



SVETLANA PASTI

The Changing Profession  
of a  
Journalist in Russia



ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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## Preface and Acknowledgements

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Kaarle Nordenstreng is the fulcrum of my research biography. When I came to Tampere, I began to take courses in Finnish language at the University while working as a teacher of Russian language in Amuri school. One day we exercised oral skill in Finnish by telling about ourselves. My neighbour turned out to be a journalist from Algeria studying journalism at the University of Tampere. When he heard that I, too, was a journalist, he reacted immediately: "You must go to Kaarle Nordenstreng, his office is on the second floor". So it happened that an unknown journalist from Algeria ten years ago threw 'a bridge' across uncertainty towards my new profession and Kaarle Nordenstreng who became the guiding light to go ahead.

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*Svetlana Pasti*

September 19, 2007, Tampere

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# 1 Introduction

This doctoral dissertation examines the profession of a journalist in Russia in the light of its history and by looking at the future through its practitioners. They represent the old Soviet and new post-Soviet generations in the profession and bring empirical evidence of ongoing change. Through the historical analysis of the development of the profession and a collection of case studies of journalists, this dissertation raises questions about the character of the profession of a journalist in Russia and the formation of the professional identity of new practitioners. It explores what changes occurred in the journalistic profession and what it is to be a journalist in contemporary Russia.

The research interest was inspired by the personal motivation of the author, a former journalist, to describe what is going on in Russian journalism, mostly by taking a look from the inside, both with her own background and that of working journalists. The question of a professional model of Russian journalism after the fall of communism came up as a key question in this work.

Before, in the Soviet time, Lenin's doctrine about the press was the single legitimate guide for the professional journalists and their educators. Thus, still in 1984, Jury Zhukov, a political observer of the national main newspaper *Pravda*, the Hero of Socialistic Labour issued his new book *Journalists*, a kind of testament of the older generation of Soviet journalists to my generation graduating from schools of journalism of the state universities. In the new book he wrote for us, beginners, what it means to be a journalist:

The duty of our workers of the propagandist, agitation front is actively and timely, decisively and effectively to repulse all ideological attacks, to bring hundreds of millions of people the truth about the socialistic society, the Soviet mode of life, the building of communism in our country. ... The mass media is one of the most powerful tools of the party in the fight for the influence the masses, for their communist education and organisation.<sup>1</sup> (Zhukov 1984, 6–7)

One year later, in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev began his new policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika* with the intention to accelerate the building of communism in the country. However, reforms hastened the collapse of communism itself and together with it Lenin's doctrine of the press. In the upshot, my generation of journalists entering the profession in the 1980s found itself in an increasing vacuum regarding professional norms and values. The old answer to the question

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1 All quotations of Russian authors in this dissertation are translated in English by the author (Pasti).

– what it means to be a journalist: Lenin’s well-known roles of *propagandist*, *agitator* and *organiser* of the communist state service – lost its inevitability, whereas a new answer is bound to emerge demanding new approach to the profession itself. It began to develop in everyday practice of professionals trying to meet needs of transforming economy.

At the start of the 1990s, the adopting of new liberal laws (Richter 2001) had radically changed conditions for media and journalists. The abolition of censorship had resulted in diversity and plurality of content and forms of performance, the introduction of private ownership and advertising had laid the bases for a media market and business that was accompanied by the media boom: increase in the number, kind, circulation, audience, investment and also popularity of journalism as a profession.

In the 1990s, a process of westernisation of Russian journalism had at least two basic trends: the rise of quality press and the rise of commercial press. The first one was adopting a new (pro-western) conception of news based on separation of fact and comment, reference to a source of information, speed and accuracy of its transmission. The journalists began to develop new attitudes to the production of news: more factual with more human interest (Zhou 1988); to the audience: a wish to meet better its needs (Gaunt 1987); to journalism education and practice: more practical training, more openness and critical assessment of the Soviet system (Remington 1988; Haddix 1990); a new genre, investigative reporting appeared.

The second trend, the rise of commercialism produced another idea of journalism as entertainment. Scoop news with fake reports bringing rumours, gossip, lies, making up facts, invading private life and provoking scandals established yellow journalism. These media indulged mass tastes and reached the biggest audience everywhere. Moreover, a growing process of tabloidisation had its impact on the quality newspapers, which also began to pursue sensations, drama and exclusives in order to attract more readers. Distributors also evaluated a demand for the press as consumers removing “a spectrum of the press more towards the yellowness, than if ideally the press depended directly, without mediators, on the reader”. “The quality press was killed by it” (Yakovenko 2001, 643).

A perception of journalistic production as goods identical to other goods on the market had ethically approved venal journalism for political and commercial ends. The working journalists hardly perceived what the professional standards in the occupation were, what objectives journalism had in society and what the role of a journalist was. But these questions are still unclear up to now, although



searches for a formula of professionalism have been undertaken by scholars, educators and practitioners. Thus, Jury Kazