: V Rossii est’ samotsenzura – ochen’ razvitaia, ochen’ izoshchrennaia, ochen’ glubokaia: ludi sami znaiut, chego im nelzia,” *RFI in Russian*, August 24, 2008, http://www.rfi.fr/acturu/articles/104/article_1121.asp (accessed May 2, 2010).

Secondly, I refer to the laws and regulations on the freedom of the press that were issued in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia, such as the law “On the Counteraction against Terrorism,” “On the Fight against Terrorism,” “On the Application of the Changes into Particular Legislative Actions of the Russian Federation in the Context of the Improvement of the Governmental Administration in the Area of the Counteraction against Terrorism,” Russian Criminal Code, Constitution of the Russian Federation (adopted at National Voting on December 12, 1993), and the Mass Media Law of the Russian Federation (1991).⁴⁷

Thirdly, I refer to the data on censorship and freedom of the press provided by international press organizations such as Reporters Without Borders, World Press Freedom Committee and Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR).

Finally, I conduct a telephone survey of a sample of Moscow newspaper journalists. This survey is focused on questions of regulation within the workplace, as well as restrictions that the journalists impose upon themselves while reporting and writing.

Methodology

The frequency of self-censorship and hypotheses about its causes are examined using a random sample of Moscow-based journalists interviewed by telephone. It is possible that my experience working as a journalist for eight years in Kazan and in

⁴⁷ Russian Federation, Law of the Russian Federation: «On the Mass Media», No 2124-1, December 27, 1991, Chapter 3, http://www.medialaw.ru/e_pages/laws/russian/massmedia_eng/massmedia_eng.html (accessed May 2, 2010).

Moscow was an asset to me during the survey process; the respondents were perhaps more receptive to answering potentially sensitive questions regarding censorship when being questioned by a colleague, rather than by someone who is not personally familiar with the unique characteristics of journalism in Russia.

The selection of the newspapers for the survey was based upon the rating of the Russian socio-political daily and weekly newspapers for the fourth quarter of 2009 created by the Russian agency of media research Ex Libris.⁴⁸

Ex Libris is a member of the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC). They provide a popularity rating that is independent from expert opinions or organizations and is based upon publicly available data. The rating covers five different categories of publications: business newspapers, socio-political newspapers, socio-political magazines, business magazines and popular “yellow” newspapers (tabloids). In this research I focus exclusively on socio-political newspapers, considering that that the outlets in this group are the ones most likely to publish articles that are related to Russian politics on a daily and weekly basis. Therefore, the journalists who are working in those outlets; specifically in the political and social news’ departments, are the ones most likely to be experiencing self-censorship.

The rating is based on the following data: 1). The size of the audience (the rating of the popularity among readers); 2). The price of the advertisement (the rating of the popularity among advertisers); 3). The frequency of quotation level in other publications

⁴⁸ Ex Libris, “Title Popularity Rating – IV Kvartal 2009,” Ex Libris TPR, <http://www.exlibris.ru/ru/stats/tpr.html?date=100101.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

or media outlets (the rating of the popularity among external journalists); 4). The frequency of quotation in the publications in social media, such as blogs, internet-sources, etc. (the rating of the popularity and significance in the socially active circles of society). The size of the audience is defined by the average issue readership (AIR), the data is based on the information provided by TNS Gallup and Comcon.⁴⁹

Terminology

In this work I refer to the definition of self-censorship given by Arlen Blium as “self-limitation in the process of the creation of the text, when the author bases his decisions on certain taboos that are imposed by the government, society, the peculiarities of the readership or his personal aesthetic tastes or moral principles.”⁵⁰ I narrow my empirical focus to self-censorship aimed at avoiding government criticism. Therefore, while discussing aspects of self-censorship, I refer to “political self-censorship,” not taking into account any other types of censorship, such as attempts by businessmen to limit the release of potentially detrimental information, or the censoring of publications in order to avoid inciting ethnic tension or conflict.

I use the term “editorial censorship” to define the limitations imposed upon the journalist by the editor of the department or the editor of the magazine, when the editor

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Arlen V. Blium, *Sovetskaia tsenzura v epokhu total'nogo terrora, 1929-1953* (S.-Peterburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000): 14.

either eliminates phrases or words that are critical of the government, or prevents the entire article from being published because of its critical content.

It is quite common for authors who write about censorship in Soviet Russia to refer to the problem of self-censorship.⁵¹ Indeed, while *Glavlit* and other departments⁵² were created for imposing official state censorship upon Soviet writers and journalists, this was not the only form of censorship that existed at the time. Self-censorship played a big role in Soviet journalism and literature. As Dewhirst puts it, there did not necessarily need to be “an official censorship body for regular and rigorous censorship to exist.”⁵³

Anatolii Kuznetsov, a prominent Soviet and Russian writer, described the self-censorship that existed in the Soviet period as “an inner censor,” without which writing “required a tremendous effort.”⁵⁴ He stated that “Everything, without exception, that was

⁵¹ For more information about self-censorship in Soviet Russia, see A.V. Blium, *Sovetskaia tsenzura v epokhu total'nogo terrora, 1929-1953*; Martin Dewhirst and Robert Farrell, *The Soviet censorship* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1973); G. V. Zhirkov, *Istoriia tsenzury v Rossii XIX-XX vv.: uchebnoe posobie dlia studentov vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii* (Moskva: Aspekt Press, 2001).

⁵² Censorship in Soviet Russia was legally enforced by Glavlit, or the Main Administration for Safeguarding State Secrets, formed in 1922. This organ was in charge of safeguarding state secrets. Besides Glavlit, Goskomizdat censored the publication of the books; Goskino was in charge of the cinema; Gosteleradio of radio and television broadcasting. Many institutions had the First Departments which were responsible for controlling the informational flow. Censorship of the media was also guaranteed by the fact that the state owned all publishing houses, TV stations and other production facilities, so all the journalists were employees of the state. For more information about Soviet censorship, see Goriaeva, *Politicheskaia tsenzura v SSSR: 1917-1991*, 146-147; N.Korenev, “Oratoriia Laboratorii 17-a,” *Liki Rossii* [2004]. http://www.liki-rossii.ru/LETI/17A/Ch1_Secret%282%29.htm (accessed April 24, 2010); P. Steiner “Introduction: On Samizdat, Tamizdat, Magnitizdat, and Other Strange Words That Are Difficult to Pronounce”. *Poetics Today* 29, no. 4 (2008): 614.

⁵³ Martin Dewhirst, “Censorship in Russia, 1991 and 2001,” *Journal of Communist Studies & Transition Politics* 18, no. 1 (2002): 22.

⁵⁴ Martin Dewhirst and Robert Farrell, *The Soviet censorship*, 26.

published in the Soviet Union bears the stigma of two censors: first the internal self-censor and then the external official censor.”⁵⁵

When official censorship ceased to exist, it might be expected that self-censorship would disappear as well. Yet within Russia self-censorship continued and became one of the major problems in post-Soviet journalism. Moscow-based journalist and publisher, Sergei Parkhomenko, in an interview with Radio France claimed that the “Russian people... know themselves, what they are allowed and what they are not allowed to do.”⁵⁶

Parkhomenko states:

...The problem of Russian society today, in particular for those who are rich, educated, advanced, and to a certain degree intelligent and creative, is that the people are scared. They are not scared to be punished, they are just scared, so to say, for themselves... For instance, I am sure that there is no censorship in Russia. There is self-censorship in Russia – very well-developed, very sophisticated, very deep: people know themselves, what is not allowed. They remember that themselves. They... can say to their colleague, ‘Hey, what are you writing? This is not allowed! You’ll be punished!’ And he believes that. You can ask various bosses, why so- and so- is not allowed to be on the TV, why this and that topics are not being discussed, why this and that text is not being published. And these bosses will honestly reply, ‘And why is it my fault? I have not given any commands, I have not asked, I have not banned anything.’ They do it themselves. People understand on their own, what is “good” and what is “bad.”⁵⁷

A famous journalist and human rights activist Oleg Panfilov, during his press conference in Bishkek Press club also discussed the problem of self-censorship in today’s press in

⁵⁵ Ibid., 27.

⁵⁶ Radio France Internationale, “Sergei Parkhomenko: V Rossii est’ samotsenzura – ochen’ razvitaia, ochen’ izoshchrennaia, ochen’ glubokaia: liudi sami znaiut, chego im nel’zia,” RFI in Russian, August 24, 2008, http://www.rfi.fr/acturu/articles/104/article_1121.asp (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

the post-Soviet space. In emphasizing the importance of creating a civil society in which the freedom of the speech without self-censorship is the norm, he stated that “the quality of journalism and the questions of censorship depend not as much on the journalists, but on the society,”⁵⁸ and that it is important to create. Russian political journalist Andrei Piontkovskii in his interview for the magazine *Indeks* in 2004 stated that “we cannot speak about a wonderful independent press that was suppressed by Putin and FSB. It has been a much more complicated process.”⁵⁹ He argued that “we are all educated people... and we all understand what will lead to our own economic success and what will lead to the opposite results... today, with a formal ban on censorship, flourishes the most effective form of censorship – self-censorship.”⁶⁰

As we can see, there are many discussions about the nature of self-censorship in Russia, especially in the circles of the intellectuals and media workers, but there have been no attempts to measure to what degree it is present in the Russian press. Another thing that is not quite clear is to what extent the journalists censor themselves, and what role the editor plays in this process. Journalists and media analysts, discussing censorship and self-censorship, frequently use these terms as interchangeable. However, these terms are quite different: while “censorship” requires the existence of a censor and a specialized censoring apparatus, “self-censorship” does not. I use the terms “self-censorship” and

⁵⁸ Institute for War and Peace Reporting. «The biggest problem of the Kyrgyz journalism is its politicization,” November 5, 2009, <http://www.iwpr.net/ru/report-news/«самая-большая-беда-кыргызстанской-журналистики---в-ее-политизированности»-0>

⁵⁹ Andrei Piontkovskii, “Samaia effektivnaia forma tsenzury – samotsenzura,” *Index. Dos'e Na Tsenzuru*, 20 (2004), <http://www.index.org.ru/journal/20/piontk20.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

“editorial censorship” to distinguish between the two different types of non-governmental (not imposed directly by the government or governmental institutions) censorship. For the sake of convenience I use the verb “to censor” while referring to the general act of eliminating any text critical of the government from the article, either by the editor or by the journalist.

Summary

By interviewing contemporary Russian journalists and analyzing their answers and comments to the questions posed to them regarding a general overview of the Russian press, this thesis seeks to answer the question: To what extent does self-censorship exist in the Russian printed media? To achieve the goal of answering this research question, the following chapters examine various aspects of censorship and self-censorship in Russian press, provide a general analysis of the media in Russia, and analyze extensive survey data.

Chapter II – Russian media after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This chapter examines the evolution of the Russian press since 1991, the year when the Soviet Union collapsed and censorship was proclaimed illegal. I look at a number of events, such as the War in Chechnya and terrorist acts in Russia, and analyze how they affected freedom of press in Russia, legally and officially (introduction of new laws restricting freedom of speech) as well as unofficially. This chapter helps us to understand how official governmental decisions about press regulations, even those that were never implemented, affected the general mood of society and journalists, and thus creating self-censorship.

Chapter III – Media ownership in Russia. Media ownership in Russia has gone through several stages in the past 50 years. First it was owned by the government of the Soviet Union, then belonged to a handful of the oligarchs during the 90s, and finally it was consolidated under governmental ownership once again after Vladimir Putin became president of Russia in 2000. In this chapter I give an overview of the ownership of Russian media, and provide an analysis of the ownership of the ten most popular Russian newspapers (according to data collected and analyzed by the media agency Ex Libris in the last quarter of 2009).

Chapter IV – Hypotheses. In this chapter I propose five hypotheses about self-censorship in the contemporary Russian printed press, which will subsequently be tested in the survey.

Chapter V – Data Analysis. This chapter examines the interrelationship of the different types of censorship and what social conditions (such as the type of newspaper, particular generation of journalist, or ownership structure) make self-censorship more likely. The survey results reflect journalists' views of state control, repression and freedom within their profession.

Chapter VI – Conclusions. This chapter draws together the various findings and theories developed in the preceding chapters which, taken as a whole, answer the primary research question. In the conclusion I also identify other pertinent research questions about censorship in Russia, and what direction future investigation might take.

CHAPTER II

RUSSIAN MEDIA AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

According to the Media Law of the Russian Federation (1991),⁶¹ and the constitution of the Russian Federation (adopted at *Vsenarodnoe Golosovanie* [National Voting] on December 12, 1993), censorship in Russia is illegal⁶².

A series of events significantly affected press freedom after 1991: war in Chechnya, and a series of domestic terrorist attacks. As a consequence of these events, the Russian government issued a number of laws and regulations restricting press freedom. These regulations, as we will see, were not followed uniformly throughout Russia and, in fact, were applied selectively. Therefore, the effect of these regulations upon legal restrictions of press freedoms was not altogether significant. The significance of these regulations can be found in the affect they had on the general level of self-censorship among Russian journalists, contributing to the creation of unofficial lists of “banned” topics. Understanding the nature of these official restrictions will help us see what factors might have been essential in the process of the journalistic self-regulation,

⁶¹ Russian Federation, Law of the Russian Federation: «On the Mass Media», No 2124-1, December 27, 1991, Chapter 3, http://www.medialaw.ru/e_pages/laws/russian/massmedia_eng/massmedia_eng.html (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁶² Russian Federation, Constitution of the Russian Federation, December, 12, 1993, Chapter 2, article 29, <http://www.constitution.ru> (accessed May 2, 2010).

and justify the selection of the topics that are considered to be an absolute taboo among the journalists (we will discuss this in detail in Chapter V).

The First War in Chechnya started in 1994 and ended in 1996. As a result, the Russian army was defeated, and Chechnya gained independence and the self-appointed status of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeriia.⁶³ Russia sought to avenge itself for its defeat in the first Chechen engagement and renewed hostilities in 1999. This Second Chechen War officially ended ten years later, in April 2009⁶⁴. The terrorist attacks in Russia, which Russian officials attributed to the Chechen separatists, started in the late 90s and went through the 2000s. Therefore, the second Chechen war was officially named “operation to suppress terrorism.”⁶⁵ It created the popular assumption that everyone who was fighting on the Chechen side was a terrorist.⁶⁶

The most tragic terrorist acts were widely covered in the press. They are: the explosion in the underground passageway near Pushkin square in 2000 (13 people died); siege on Dubrovka theatre (known as Nord-Ost by the name of the musical that was performed at the time), when nearly 175 people died, and the school siege in Beslan,

⁶³ GlobalSecurity.org, “First Chechnya War 1994-1996,” <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/chechnya1.htm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁶⁴ Aleksandr Ivanov, “The Counter-Terrorist Operation Regime Belongs to History,” *RIA-Novosti*, April 16, 2009, http://rian.ru/defense_safety/20090416/168286167.html (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁶⁵ Emil Pain, and Robert R. Love, “Regional Studies - The Second Chechen War: The Information Component,” *Military Review* 80, no 4 (2000): 59.

⁶⁶ Interestingly, a very similar ideology was held in the U.S., when the war in Iraq was called “operation Iraqi freedom” and the war captives were given the status of the “unlawful combatants” and therefore were not considered to be defended by the Genève convention on the war prisoners. For more information, see Knut Dormann, “The Legal Situation of “Unlawful – Unprivileged Combatants,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 849 (2003): 45-47.

Northern Ossetia (when approximately 350 people, a significant number of children among them, were killed).

Changes in public attitude towards Chechnya occurred throughout both wars. When the first war in Chechnya began in the early 90's, Russia was still in a state of a relative chaos after the rapid change of the governmental regime from Soviet totalitarianism to nascent democracy.⁶⁷ Therefore, there were no strict rules regarding the covering of the war by the press, and journalists had wide access to the battlefields and war zones.⁶⁸ Subsequently, at the end of the first war the government literally accused the press of engendering defeat. When the second war began, the administration significantly limited access to information about the war.⁶⁹

Public opinion underwent many changes from the early 90's to the late 2000's. Polls show that in the beginning of the first war most Russian citizens were against the war in Chechnya and were in favor of Chechen independence. In September 1994 (1602 people polled), when war was yet to be declared but the possibility of the commencement of hostilities was clear, 42% of respondents agreed that "Russia should stay away from the conflict in Chechnya."⁷⁰ In December of the same year, 36% of the respondents (1600 people polled) to the question "What actions should Russia conduct towards Chechnya?"

⁶⁷ Kerstin Olofsson, "The Cultural Debate on Abolishing Censorship," *Russian Reports* (2000): 31.

⁶⁸ Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, Marina Latysheva and Anna Stavitskaia, "The Year of 1999: The Beginning of the Second Chechen War," *Journalists and Terrorism* (2008): 18.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-19.

⁷⁰ Dukhovnoe Nasledie, "The Reflexions of the First and the Second Chechen Campaigns in the Minds of Our Compatriots," *Nasledie.ru*, http://www.nasledie.ru/politvnt/19_38/article.php?art=62 (accessed May 2, 2010).

replied that there should be a search for a “peaceful resolution to the problem,” 23% of the respondents were in favor of a “withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.” In January 1995, 62% of the respondents (1547 people polled) expressed doubts about the capability of Russian troops to establish peace and order in Chechnya; 42% of the respondents blamed the failure of Russian troops in Chechnya on an unskilled command and operation planning, 77% of the respondents did not support the bombing attack of the capital of Chechnya, Grozny. ⁷¹ The poll that was held in March of the same year showed that 44% of respondents (2000 people polled) did not know the reason for the war in Chechnya, while 22% believed that the reason was “to conceal illegal business.” ⁷² But in 1999 and later the attitude of Russian citizens towards the war was quite different. This can partially be explained by the terrorist acts that were taking place all across Russia and were attributed directly to Chechen separatists. The general perception of Chechens and Chechnya became very negative. More than 60% of those polled agreed that they felt the need for revenge and hatred towards Chechen separatists, many stated that “Chechens get what they deserve.” ⁷³ The public widely supported Putin’s policies and military actions in Chechnya. In November 1999, 61% of those polled agreed with the continuation of military intervention in Chechnya, 55% disagreed with the plan of cessation of hostilities proposed by Grigorii Yavlinskii. ⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

By the end of 2002, 46% of Russian citizens who were asked the question “How do you think the conflict in Chechnya should be resolved?” answered “By continuation of the war.”⁷⁵

One possible reason for the deteriorating of the image of Chechnya and Chechens was the tightening of control over the television in its coverage of the war. The late 90s and early 2000s were marked by an increase of governmental control of the press. The owner of the TV-channel *NTV*, created in 1993 and considered to be the most independent socio-political channel,⁷⁶ was forced to give stocks of the company to the government-owned *Gazprom*.⁷⁷ The director of the company was fired and most of the staff left. It was widely considered to be an act of censorship, where President Putin played a direct role. Before the takeover he had repeatedly expressed his disagreement with the policy of the channel.⁷⁸ The events surrounding *NTV* are considered to be a symbolic landmark that defined the new course of the government. The main

⁷⁵ Mariia Tsvetkova, “Russians Want War in Chechnya Again,” *Gazeta.ru*, October 30, 2002, <http://www.gazeta.ru/2002/10/30/rossianesnov.shtml> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁷⁶ Gene Mater, “Once-independent Russian TV-channel in turmoil again,” *freedomforum.org* (October 15, 2001), <http://www.mediastudies.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=15149> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁷⁷ *Gazprom* is the largest extractor of natural gas in the world and the largest Russian company; after the collapse of the Soviet Union the company was privatized, but the government still holds a controlling stake. For more information about *Gazprom*, see its official site, www.gazprom.com (accessed May 2, 2010). For information about the changes in *NTV* ownership, see CNN, “*NTV*: Timeline of Events,” CNN.com, April 10, 2001, <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/04/09/ntv.timeline/index.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁷⁸ Yevgeniia Al'bats, “Cry for Russia’s Lost Press Liberty,” *The Guardian*, May 11, 2001, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/may/11/russia.comment> (accessed May 2, 2010).

characteristic of this course is an increase of governmental control over television.⁷⁹ A number of TV-companies (*TNT*, *TV6*, *TVS*) became government-owned and changed their tone from oppositional to pro-governmental.⁸⁰ Therefore, the gap between the television and the printed media increased. While the TV was rapidly becoming more and more loyal to the government, printed press retained its right to criticize the state or remain neutral.

There were a number of cases when print journalists were fired after publishing information on the Chechen conflict. Raf Shakirov, the editor in chief of the newspaper *Izvestia*, was dismissed when the newspaper put a big photograph of the victims of Beslan soon after the Beslan siege in 2004.⁸¹ A popular and successful news anchor and editor of the program *Namedni* (*NTV*), Leonid Parfenov, wanted to show in his program an interview with the widow of Yandarbiev, the former president of the self-appointed republic of Ichkeriia, supposedly killed in Qatar by employees of the Russian embassy. Parfenov was not allowed to show this interview, and afterwards gave a detailed interview about it to *Kommersant* newspaper.⁸² Subsequently, he was fired. Although state regulations affected a relatively limited number of journalists, the importance of

⁷⁹ Alex Lupis, "Russia Briefing: Domino Effect," *Committee to Protect Journalists*, April 2004, <http://cpj.org/reports/2001/04/russia-apr01.php> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁸⁰ Viktor Shenderovich "Zdes' bylo NTV, TV6, TVS. Obstoiatelstva Nepreodolimoj Sily," *Tvoi Golos*, June-November 2003, <http://tvoygolos.narod.ru/klio/text1.htm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁸¹ BBC, "Viewpoint: Soviet Grip in Russia," *BBC News – Europe*, November 26, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4043389.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁸² Maria-Luisa Tirmaste, "Pros'ba byla iz razriada tekhn, v kotorykh nel'za otkazat'," *Kommersant*, May 31, 2004, <http://www.Kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=478840> (accessed May 2, 2010).

these events is not to be underestimated. Both Shakirov and Parfenov are very famous personas in journalistic circles, so their dismissal was widely discussed by journalists, who, as a consequence, drew conclusions about “what is allowed” and “what is not allowed,” which could have led to the further increase in self-censorship.

In 2004, the newspaper *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* published an article about the list of words that were supposedly banned by the government on the governmental TV-channel *Rossiia* (Russia). Among these words was “Chechnya.” Stories were to refer to the “Republic of Chechnya” instead (which stresses that Chechnya is not a separate unit but a part of Russia). It was also prescribed to say “*poias shakhida*” (*shakhid*’s belt) instead of just *shakhid*.⁸³ Interestingly enough, in April 2010, not long after the terrorist attack in the Moscow metro, *Sovet Federatsii* (Federation Council) proposed to legally ban the use of the words “*shakhid*” and the “*Jamaat*” in the media in relation to terrorist activity.⁸⁴

The main “antiterrorist” law in Russia is the Federal Law of the Russian Federation N35-FZ issued on March 6, 2006, “On Counteraction against Terrorism.” It replaced the law “On the Fight against Terrorism” of December 17, 2004, which, in its turn, replaced a number of previous laws.⁸⁵

⁸³ Sergei Varshavchik, “Na televidenii zachishchaiut terminologiiu,” *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, August 2, 2004, http://www.ng.ru/politics/2004-08-02/2_tv.html (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁸⁴ Newsru.com, “Sovet Federacii hochet zapretit’ SMI ispolzovat’ slova «shakhid» i «jamaat» po otnosheniiu k terroristam,” April 24, 2010, <http://www.newsru.com/russia/24apr2010/sf.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁸⁵ Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, Marina Latysheva and Anna Stavitskaia, “The Comparative Analysis of the Legislatures,” *Journalists and Terrorism* (2008): 195.

The Center of Journalism in Extreme Situations and human rights activists such as Marina Litvinovich and Lev Ponomarev expressed their suspicions about the way the laws would be used. Their concerns were mainly about the possible abuse of this power and as a consequence an abridgement of the rights of regular citizens who have nothing to do with terrorists⁸⁶. The law “On the Counteraction against Terrorism” widened the definition of the word “terrorism”: “Terrorism shall mean the ideology of violence and the practice of influencing the adoption of a decision by public authorities, local self-government bodies or international organizations connected with frightening the population and (or) other forms of unlawful violent actions.”⁸⁷ Another part of the law that is hostile to the media is the definition of “terrorist activity” in Article 3. It supposes to consider terrorist activity as “informational or other assistance to planning, preparing, or implementing an act of terrorism.” The definition is expanded to include “popularization of terrorist ideas, dissemination of materials or information urging terrorist activities, substantiating or justifying the necessity of the exercise of such activity.”⁸⁸ Considering the fact that the second war in Chechnya was officially defined as an “anti-terrorism operation,” any critique of this “operation” can be seen as justifying the necessity of terrorist activity. Even journalists who inform the population about terrorism acts in detail, including some critical analysis of governmental actions (such as

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Russian Federation, “On the Counteraction Against Terrorism,” Federal Law No. 35 FZ, March 6, 2006, Russian Embassy in Canada (unofficial translation), http://www.rusembcanada.mid.ru/terror_e_03.html (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

criticism of the use of poisonous gas during the *Dubrovka* siege in 2002, when many hostages died because of the effect of the gas and not by the hands of terrorists) might be seen, according to this law, as the “popularization of terrorist ideas.”⁸⁹

In July 6, 2007 a new law “On the Application of the Changes into Particular Legislative Actions of the Russian Federation in the Context of the Improvement of the Governmental Administration in the Area of the Counteraction against Terrorism” was passed.⁹⁰ This law made the punishment for extremist actions more severe and significantly widened the term “extremism.”⁹¹ Furthermore, the national security, defense and law enforcement agencies sanctioned the creation of the so-called *Bastion* qualification course, which is supposed to teach journalists the rules of behavior in a war zone, in the areas of mass rallies, terrorist acts, etc. Even though the course is not obligatory, it has been widely discussed by Russian media that in the future journalists who have not passed the *Bastion* course may not be allowed to cover events in those areas.⁹²

Another governmental step that presented a potential threat to freedom of speech was the special subdivision on the fight against the ideology of terrorism, created by the National Anti-Terrorist Committee. This group is in charge of the control of zones

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, Marina Latysheva and Anna Stavitskaia, “2007: The Law on Terrorism is Getting More Severe, the “Bastion” Course is Introduced, the FSB Forms the Department on the Fight with the Terrorist Ideology, the Innovation – Fight against the Websites,” *Journalists and Terrorism* (2008): 171.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 178.

“potentially dangerous in terms of the spread of terrorist ideology” and of the “anti-propagandistic actions against the ideology of terrorism.”⁹³

All these laws notwithstanding, legal regulations rarely serve in Russia as the basis for media censorship. Russian ombudsman⁹⁴ Vladimir Lukin reported in 2006, that “the constitutional right for speech freedom is basically observed, and there is no institutionalized censorship.”⁹⁵ Mikhail Fedorov, the head of the Russian Union of Journalists, explains that by the “lack of political will.”⁹⁶ He states that the laws are very restrictive, and once applied, could lead to closing up all the free media in the country. However, the Russian government is “probably still indecisive”⁹⁷ regarding the extent which it wants to impose restrictions upon the press. Fedorov explains that there is still no “Federal will”⁹⁸ to oppress the media by implementation of the terrorist laws. Therefore, the significance of the laws analyzed in this chapter lies in their possible contribution to the process of self-censorship, as well as a general “cooling” affect on journalists. After the laws were passed, various analysts commented about their possible

⁹³ Ibid., 180.

⁹⁴ Russian ombudsman position is called Commissioner for Human Rights and is appointed for a certain term by the Parliament; he cannot be dismissed before the end of his term, and is not subordinate to any body of power, including the President or the Government. For more information, see <http://ombudsmanrf.ru/> (in Russian).

⁹⁵ Russian Federation, Russian Ombudsman, Sergei Lukin. *Doklad Upolnomochennogo po pravam cheloveka v Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, 2008, <http://old.ombudsmanrf.ru/doc/ezdoc/08.shtml> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁹⁶ Lubov' Sharii, «Zakon ob ekstremistakh v deistvii: mneniia ekspertov,» August 26, 2006, *Grani.ru*, <http://www.grani.ru/Politics/Russia/m.110506.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

effects. Vladimir Pozner claimed that “the laws are not precise enough”⁹⁹ and can affect multiple targets, causing fear among journalists and triggering an undesirable degree of self-censorship among them. Ilim Karypbekov argued that these actions could be “a threat to the development of steady self-censorship among journalists and the mass-media, becoming a real tool to influence the latter.”¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Russian authorities have recently appealed to journalists asking directly for an increase in self-censorship. Ramil’ Latypov, the director of the Center of Analysis of the Terroristic threats, contended that Russian journalists who are covering terrorism should “increase their self-censorship,” and “remember that their publications can be read by children and pregnant women.”¹⁰¹ The leading expert of the Center, Alexandr Rudakov, suggested that the journalists in contemporary Russia cannot control what they are writing, unlike in Soviet times when they could effectively control the flow of the released information, which, according to Rudakov, was a useful skill.

⁹⁹ “U kazhdogo svoi uroven’ ogranicheniia,” *Vlast’*, November 11, 2001, <http://www.kommersant.ru/docs.rss.aspx?DocsID=350119> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ Ilim Karypbekov, “Terrorism i extremism w SMI kak faktor ugrozy svobody slova w Kirgizstane,” *Journalist News*, June 10, 2008, <http://www.journalist.kg/?pid=173&nid=250> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁰¹ Sofiiia Krapotkina, “Sam sebe Kreml’,” *Kasparov.ru*, April 21, 2010, <http://www.kasparov.ru/material.php?id=4BCEFC90A38A7> (accessed May 2, 2010).

CHAPTER III

MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN RUSSIA (PRINTED PRESS)

This chapter assesses the importance of the ownership of newspapers for censorship and self-censorship.

Among the sources for identifying media ownership are the BBC Monitoring report on the Russian printed press,¹⁰² the Harvard University Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs research (created as part of the “Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project”¹⁰³), and the Open Source Center’s “Media Aid: Source Description of Key Russian Media.”¹⁰⁴ I also use the information that the newspapers provide on their official web pages when available, as well as anonymous sources cited in other newspapers’ publications that cover the changes in media ownership.

Media experts studying the dynamics of media ownership in post-Soviet Russia often divide the 1990s and 2000-present as two distinct periods. The 1990s are characterized by oligarchic ownership of media outlets. The second period is marked by Putin coming to power and gradually consolidating media ownership; taking it from the

¹⁰² BBC, “The Press in Russia,” BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁰³ Belfer Center For Science and International Affairs, “Russian Media Ownership and Influence Event Report,” BCSIA, http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/12757/russian_media_ownership_and_influence.html?breadcrumb=%2Fpublication%2Fby_type%2Fevent_report%3Fpage%3D5 (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁰⁴ Open Source Center, “Russia – Source Descriptors of Key Russian Media,” *Open Source Center Media Aid*, December 6, 2007, www.fas.org/irp/dni/osc/russian-media.pdf (accessed May 2, 2010).

oppositional oligarchs and obliging the pro-governmental corporations to buy them.¹⁰⁵

John Dunn compares the oligarchic ownership of the media in Russia in the 90s to the Italian system of *lottizzazione*, or “division of the spoils,”¹⁰⁶ where there is not absolute, but limited freedom of the press, which is determined by various media outlets’ owners who compete for political power. At the same time, as Dunn argues, no such competition between owners occurred in Putin’s era.

According to Monroe Price and Peter Krug, Russian media ownership has “blurred lines.”¹⁰⁷ That is, although some media outlets are privately owned, many owners are loyal to the administration, or have business interests that are somehow connected with the government. Let us consider the ownership structure of the ten most popular Russian newspapers (as the business agency Ex Libris ranked them in the end of 2009).

Kommersant

Kommersant is considered to be “one of Russia’s leading business broadsheets.”¹⁰⁸ It is a daily newspaper that describes itself as “one of the most

¹⁰⁵ Birgit Beumers, Stephen C. Hutchings, and Natalia Ryleva, eds. *The post-Soviet Russian media: conflicting signals*; Monroe Price and Peter Krug, *Ownership in Russia. Scholarly Commons* (1996), http://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/66/ (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁰⁶ John A. Dunn, “Where Did It All Go Wrong,” in *The post-Soviet Russian media: conflicting signals*, edited by Birgit Beumers, Stephen C. Hutchings, and Natalia Ryleva (London: Routledge, 2009), 42-55.

¹⁰⁷ Monroe Price and Peter Krug, *Ownership in Russia. Scholarly Commons* (1996): 171, http://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/66/ (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁰⁸ BBC, “The Press in Russia,” BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

authoritative and influential publications for Russia's decision-makers"¹⁰⁹ and reports that more than half of its readers are managers or "specialists."¹¹⁰ Officially the newspaper *Kommersant* belongs to ZAO¹¹¹ "Publishing House *Kommersant*." Previously, it was owned by an oligarch Boris Berezovskii (he is now in exile). In August 2006 it was bought by Alisher Usmanov,¹¹² a "steel tycoon who also runs a subsidiary of Gazprom and whose other interests include a major stake in the English football club Arsenal."¹¹³ Usmanov is considered to be "pro-Kremlin and Gazprom-linked."¹¹⁴ When he became the owner of the ZAO publishing house, the editor in chief of *Kommersant*, Vladislav Borodulin, resigned his position. Andrei Vasil'ev, who ran the newspaper from 1999 to 2005, replaced Borodulin as *Kommersant*'s editor, and subsequently made a statement that the newspaper will remain critical of the government, publishing articles that "might not please the owner."¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ In Russian "ZAO" stands for "Zakrytoe Aktsionernoe Obshchestvo," or "closed joined stock company."

¹¹² Marina Rozhkova, Ekaterina Dolgosheeva, and Irina Reznik, "*Kommersant* Usmanov: Biznesmen kupil izdatelskii dom u Badri Patarkatsishvili," *Vedomosti*, August 31, 2006, <http://www.Vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article.shtml?2006/08/31/111885> (accessed May 2, 2010); RBK, "Glava holdinga «Metalloinvest» Alisher Usmanov priobrel «*Kommersant*»," *RBK Daily*, August, 30, 2006, <http://top.rbc.ru/economics/30/08/2006/86806.shtml> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Open Source Center, "Russia – Source Descriptors of Key Russian Media," *Open Source Center Media Aid*, December 6, 2007, www.fas.org/irp/dni/osc/russian-media.pdf (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹¹⁵ Russia Profile, "*Kommersant* Newspaper, Business-Oriented," Russia Profile, Culture Now, February 25, 2009, <http://www.russiaprofile.org/resources/culture/Kommersant> (accessed May 2, 2010).

Argumenty i Fakty (AiF)

AiF was founded in 1978 and “quickly gathered a strong following, with a reported circulation of more than 33 million in 1990.”¹¹⁶ Its readership is smaller now than it used to be, but *AiF* still remains among the most read general interest newspapers, whose content is often characterized as a combination of “political analysis and speculation, patriotic sentiment, high-profile interviews, regional supplements and consumer advice.”¹¹⁷ *AiF* belongs to *ZAO Argumenty i Fakty*, and *Promsviaz’bank*, one of the biggest banks in Russia.¹¹⁸ It describes its readers as “working people, businessmen, intellectuals, politicians and managers”¹¹⁹ and is known for “often taking a nationalist line.”¹²⁰ *AiF*’s official webpage presents the newspaper as the one that is “read by the President Medvedev himself,” and a photograph of Medvedev reading *AiF* with an apparently interested face accompanies this statement.¹²¹

Vedomosti

Vedomosti is a daily business newspaper published in conjunction with the *Wall*

¹¹⁶ BBC, “The Press in Russia,” BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.; Open Source Center, “Russia – Source Descriptors of Key Russian Media,” *Open Source Center Media Aid*, December 6, 2007, www.fas.org/irp/dni/osc/russian-media.pdf (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹¹⁹ BBC, “The Press in Russia,” BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹²⁰ Open Source Center, “Russia – Source Descriptors of Key Russian Media,” *Open Source Center Media Aid*, December 6, 2007, www.fas.org/irp/dni/osc/russian-media.pdf (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹²¹ *Argumenty i Fakty*, “Nasha Istoriia,” *ID AiF*, <http://corp.AiF.ru/page/4> (accessed May 2, 2010).

Street Journal and the *Financial Times*. It belongs to *ZAO Business News Magazine* which is owned by the *Independent Media Sanoma Magazines* publishing house, which is the property of Finland's *Sanoma* media group. Therefore, *Vedomosti* is not directly owned by any Russian corporation.

Vedomosti states its purpose as “to inform readers on a daily basis about the most important economic, political, financial and corporate events, offering in-depth analysis and forecasts.”¹²²

Komsomol'skaia Pravda

This newspaper is a daily tabloid that received its name during Soviet times, when it was a leading Soviet paper (its title can be translated as *The Komsomol Truth*). In 1999 “it reached the height of its popularity,”¹²³ when its daily circulation reached almost 22 million. It is considered to be a newspaper that combines a “firm backing for Kremlin policy”¹²⁴ and “keen interest in celebrity news and scandal from home and abroad.”¹²⁵ The newspaper belongs to *ZAO Publishing House Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, the major shareholder of which is the Russian energy group *YeSN* owned by Grigorii Berezkin.¹²⁶

¹²² *Vedomosti*, “About *Vedomosti*,” ID *Vedomosti*, <http://www.Vedomosti.ru/eng/> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹²³ BBC, “The Press in Russia,” BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Marina Noskovich, “«Komsomolka» ne dostalas' «Gazpromu»,” *RBK Daily*, January 22, 2007, <http://www.rbcdaily.ru/2007/01/22/media/263943> (accessed May 2, 2010).

Unofficial sources¹²⁷ claim that Berezkin has close ties with government-owned Gazprom, the largest extractor of natural gas in the world.

Rossiiskaia Gazeta

Established by the government in 1990, *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* is the main government-owned newspaper.¹²⁸ It publishes all new laws in their entirety, as well as news and analytical articles on political and social issues in Russia and abroad. The newspaper's website cites the surveys that define its readers as "even -tempered adults inclined to conservative views."¹²⁹

Moskovskii Komosomolets (MK)

MK is a mass-circulation daily newspaper that tends to criticize the Federal government but to support the Moscow administration, Mayor Yurii Luzhkov in particular,¹³⁰ towards whom it "expresses broad support".¹³¹ The informational-analytical Group SOVA accused it of publishing of xenophobic articles and of extensively using "the

¹²⁷ N. Nikiforov, "High Voltage," *Pravda.ru*, 22 December, 2003, http://english.pravda.ru/main/18/89/355/11615_Gazprom.html (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹²⁸ BBC, "The Press in Russia," BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹²⁹ Rossiiskaia Gazeta, "About," *ID Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, <http://www.rg.ru/about.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹³⁰ Open Source Center, "Russia – Source Descriptors of Key Russian Media," *Open Source Center Media Aid*, December 6, 2007, www.fas.org/irp/dni/osc/russian-media.pdf (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹³¹ BBC, "The Press in Russia," BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

language of racial hatred.”¹³² These accusations were based on annual monitoring of the language of the Russian Media in terms of the usage of xenophobic words and expressions.¹³³ The newspaper belongs to *ZAO Moskovskii Komsomolets*. The newspaper's editor-in-chief, Pavel Gusev, is believed to be the owner of the publishing house.¹³⁴

Novaia Gazeta

It is a newspaper that is published three times a week and is considered to be liberal and openly oppositional to the Russian government.¹³⁵ It is well known for its investigative journalism¹³⁶ and critical coverage of Russian political and social life.¹³⁷ In the last eight years, four journalists from *Novaia Gazeta* have been murdered,¹³⁸ among them – famous investigative journalist and human rights activist Anna Politkovskaia. The newspaper belongs to the *ANO*¹³⁹ *Novaia Gazeta*. According to the BBC Press Monitoring

¹³² Galina Kozhevnikova, 2007. Iazyk vrazhdy i vybory: federalnyi i regionalnyi urovni. Po materialam monitoringa materialov oseni 2007. On-line at: <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/213716E/21728E3/B2A44F2>

¹³³ <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/213716E> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹³⁴ BBC, “The Press in Russia,” BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹³⁵ Russia Profile, “*Novaia Gazeta*,” Russia Profile, Culture Now, April 26 2010, http://www.russiaprofile.org/resources/culture/novaya_gazeta (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹³⁶ BBC, “The Press in Russia,” BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹³⁷ Russia Profile, “*Novaia Gazeta*,” Russia Profile, Culture Now, April 26 2010, http://www.russiaprofile.org/resources/culture/novaya_gazeta (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹“ANO,” or “avnonomnaia nekommercheskaia organizatsiia” is translated as “autonomous non-commercial organization.”

data, the *ANO Novaia Gazeta* was previously owned solely by employees, but in June 2006 “former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and wealthy businessman Alexandr Lebedev purchased a 49% stake,”¹⁴⁰ becoming the newspaper’s minority owners.

Izvestiia

Izvestiia, a daily newspaper, was established in the Soviet Union. It is a part of *OAO*¹⁴¹ *Izvestiia*, which was bought in 2005 by the governmentally owned *Gazprom-Media*. This event, according to some observers, resulted in the newspaper “adopting a clear pro-Kremlin line.”¹⁴² In 2008 its majority stake was sold to the *SOGAZ* insurance company, owned by St. Petersburg-based *Bank Rossiia*, whose co-owner Yurii Kovalchuk “is widely reported to be a close associate of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.”¹⁴³

Nezavisimaia Gazeta (NG)

NG is a daily Moscow newspaper focused on the analysis of political and social issues. It used to belong to the oligarch Boris Berezovskii, who is now in exile. *ZAO Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, that publishes the newspaper, was bought by Konstantin

¹⁴⁰ BBC, “The Press in Russia,” BBC Monitoring, May 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁴¹“OAO,” or “otkrytoe aktsionernoe obshchestvo,” is translated as “open joint-stock company.”

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

Remchukov in 2005, who at the time was a Russian government adviser,¹⁴⁴ and who in 2007 became *Gazeta's* editor-in-chief.

Vremia Novostei

This newspaper is published five times a week and is focused on Russian politics and social life. It is officially owned by NP (non-commercial partnership) Publishing house *Vremia*. *Vremia Novostei* is believed to be tied to Alexandr Voloshin,¹⁴⁵ chairman of *Norilsk Nickel* who served as the head of the Russian presidential administration from 1999 until his resignation on October 29, 2003. Nevertheless, it is considered to be a liberal newspaper that “sometimes criticizes the government.”¹⁴⁶

As we have seen from this brief media ownership overview, these foremost leading Russian newspapers have different ownership structures and also differ in the frequency of their publication. Most of the outlets (six out of ten) are owned by ZAO’s (closed joint stock companies). One newspaper is officially owned by the government (*Rossiiskaia Gazeta*), another by OAO (open joint stock company), another by ANO (autonomous non-commercial company), and another by NP (non-commercial partnership). Seven out the ten companies that own the newspapers, however, according

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Aleksei Makarkin, “Lichnyi politicheskii defolt. Voloshin: Politik-innovator,” *Kompromat.ru*, December 2001, On-line at: http://www.kompromat.ru/page_11381.htm (accessed May 2, 2010); Andrei Zolotov, Jr., “Gazprom Gives Jordan the Boot,” *The Moscow Times*, 20 January 2003, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/gazprom-gives-jordan-the-boot/240999.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁴⁶ Open Source Center, “Russia – Source Descriptors of Key Russian Media,” *Open Source Center Media Aid*, December 6, 2007, www.fas.org/irp/dni/osc/russian-media.pdf (accessed May 2, 2010).

to the unofficial sources (articles in the newspapers, media databases, such as BBC Monitoring, etc.), belong to businessmen who have direct ties with the current government. Therefore, what should be considered are not the official structures of the media (*ZAO*, *OAO*, *NP*) but the level of loyalty towards the government of the businessmen who de facto own the publishing houses, and the extent to which they personally interfere with the work process of the newspapers that belong to them.

CHAPTER IV

HYPOTHESES

The assumptions from the analysis of Russian media laws, publications in newspapers, and internet sources can be reduced to a set of formal hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Soviet-era journalists are more predisposed towards self-censorship than post-Soviet era journalists

Many social and media analysts have hypothesized that people in Russia, journalists in particular, can be divided into “Soviet” and “post-Soviet,” with “Soviet” journalists being more commonly predisposed to being controlled by the state due to their previous experience of working and living under the Soviet censorship, and “post-Soviet” journalists being less inclined to tolerate governmental oppression.

Thus, Svetlana Juskevits, in her research “Professional Roles of Contemporary Russian Journalists,” in writing about “two generations of the journalists” (Soviet and post-Soviet), states that Soviet journalists are “shaped by the State and were under its complete control,” and therefore they are less accustomed to freedom of the speech and are more easily restricted by the government than “post-Soviet” journalists.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷Svetlana Juskevits, “Professional Roles of Contemporary Russian Journalists,” presented in the 15th *Nordic Conference on Media and Communication Research*, Reykjavik Iceland, 11-13th August 2001, www.nordicom.gu.se/mr/iceland/papers/nine/SJuskevits.doc (accessed May 2, 2010).

Antony Jones, speaking of journalists who proceeded from the Soviet era, points out that they cannot be called professional journalists due to the lack of experience of writing without being censored by the government.¹⁴⁸

Journalists Aleksandr Podrabinek and Anna Politkovskaia have written that it is hard to get rid of the “Soviet mentality” and “hereditary memory”¹⁴⁹ of the Soviet times, especially for those who were educated in Soviet Russia. Colin Sparks, speaking of the contemporary Russian broadcasting system states that “the old state broadcasters of the communist epoch have survived as institutions, and many of their staff remain the same.”¹⁵⁰

At the same time, previously analyzed data about the laws and regulations passed in the post-Soviet period, under Putin’s presidency, show that Soviet influence is not necessarily the primary factor in the formation of self-censorship among journalists.

In my survey I will test the hypothesis that Soviet journalists are more inclined to exercise self-censorship than post-Soviet journalists. Journalists are considered “Soviet” if they started their careers before 1991, and “post-Soviet” – if they became journalists after 1991. Testing this hypothesis will help us understand whether self-censorship should be seen as the consequence of a Soviet mentality, or whether it can be analyzed

¹⁴⁸ Antony Jones, "Professionalization," *Russia in Flux*, 85.

¹⁴⁹ Aleksandr Podrabinek, “Ne nado podrazhat vlasti!” *Gazeta.ru*, March 5th, 2009, http://www.gazeta.ru/comments/2009/03/05_a_2952859.shtml (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁵⁰ Colin Sparks, and Anna Reading, *Communism, capitalism, and the mass media* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), 174.

within the framework of the post-Soviet era, with contemporary events and regulations as the main basis for its existence.

Hypothesis 2: Self-censorship is caused by editorial censorship

According to the “totalitarian” approach towards the Russian media, developed by Siebert et al¹⁵¹, there is a strong interdependence between censorship imposed by the editor of the outlet and self-censorship practiced by the journalists themselves; when censorship “works itself down the chain”¹⁵² Following this theory, we can assume that the higher the percentage of information critical of the government that is censored by the editor, the higher the percentage of material that a journalist would delete from his article of his own will. In Richter’s research we read that journalists are “forced to self-censor,”¹⁵³ and with self-censorship being defined as “constraints that journalists apply in-house under external pressure as they determine to what extent they can exercise freedom of expression in the coverage of political events.”¹⁵⁴ Kolesnikov, describing the relationship between editor and journalist, assumes that while “an editor-in-chief always makes sure that his heads of departments do not deviate from the official line, they, in

¹⁵¹ Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press: the Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*, 134.

¹⁵² Daniel Scheschkewitz, “Critical reporting? No thanks - Russian media under state and self-censorship,” March 5, 2010, *Deutsche Welle*, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5518566,00.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁵³ Andrei Rikhter, "Post-Soviet Perspective On Censorship and Freedom of the Media," 315.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 314.

turn, have no desire to lose their jobs over a political mistake and comb their journalists' pieces obsessively," and journalists, subsequently, "weigh every word, every thought, every expression."¹⁵⁵

Hypothesis 3: Journalists who practice self-censorship when they write articles for the newspapers they work for publish more courageous articles on-line

Recent studies of the Russian media have indicated the internet as a niche that is relatively free from censorship and self-censorship. Robert Sanders, in his article "New Media, New Russians, New Abroad,"¹⁵⁶ writes about the Russian cyberspace, or *Runet*, and its "capacity to provide unfiltered access to information and news."¹⁵⁷ Sanders states that the internet in Russia is the only forum of media with "freedom of information" which cannot be controlled by the government. He also mentions that Russian web use is steadily growing due to several factors, such as "the increasing convergence of mobile telephony and Internet access,"¹⁵⁸ as well as "the increasing prosperity of Russians."¹⁵⁹ The author compares Russian cyberspace with the popularity of blogging in Russia to the Soviet-time *samizdat*, a phenomenon that "appeared in the 1950s and was simultaneously

¹⁵⁵ Andrei Kolesnikov, "Freedom of expression: for what? It's written in to the Russian constitution but no one takes it for real," 21.

¹⁵⁶ Robert Sanders, "New Media, New Russians, New Abroad" in *The post-Soviet Russian media: conflicting signals*, edited by Birgit Beumers, Stephen C. Hutchings, and Natalia Rulyova (London: Routledge, 2009), 191-207.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

a mechanism for reproduction of and institution for dissemination of unavailable texts.”¹⁶⁰ Calling internet a contemporary *samizdat*, Sanders claims that they have many common features – a “self-made” character” and an absence of “interference of government censorship, editorial review boards or any other information-regulating entity.”¹⁶¹ There are also more modern features that can be attributed to the new, “virtual” *samizdat* - its consumption is possible without regard for geographic location, and it is available to everyone, which has created an informational field where oppositional articles and blog posts that criticize the government are neighboring with pro-governmental propaganda or nationalistic lozenges.

Vlad Strukov in his work “Russia’s Internet media policies”¹⁶² writes about the dominant state official’s attitude towards the internet, “general misapprehension as regards the Web’s extraterritorial and ephemeral nature; the complexity of notions of authorship; and their general lack of authority pertaining when it comes to new, digital technologies.”¹⁶³ Strukov looks at possible ways of governmental control over Russian cyberspace, writing that with the rapid development of technologies there appears more ways of controlling internet space. For instance, now it is possible to track “a user’s internet activity through the “digital trace,” that is, a record of online movements and

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 203.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Vlad Strukov, “Russia’s internet media policies” in *The post-Soviet Russian media: conflicting signals*, edited by Birgit Beumers, Stephen C. Hutchings, and Natalia Rulyova (London: Routledge, 2009), 208-222.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 209.

publications.”¹⁶⁴ There have already been a number of governmental attempts to control internet-publications by applying to them criminal, civil and media laws. For example, in 2007 a 23-year old Russian blogger named Dmitrii Shirinkin from Perm posted a fictional story on his blog inspired by the Virginia Tech Shooting. In this story, which was written as an angry satire, he wrote about buying a gun and going to shoot people. He also wrote that he “hated Putin, hated Kasparov, hated McDonald’s, hated Dom-2 (popular reality show), hated metro, hated Russian provincialism.” Shirinkin was accused of “falsely warning of a terror threat.” He was found guilty for the false announcement of a planned terrorist act based on his post, and a fine of 20.000 rubles (approximately \$800 USD) was imposed upon him. The court came to the conclusion that “the resource (a site on the internet) can be considered to be a part of the mass media... in these circumstances the court comes to the conclusion that the announcement of Shirinkin was made in the mass media”. Although cases like this are not numerous, they cause worry among human rights activists and journalists in Russia.

Another Russian blogger was accused of “inciting hate” against the police. According to the Komi regional prosecutor, the blog post of the 21-year old musician Savva Terent’ev contained “a direct call aimed at inciting hatred or hostility, as well as harming the dignity of ... a particular social group - policemen.”¹⁶⁵ In February, 2007,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 210.

¹⁶⁵ Marianna Tipshchenko, “Blogger Handed Suspended Sentence,” July 8, 2008, The Moscow Times, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/blogger-handed-suspended-sentence/368793.html> (accessed May 2, 2010).

Savva wrote a post in his friend's blog¹⁶⁶ that the police are “dumb, uneducated representatives of the animal world” and should be burnt periodically in town squares “like at Auschwitz.”¹⁶⁷

Terent'ev was summoned to the local prosecutor's office almost immediately after his comment appeared and was accused of “inciting hatred or enmity.”¹⁶⁸ The blogger's ten month-long criminal trial resulted in a guilty verdict. The musician received a year-long conditional probation¹⁶⁹.

While the internet appears to be an important component of the media which is less restricted than traditional media, there are also dangers of being prosecuted for what have been published on-line. In this thesis I would like to answer a specific question - do journalists who practice self-censorship in the newspapers tend to publish articles critical of the state on-line?

Hypothesis 4: Media ownership directly affects the level of self-censorship among journalists

The analysis of media ownership conducted in Chapter III shows that there are the three types of newspapers: joint-stock companies, non-commercial organizations and

¹⁶⁶ Boris Surano's Blog, <http://suranov.livejournal.com> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁶⁷ “Terent'ev is being sued for his LJ commentary,” *Lenta.ru* (accessed May 2, 2010); available from <http://lenta.ru/story/terentyev/> (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁶⁸ Mike Eckel, “Incendiary Blogger's Case Is Sent to Court,” March 14, 2008, “The St. Petersburg Times,” http://www.sptimes.ru/index.php?action_id=2&story_id=25320&highlight=russian%20blogge (accessed May 2, 2010).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

governmental property. However, de facto almost all of these outlets belong to individual owners close to the Russian government. The only exceptions are *Novaia Gazeta*, 51% of which is owned by the employees, and *Vedomosti*, that belongs to a foreign corporation. The question is - what is the interrelation between the media ownership and self-censorship?

Media analysts widely discuss the affect of ownership on Russian media since it ceased to be the sole property of the government, which, in the end, resulted in the re-consolidation of the media in the hands of businessmen loyal to the government.¹⁷⁰ At the same time, nothing has been said about the affect of media ownership upon the level of self-censorship among journalists. The findings of the current survey will allow us to examine this aspect of Russian media and test the hypothesis that a connection exists between the ownership of a given newspaper and self-censorship.

¹⁷⁰ Andrei Zolotov, "The Roots of NTV's Difficulties Dig Deeply into Political Turf," *Nieman Reports* 55, no. 2 (2001), 85-87; Romesh Ratnesar, Mike Billips, Barry Hillenbrand, Jane Walker, Yurii Zarakhovich, "Putin's Media Blitz." *Time Europe*, 157, no. 17 (2001), 26-27.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS

Sample

The data used to assess hypotheses about the prevalence of self-censorship come from my own survey of Moscow newspaper reporters.

A sampling frame was developed by listing all the journalists, who work in the departments of politics, society, urban life and investigations at each of the top ten Moscow newspapers from March 2009 to March 2010. Next, a random sample of 55 journalists was chosen and I attempted to contact them each by phone. 40 agreed to participate, a response rate of 73%. At most papers I spoke with more than one political reporter (See Appendix I for the questionnaire).

All journalists were told that the information they provide would be confidential and their names would not be disclosed. All interviews were conducted in Russian. No audio records of the interviews were taken, only shorthand notes, which I transcribed and translated.

General overview

In this survey, journalists were asked questions which can thematically be divided into two main groups. The first group was designed to promote discussion about the journalists' working experience. Basic descriptive statistics show how long a given journalist has been at work in his profession and the type of work that he does (Table 1; all tables are in Appendix II)

The length of working experience of the journalists helps us to understand whether the journalist received his education in the Soviet or post- Soviet period.

The second set of questions elicits the journalists' responses concerning editorial censorship and self-censorship. The questions were formulated in such a way that the words "censorship" and "self-censorship" are avoided due to their ambiguous nature and the possibility of subjective interpretation. Therefore, in order to define whether journalists experienced editorial censorship, they are asked two questions: 1). In the last four years, has it occurred that the editor eliminated from your article any words or phrases criticizing the Russian government? 2). In the last four years, has it occurred that the editor refused to publish your article that contained information critical of the Russian government? In regard to self-censorship, journalists are asked a single question: In the last four years, has it occurred that, in order to publish your article, you yourself decided not to include facts that negatively characterize the Russian government?

Most of the respondents (60%), stated that they write articles as well as edit texts written by other journalists, with remaining 40% stating that they only write articles and do not work as editors (Table 1). However, most of the latter journalists commented that they have tried editing and did not like it, so although they were offered work as an editor, they decided not to pursue it. It is very common for journalists in Russia to combine writing and editing, because an editor's job is higher paid. The fact that most of the journalists interviewed have previous experience in editing articles written by others proves that they are familiar with the editing process and can recognize when the editing of an article has a purely stylistic basis and in which cases it is based on eliminating

phrases, words, or facts that are critical of the state; a process that is similar to censorship.

The majority of the interviewees (80%) publish articles every day (52.5 %) and every week (27.5%). 20% publish their texts monthly or less than once a month. 70% of those interviewed write about politics on a daily or weekly basis, 27.5 % - monthly or less than monthly (Table 2). Some of the interviewees explained the lower frequency of their political writing by the fact that they work as investigative journalists and it takes a month or more to write one investigative article. Another explanation for the lower frequency of publications is their editing work, which requires a lot of time and interferes with writing articles. Several journalists commented that the borders between “political” and “non-political” writing are sometimes blurred. One of the interviewees stated that while he was not specializing in politics and was mainly writing about the city planning, and real estate, he commonly had to deal with political issues because real estate business in Moscow is closely affiliated with the Moscow and Federal government. He stated that, as far as the owner of the biggest construction company in Moscow is the wife of the mayor, “criticizing the construction of a certain building means criticizing some high-end state bureaucrat.” Another interviewee mentioned that “today, whatever you write about is politics; although I am trying not to get into politics too much, it is almost impossible to stay away from it, unless you are working for the yellow press and write about celebrities.”

Most journalists (94.9%) have stated that they have criticized the government in their articles (Table 3). Several journalists admitted that they have criticized the

government in their articles by quoting direct speech of the oppositional commentators, or just stating facts that by themselves critique the government, but did not comment on those facts or direct quotations. They explained their behavior by citing the necessity of being “careful” in order to be able to publish in the outlets that they are working for.

The results of the survey show that self-censorship is prevalent among journalists; more than half of journalists (51.3%) affirmed that in the last four years they have practiced self-censorship, deciding not to include certain facts that are critical of state authorities in their articles in order to have their articles published (Table 4).

Editorial censorship occurs, but it is less frequent. While 40% of journalists stated that in the last four years of work their editors have eliminated from their articles words or phrases criticizing the state (Table 4), only 30% agreed that their editor in the last four years refused to publish their articles because they contained information critical of the Russian government (Table 5). This is consistent with the idea that a significant level of self-censorship and “soft” editorial censorship (when an editor eliminates parts of an article), makes it unlikely for the editor to reject the whole article for its political “incorrectness.” Therefore, in further analysis I will speak mostly of “soft” editorial censorship, considering that “hard” editorial censorship occurs in the same circumstances as “soft” censorship, but less frequently.

Hypothesis 1: Soviet-era journalists are more predisposed towards self-censorship than post-Soviet era journalists

The results of the survey are not consistent with the hypothesis that journalists who started their career in the Soviet era are practicing more self-censorship than their younger colleagues who began working after the collapse of the Soviet system and, consequently, at the time when censorship was no longer legal.

According to the data, 54.5% of “Soviet” journalists have not practiced self-censorship, while 45.4% have. At the same time, 46.1% of “post-Soviet” journalists have not practiced self-censorship, while 53.8% have (Table 6). Therefore, the difference between “Soviet” and “post-Soviet” journalists in terms of their willingness to exercise self-censorship is insignificant, and even this small difference indicates that journalists of the Soviet era practice less self-censorship than their “post-Soviet” colleagues. The same is true of the relation to censorship that proceeds from the editor of the outlet. Overall results show that there is very little difference between the percentage of “Soviet” and “post-Soviet” journalists who agreed that their editors eliminated parts of their articles in order to prevent the publication of information critical of the government. In this case, as in the previous one, the little difference in the percentage shows that “Soviet” journalists experience slightly more pressure from their editors, which is consistent with the idea that their articles contain more information critical of the government than that of their younger colleagues.

One respondent commented that journalists who were most active in the early nineties are much more oppositional in their judgments than those who started later. Another journalist said, “I am a journalist of the old school, so my articles are sometimes too much... I still write as I was in the nineties.” As I discussed in Chapters II and III, the 2000s are an era marked by the Second Chechen War, war against terrorism, and are characterized by the appearance of legal restrictions imposed upon the printed press. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that these facts partially explain why the older journalists act with less self-restriction than the younger ones, who started their careers in the late 90s and early 2000s.

Another explanation for “Soviet” journalists exercising less self-censorship than their younger colleagues is that the former can be characterized as members of *intelligentsiia*, or Soviet intellectuals. Many of them were oppositional to state authorities even in the Soviet era. Although very few were brave enough to explicitly express their protest, after the collapse of the Soviet Union these people were more willing to openly criticize the government. One of the examples is Vladimir Pozner, a famous Russian journalist who worked for the magazine “Soviet Life” and wrote articles about the greatness of Russia during the Soviet period. As Pozner describes in his memoirs “Parting with Illusions,” although he experienced censorship from his editor, he did not dare to argue with him.¹⁷¹ He explains that he did not believe the government to be entirely wrong, and that he had illusions about the Soviet system, although understood

¹⁷¹ Vladimir Pozner, *Parting with illusions* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990).

some of its faults. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, Pozner became a very famous oppositional journalist who challenges governmental decisions in his TV programs, books and articles, arguing that “the press still should not trust the government.”¹⁷²

Another world-famous oppositional Russian journalist, Anna Politkovskaia, who openly criticized Russian government and was killed in 2006, also started her journalistic career in the Soviet era, becoming a journalist for *Izvestiia* newspaper in 1982.¹⁷³

Hypothesis 2: Self-censorship is caused by editorial censorship

The survey shows that there is a complex interrelation between editorial censorship and journalistic self-censorship, which does not prove that editorial censorship affects the level of self-censorship among journalists.

The percentage of journalists who exercise self-censorship is roughly the same both in outlets where editors censor their articles, and in outlets whose editors do not impose any censorship (Table 4). At the same time, there is a very strong correlation between those journalists who prefer not to publish any articles critical of the state and editorial censorship (editor eliminated parts of their articles that criticized the state). Those journalists who have claimed to have experienced strong editorial censorship prefer not to publish any articles critical of the government (Table 7).

¹⁷² Vladimir Pozner, and Irina Karpenko, “I Will Not 'Go After' Anyone”. *Russian Politics and Law* 39, no. 1 (2001), 92.

¹⁷³ Sergei Tepliakov, “Za chto ubili Anny Politkovskiyu?” *Izvestiia*, October 9, 2006, <http://www.Izvestia.ru/incident/article3097332/> (accessed May 2, 2010).

On the one hand, these results are consistent with the possibility that contemporary Russian journalists who work in popular Moscow newspapers know well the policies that are practiced within each outlet, and in the case of strong editorial censorship prefer not to contradict these policies and not to raise any issues critical of the government in their articles.

On the other hand, journalists who do publish articles critical of the government seem to know well the “rules of the game” and are aware of the particular topics that are not supposed to be raised in the Russian media. They efficiently self-censor their texts according to these rules, which are not directly related to their editor’s preferences, but based on their personal and social experience. This theory can find support in the comments that the respondents give on self-censorship. For example, one of the interviewees commented that there is a number of established topics that are not supposed to be discussed in press, and “everyone knows them,” so when it comes to writing, journalists know what they can and what they cannot write about. They either avoid writing on this topic or carefully camouflage it so that it does not attract too much attention. The topics that are not to be written on are the following: 1). Putin’s personal life (absolute taboo); 2). Personal life of Medvedev and other first-rank bureaucrats; 3). Weapon trade (a good example is the situation with the ship Arctic Sea); 4). Ramzan Kadyrov and the situation in Chechnya (it is dangerous for one’s life); 5). Baturina’s business (Elena Baturina is the richest woman in Russia, the owner of the constructing company Inteko, and the wife of Yurii Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow since 1992 (Baturina is famous for her (successful) lawsuits against journalists and outlets that

publish any criticism of her company or herself)¹⁷⁴; 6). Investigation of terrorist acts. The same author stressed the fact that if a journalist covers a “tabooed” topic in his or her article, the other newspapers would not follow suit, even if the journalist discloses something revealing about the misconduct of the state. Such behavior, according to the journalist, leads to the “death” of a topic, when it is mentioned once and then forgotten. The journalist explains this phenomenon as “the lack of solidarity between journalists.” On the other hand, solidarity in keeping silence can also be an explanation. All journalists, no matter what outlet they are working for, share more or less the same informational space and follow similar sets of rules. Therefore, journalists share solidarity in what they are not supposed to publish, and at the same time lack solidarity in working together towards an investigation of a common problem. Hence, the level of self-censorship that they practice is very much their personal choice.

The topic that was stated by many journalists as the most “problematic” is the private life and personal qualities of either the Prime Minister Vladimir Putin or the President Dmitrii Medvedev. Both editors and journalists avoid this topic, and many journalists refer to it as to the “absolute taboo.” Journalists confirmed that their editors had eliminated parts of their articles that contained personal criticism of either Putin or Medvedev. Examples of “personal criticism” of Putin and Medvedev that journalists eliminate from their articles demonstrate the extent of the banned topics. One of the

¹⁷⁴ Among the most well-known court cases initiated by Baturina’s Inteco are the ones against The Sunday Times and Forbes (Russia); see “Russia’s Richest Woman Sues Forbes Magazine,” February 14, 2007, *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, <http://www.rferl.org/content/BackgroundEmbedded/1074710.html> (accessed May 2, 2010); Roy Greenslade, “Sunday Times Sued for Libel,” 29 November 2009, Greenslade Blog, *Guardian.co.uk*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/greenslade/2009/nov/29/sundaytimes-medialaw> (accessed May 2, 2010).

journalists stated that he decided not to publish an article with information about the height of the President of Russia in comparison to the height of the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. The journalist noticed that although Putin was two centimeters shorter than Berlusconi during the Summit of the G8 he somehow managed to look taller than the Italian leader. He edited this piece and it never went to print. Among other cases of “dangerous” topics that the respondents claimed to deliberately cut from their own materials or not mention are the personal wealth of Putin, Putin’s and Medvedev’s “tandem” and its political strangeness, Putin’s family life, his wife and daughters, criticism of Putin’s politics towards Russian sport, foreign politicians’ negative comments about Putin, newsmakers’ comments on the political actions of Medvedev and Putin. The phenomenon of the taboo on the personal criticism of the leading politicians is an interesting topic for further research; the most logical conclusion that we can make on the basis of this finding is that Russian politics are formed around strong personalities and not that much around the laws, what Shevtsova, Hale and McFaul call “superpresidential regime” or “superpresidency.”¹⁷⁵

Having analyzed the comments of the journalists, I can roughly divide them into three groups. The first one includes those who prefer not to engage in self-censorship, although they know that their editors may delete text or kill stories. As one of the interviewees stated, “let the editor himself spoil his karma.” Another respondent commented, “I write what I feel, and then the editor corrects it, making it look right.”

¹⁷⁵ Liliia Shevtsova, “The Problem of Executive Power in Russia,” *Journal of Democracy* 11, no. 1 (2000), 32-39; Henry Hale, “Iabloko and the Challenge of Building a Liberal Party in Russia,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no. 7 (2004), 993-1020; Michael McFaul, “Russian Democracy: Still not a Lost Cause,” *The Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2000), 161-172.

One journalist stated, “I know that I sometimes become unnecessarily critical of the state, when my criticism is not based on facts but on my emotions, so I accept the editor’s corrections.”

The second group includes those who prefer to avoid writing anything that they think their editor would cut or rewrite out of convenience and for the faster publication of an article. These journalists prefer to exercise self-censorship when it comes to problematic topics. For them, self-censorship has two principal methods: first, not mentioning certain facts, or eliminating pieces from a text; second, trying to formulate critical materials and facts in a way that makes it look less “extreme.” Journalists often describe the latter method as “softening the angles,” “being more accurate” or “trying to be more cautious,” as well as “tricking the editor through the formulation of “banned” facts and trying to disguise them and sneak them in.” There are other ways that journalists use in order to publish controversial information, such as publishing “problematic” articles in other outlets or publishing them on-line (I address this below).

The third group includes those who cease to write any criticism about the government. This group is the least numerous, while the number of journalists in the first and second group is roughly the same.

The director of communications at the World Association of Newspapers, Kilman, when speaking about the relationship between censorship and self-censorship, affirmed that “censorship leads to self-censorship because it causes reporters to question

what is ‘allowed’ and what is not.”¹⁷⁶ The conclusions drawn from the data obtained in this survey take towards further step of self-censorship. It appears to exist independently from editorial censorship, and even those journalists who work in different newspapers share information on “dangerous” topics. Therefore, there is an informational space that provides a list of “dangerous” topics. It is not editorial censorship, but this space, common for the journalists who work in the popular Moscow dailies and weeklies, that defines the current topics which are chosen to be censored. Journalists who are exposed to censorship from their editors, and those who are not practice self-censorship to the same extent. As we can see from the comments, it is a matter of personal working techniques and methods, and a matter of convenience. The most common reaction to editorial censorship is either ignoring it, letting the editor make any changes he wants; or reacting by only changing the form but not the content.

Hypothesis 3: Journalists who practice self-censorship when they write articles for the newspapers they work for publish more courageous articles on-line

In this survey I am answering the following questions: Do journalists prefer to publish articles critical of the state on-line? Is there any relationship between the level of self-censorship that they apply to their writings and their willingness to publish something on-line? Does it feel safer to publish information critical of the government on the internet rather than in the outlets they work for?

¹⁷⁶ As cited in Simons, Greg, and Dmitrii Strovskii, "Censorship in Contemporary Russian Journalism in the Age of the War Against Terrorism," *European Journal of Communication* 21, no. 2 (2006): 191.

Journalists were asked whether they published in their blogs or other internet-sources (such as on-line newspapers and news agencies), any articles critical of the government that could not be published in the newspapers they work at.

12.8% of the journalists answered “yes” to this question (Table 8). Two main explanations were given for the negative answers. Roughly half of the journalists claim that their contract does not allow them to publish any article on-line without the approval of the newspaper that they work for. Another half explains this by the fact that they are too “old-fashioned” to publish anything on the internet. However, a significant number of the latter express their wish to start up their own blog or to publish something on-line in the future.

Although the percentage of journalists who publish on-line is small, the data show that 80% of those who posted their articles on the internet practice self-censorship, while only 40% experienced censorship from their editors (Tables 10 and 11). This suggests that journalists use different standards when writing for the outlets where they work then for internet sources, news agencies, and blogs. They are more cautious in the printed press and avoid writing critical notions about the government, while on the internet they are more explicit in their opinions about state authorities. Journalists who published articles on-line said that in that medium they could more explicitly express their opinions and attitudes, while in the printed press they were required to use a neutral tone. Most of the journalists interviewed stated that the decisive factor for publishing something critical about the government is the ability to name the source. In other words, as one journalist explained, “You cannot write: ‘Minister of Finance Ivanov is incompetent, he cannot

count,’ – said one of his classmates’; you can only write: ‘Minister Ivanov is incompetent, he cannot count,’ – said one of his classmates, Petr Petrov.” Most of the journalists have noticed that in the last several years the necessity to reveal all the sources of information that criticizes the state has significantly lowered their ability to publish any criticism at all, as far as it is hard to get information without promising anonymity to the source. As one of the journalists said, “sometimes we prefer not to publish the comment because we do not want to harm our source.” He added that “in Russia, the sources almost never speak for the record, and all Russian journalism is basically built upon anonymous sources, which lowers its quality.” Internet publications allow journalists to publish critical information and be more evasive about their sources, although the fact that the government applies criminal and media laws to articles and blog posts published on-line makes most of the journalists treat internet publications with caution.

Hypothesis 4: Media ownership directly affects the level of self-censorship among
journalists

The results show that there is no significant relationship between self-censorship, editorial censorship and the official ownership structure (*ZAO*, *OAO*, etc.) (Table 11). These results are consistent with my previous analysis of the two levels of ownership structures in the Russian media: the “official” (publishing houses that belong to non-commercial partnerships and joint-stock companies) and “unofficial” (individual businessmen who stand behind these companies). While *ZAOs*, *OAOs*, *NPs* and other

forms of ownership have different structures that, supposedly, should affect media in different ways, unofficially most of the media outlets are owned by the individual businessmen. Their personal tastes and political views turn out to be more important than the official ownership structure. Thus, one of the respondents claimed that he tries “to avoid any criticism of the native republic of the owner of the publishing house,” and “considering that you cannot speak of this republic without criticizing it,” he prefers “not to write about it at all.” Another respondent stated that he does not write anything bad about a “certain bureaucrat who is friends with our owner... everybody knows it, and everyone avoids criticizing him, which allows us to criticize anything else.”

Therefore, in order to understand the relationship between the ownership structure and media policies we need to have a closer look at the personalities of the owners, their political attitudes and behaviors, as well as the extent of their participation in the policies of the newspapers they own. Such research could become a continuation of the current thesis.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis examines the contemporary Russian printed press and, in particular, the way that journalists who work in the ten most popular socio-political Russian newspapers practice self-censorship and are subjected to editorial censorship. In exploring the problems of self-censorship in ten particular outlets, this thesis offers the answer to the more general question: To what extent does self-censorship exist in the contemporary Russian press, and what principal factors affect its existence?

In seeking the stimulus for censorship, the thesis explores the question of media ownership in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and studies the laws and regulations related to freedom of the press that the government has issued since 1991, as well as the events that significantly affected that freedom (Wars in Chechnya and terrorist acts in Russia). Finally, it analyzes the findings from the survey in the context of the previously studied theoretical data.

A recap of the findings as a result of this thesis research includes the following conclusions:

Although there is no legal censorship in Russia, contemporary Russian journalists practice significant self-censorship and, to a lesser extent, editorial censorship. Editorial censorship is most commonly practiced through eliminating certain parts of text by the editor (phrases or words critical of the government) and less commonly by refraining from publishing the entire article. Nevertheless, even those journalists who experience

self-censorship and editorial censorship claim to criticize various aspects of the government in their publications.

The data shows that journalists who started their careers in the Soviet Union do not practice self-censorship to a greater extent than journalists who started their careers after the collapse of the Soviet Union. More than that, the results of the survey show that “Soviet” journalists are less inclined to self-censorship than their younger colleagues. It leads to the possibility that self-censorship in the contemporary Russian press is different from that which existed in Soviet times, has its own dynamics, and is formed by disparate factors. There is the whole new generation of Russian journalists who started their careers in the post-Soviet era, and who still exercise self-censorship. Hence, in the further analysis of self-censorship in Russian press it would be essential to study it not as a direct continuation of the Soviet past but in the context of contemporary circumstances and events.

The data do not confirm the hypothesis that editorial censorship directly affects self-censorship. The results of the survey show that there is an equal percentage of journalists who practice self-censorship among those who have experienced editorial censorship and among those who have not. It is consistent with the idea that self-censorship in the contemporary Russian printed press does not necessarily have a vertical structure (come from the editor). Journalists who decide to censor their own articles might make decisions based on their personal experience and a certain “common knowledge.” It is possible to suggest that the journalists of most of the printed newspapers that are based in Moscow share this “common knowledge,” as far as all the

journalists interviewed for this thesis independently from each other named the same topics that are considered to be “the most dangerous.” Among the factors that may influence the common journalistic knowledge about the most “dangerous” topics are the numerous anti-terroristic acts and regulations, which the government introduced after the Second Chechen War, as well the selective punishments of some of the most famous journalists who crossed the line and covered those topics.

The hypothesis that journalists who practice self-censorship when they write articles for the newspapers publish more courageous articles on-line is confirmed. Although the number of journalists who publish articles in their blogs and on-line sources proves to be relatively small, those journalists who publish articles on-line practice self-censorship in the outlets they work for. It shows that journalists are inclined to see the internet as a place where they can express more criticism towards authorities. However, a significant number of journalists prefer not to publish their texts on-line. Some journalists explain this tendency by their being “old-fashioned,” others state that their contract does not allow them to do so without official permission from their employer. Overall, the respondents consider the internet to be an alternative to the printed media, and state that internet space has more freedom than the printed press.

The data show that there is no obvious relationship between official media ownership structure and self-censorship. The fact that Russian ownership structures are only relatively transparent, and on the unofficial level most of the Russian media outlets are considered to be owned by individual businessmen, may provide an explanation to this result. At the same time, it may be partially explained by the idea that self-censorship

among Russian journalists is not necessarily the result of the editorial policies and is based on the common knowledge that all Moscow-based journalists who work for popular socio-political newspapers and write about political or social issues are likely to share.

Although self-censorship occupies a significant place in contemporary Russian journalism, and in the printed press in particular, the Russian printed media is freer than it is considered to be, and is not directly censored by the state. Journalists often compromise their ability to discuss the most “dangerous” topics such as Chechnya, terrorism and the private lives of Putin and Medvedev, in order to continue their work as journalists and address issues that can be criticized with greater success, such as governmental corruption.

This work offers only the first step in the analysis of the mechanisms of self-censorship and editorial censorship in Russia. The problems of these modern types of censorship have been widely discussed by media analysts, journalists, and human rights activists and represent an important problem in today’s media; however, they need to be studied further and in more detail. Understanding the mechanisms that stand behind these “civilized” forms of censorship can benefit media analysts in many ways, starting with getting a clearer picture of the contemporary Russian press and ending with the ability to make a more precise content analysis of the contemporary media in Russia. This research suggests a number of explanations of how self-censorship in Russia works.

There is a number of possible topics for further research on this problem. One of the suggested topics is the relationship between the real, semi-official owners of the

publishing houses and media outlets, and their editors and journalists. Another possible topic for further studies is the informational space that is shared by journalists who work for the printed media in Moscow and other regions in Russia, as well as a comparative analysis of the topics that are commonly considered taboo by Russian journalists throughout the country.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY: SELF-CENSORSHIP IN RUSSIAN PRINTED PRESS

English version

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Elena Rodina, a student from the REESC department at the University of Oregon. I hope to learn about the problem of self-censorship in contemporary Russian printed press. This research will be used in a thesis on the same topic. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are working as a journalist in one of the ten most popular daily newspapers in Russia.

If you decide to participate, I will interview you, asking questions about your job and the process of article-writing in order to understand whether you yourself or your editor restrict the publication of information that is critical of the government. This one-time interview will take up to ten (10) minutes, will be conducted over the phone and will be recorded by taking notes and without using any audio or video record facilities.

The interview may take more than ten minutes (up to fifteen minutes) in case I would ask you to specify some of your answers.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Subject identities will be kept confidential.

Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with the University of Oregon. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you have questions, contact Elena Rodina, GTF Russian Instructor, REESC, 271 PLC, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-4001; or Professor Caleb Southworth (advisor), 720 PLC, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-5034.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510. This Office oversees the review of the research to protect your rights and is not involved with this study.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any

time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

Name:
Tel.:
Date of the interview:
Place of work:

1. For how many years have you been working at your current position?
2. When (what year) did you start working as a professional paid journalist?
3. At your current job, you are:
 - a) only writing articles
 - b) writing articles and editing texts written by other journalists
4. How often do your articles appear in print?
 - a) daily
 - b) weekly
 - c) monthly
 - d) less than once per month
5. How often do you write about politics?
 - a) less than monthly
 - b) monthly
 - c) weekly
 - d) daily
 - e) other, please specify _____
6. *In the last four (4) years* (starting with 2006), has it occurred that:
 - 6.1 The editor eliminated from your article any words or phrases criticizing the Russian government? If yes, give an example.

6.2 In order to publish your article you yourself decided not to include the facts that are negatively characterizing the Russian government? If yes, give an example.

6.3 Your editor refused to publish your article that contained information critical of the Russian government? If yes, give an example.

7. Have you published articles critical of the Russian government in the outlet you are working for? If yes, give an example. If no, explain why.

8. In the last four (4) years (starting with 2006) has it happened that you have published your article(s) that could not be published in the outlet you work for because of their criticism towards the government in your blog or another internet-source? If yes, how many?

Russian version

Вы приглашаетесь принять участие в опросе в рамках исследования, которое проводится Родиной Еленой, студенткой отделения факультета Русской и Восточно-Европейской Культуры Университета Орегон. Опрос направлен на выяснение уровня самоцензуры в современной российской печатной прессе. Это исследование будет использовано при написании кандидатской диссертации, посвященной проблеме самоцензуры. Вы были выбраны для участия в данном опросе по причине того, что Вы являетесь журналистом, работающем в одном из десяти самых популярных еженедельных газет в России.

В случае вашего согласия на участие в опросе, мною будут заданы вопросы о Вашей работе и процессе написания материалов. Цель вопросов – выяснить, существует ли контроль публикаций, содержащих критические замечания в сторону правительства, со стороны Вашего редактора и ограничиваете ли Вы сами количество фактов, критикующих Российское правительство, в Ваших материалах.

Опрос будет проводиться один раз и займет до десяти (10) минут. Он будет проведен по телефону. Я буду осуществлять синхронную запись разговора в виде заметок в электронном документе (печать). Разговор не будет записан на аудио- или видео- носители. Интервью может занять до пятнадцати (15) минут в случае, если некоторые Ваши ответы потребуют дальнейших уточнений и примеров.

Вся информация, полученная в данном опросе, будет оставаться конфиденциальной. Ваше имя в связи с данной информацией сможет быть оглашено лишь при наличии вашего согласия, в остальных случаях ваше имя и место работы разглашены не будут. Ваше участие в опросе добровольное. Ваше решение о том, участвовать или нет в опросе никак не повлияет на Ваши отношения с Университетом Орегона. Если Вы решите участвовать в опросе, Вы можете изменить ваше решение в любой момент без каких-либо последующих санкций.

В случае вопросов, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с Еленой Родиной по адресу REESC, 271 PLC, Университет Орегона, Юджин, Орегон, индекс: 97403, тел.: (541) 346-4001; или профессором Кайлебом Саусвортом (научный руководитель) по адресу: 720 PLC, Университет Орегона, Юджин, Орегон, индекс: 97403, телефон: (541) 346-5034.

Если у вас возникнут вопросы о ваших правах как участника опроса, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с Офисом по защите Прав Человека, Университет Орегона, Юджин, Орегон, индекс: 97403, тел. (541) 346-2510. Данный офис наблюдает за проведением опроса с целью защиты Ваших прав, но непосредственно не вовлечен в опрос. Ставя вашу подпись, вы соглашаетесь с тем, что вы прочли и поняли информацию, предоставленную выше, что вы добровольно согласны участвовать в

опросе и что вы имеете право отказаться в участии в данном опросе в любое время без последующих санкций, что вы получили копию данного документа и что ваши законные права не были нарушены.

Имя:
Тел.:
Дата интервью:
Название издания:

4. Сколько лет вы занимаете настоящую должность?

5. В каком году вы начали работать профессиональным, оплачиваемым журналистом?

3. Занимая настоящую должность вы:
 - а) только пишете статьи
 - б) пишете статьи и редактируете материалы других журналистов

4. Как часто публикуются ваши статьи?
 - а) ежедневно
 - б) еженедельно
 - в) ежемесячно
 - г) реже, чем раз в месяц

5. Как часто вы пишете о политике?
 - а) реже, чем раз в месяц
 - б) ежемесячно
 - в) еженедельно
 - г) ежедневно
 - е) другое _____

6. За последние четыре года вашей работы журналистом (начиная с 2006 года) случилось ли, что:

6.1 Редактор удалял из вашей статьи слова или фразы критикующие государственную власть? Приведите пример.

6.2 Для того, чтобы ваша статья была опубликована, вы самостоятельно решали не включать в неё факты, негативно характеризующие государственную власть? Приведите пример.

6.3 Редактор отказывался «пропускать» в печать вашу статью, содержащую информацию, критикующую государственную власть?

7. Публиковали ли вы статьи, содержащие критику государственной власти, в издании, где вы работаете? Если да, то приведите пример. Если нет, объясните, почему.

8. За последние четыре года работы (начиная с 2006 года) случалось ли, что вы публиковали в блогах или в интернет-ресурсах ваши статьи, которые не были опубликованы в вашем издании по причине критических замечаний в адрес властей?

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APPENDIX B

TABLES OF SURVEY RESULTS*

Table 1: Summary of Experience in their Profession

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Years in Current Position	5.9	3.9	39
What year did you start working as a journalist	1994.9	7.0	39
Percent writing and editing	60%	.49	40

* All tables in the appendix II are based on the survey conducted by me among Russian (Moscow-based) newspaper journalists in the period of two months (March-April) of 2010. The total number of the respondents is 40 people. The respondents were reached by phone and interviewed in Russian, all interviews were translated by me into English.

Table 1 is based upon three questions of the survey: "For how many years have you been working at your current position?" "When (what year) did you start working as a professional paid journalist?" and "At your current job, you are: a) only writing articles b) writing articles and editing texts written by other journalists."

Table 2: The frequency of journalistic publications

How often do your articles appear print?	Freq.	Percent
Daily	21	52.50
Weekly	11	27.50
monthly	6	15.00
Less than once a month	2	5.00

Table 2 shows the frequency of journalistic publications and is based on the respondents' answers to the multiple choice question: "How often do your articles appear in print?" with possible answers "daily," "weekly," "monthly," "less than once per month."

Table 3: The percentage of journalists who publish articles critical of the state

Has published articles critical of the state	Freq	Percent
No	2	5.13
yes	37	94.87

Table 3 shows the percentage of the respondents who have written articles critical of the Russian government. The respondents were asked a yes-no question: “Have you published articles critical of the Russian government in the outlet you are working for?”

Table 4: The relationship between journalistic self-censorship and editorial censorship (cutting or editing political content)

Journalist Engages in Self-Censorship	Editor Does Not Censor Political Content	Editor Censors Political Content	Total
no	11 52.38	7 46.67	18 50.00
yes	10 47.62	8 53.33	18 50.00
Total	21 100.00	15 100.00	36 100.00

Pearson chi2(1) = 0.1143 Pr = 0.735

Table 4 shows the relationship between journalistic self-censorship and editorial censorship. It is based upon the answers to the two questions of the survey: “In the last for years of working as a journalist, has it happened to you that, in order to publish your article, you yourself decided not to include the facts that are negatively characterizing the Russian government?” and “In the last four years, has it happened to you that the editor eliminated from your article any words or phrases criticizing the Russian government?”

Table 5: The relationship between the journalistic self-censorship and editorial censorship (refusing to publish the article)

Journalist Engages in Self-Censorship	Editor Does Not Kill Article	Editor Kills Article	Total
no	13 52.00	5 45.45	18 50.00
yes	12 48.00	6 54.55	18 50.00
Total	25 100.00	11 100.00	36 100.00

Pearson chi2(1)= 0.1309 Pr = 0.717

Table 5 shows the relationship between journalistic self-censorship and editorial censorship. It is based upon the answers to the two questions of the survey: “In the last for years of working as a journalist, has it happened to you that, in order to publish your article, you yourself decided not to include the facts that are negatively characterizing the Russian government?” and “In the last four years of working as a journalist, has it happened to you that your editor refused to publish your article that contained information critical of the Russian government?”

Table 6: The relationship between Soviet-era credentials and self-censorship

Editor Censors Political Content	Post-Soviet Credentials	Soviet Credentials	Total
no	12 46.15	6 54.55	18 48.65
yes	14 53.85	5 45.45	19 51.35
Total	26 100.00	11 100.00	37 100.00

Pearson chi2(1) = 0.2179 Pr = 0.641

Table 6 shows the relationship between Soviet-era credentials of the journalists and self-censorship and is based on the questions “For how long have you worked as a journalist?” and “In the last for years of working as a journalist, has it happened to you that, in order to publish your article, you yourself decided not to include the facts that are negatively characterizing the Russian government?”

Table 7: The relationship between the frequency of publishing articles critical of the state and the editorial censorship (cutting or editing political content)

Editor Censors Political Content	Journalist Does Not Publish Articles Critical of the State	Journalist Publishes Articles Critical of the State	Total
no	2 28.57	21 67.74	23 60.53
yes	5 71.43	10 32.26	15 39.47
Total	7 100.00	31 100.00	38 100.00

Pearson chi2(1) = 3.6673 Pr = 0.055

Table 7 shows the frequency of publishing articles critical of the state in relation to editorial censorship. It is based on the respondents' answers to the questions, "Have you published articles critical of the Russian government in the outlet you are working for?" and "In the last for years of working as a journalist, has it happened to you that the editor eliminated from your article any words or phrases criticizing the Russian government?"

Table 8: Frequency of publishing critical articles on-line

Have you published articles critical of the state that you could not publish in your newspaper in any on-line source?	Freq.	Percent
yes	5	12.82
no	34	87.18

Table 8 shows the frequency of publishing articles critical of the state on-line. It is based upon the answers to the yes-no question, “Have you published articles critical of the state that you could not publish in your newspaper in any on-line source?”

Table 9: The relationship between the frequency of the internet publications and journalistic self-censorship

Journalist self-censors	Have you published articles critical of the state that you could not publish in your newspaper in any on-line source?		
	yes	no	Total
no	1 20.0	17 53.12	18 48.65
yes	4 80.00	15 46.88	19 51.35
Total	5 100.00	32 100.00	37 100.00

Pearson chi2(1) = 1.8994, Pr = 0.168

Table 9 shows the relationship between the frequency of the internet publications and journalistic self-censorship and is based on the respondents' answers to the questions, "In the last for years of working as a journalist, has it happened to you that, in order to publish your article, you yourself decided not to include the facts that are negatively characterizing the Russian government" and "Have you published articles critical of the state that you could not publish in your newspaper in any on-line source?"

Table 10: The relationship between the frequency of the internet publications and editorial censorship (cutting or editing political content)

Editorial censorship	Have you published articles critical of the state that you could not publish in your newspaper in any on-line source?		
	yes	no	Total
no	3 60.0	20 60.61	23 60.53
yes	2 40.00	13 39.39	15 39.47
Total	5 100.00	33 100.00	38 100.00

Pearson chi2(1) = 0.0007, Pr = 0.979

Table 10 shows the relationship between the frequency of the internet publications made by the respondents and editorial censorship in media outlets they work at. It is based on the answers to the following questions: “In the last for years of working as a journalist, has it happened to you that the editor eliminated from your article any words or phrases criticizing the Russian government?” and “Have you published articles critical of the state that you could not publish in your newspaper in any on-line source?”

Table 11: The relationship between the legal structure of the outlet and self-censorship

Ownership Structure	Proportion of Journalists Reporting Self-Censorship
OAD	.5
ZAO	.57142857
ANO	.66666667
NP	.22222222
GOSsob	1
Average*	.51351351

**Averages are used here without frequencies to protect the identity of respondents.*

Table 11 shows the relationship between the legal structure of the outlet and the level of self-censorship. It is based upon data about the legal ownership structure of the 10 media outlets applied to in the survey and answers of the respondents to the question: “In the last for years of working as a journalist, has it happened to you that, in order to publish your article, you yourself decided not to include the facts that are negatively characterizing the Russian government?”

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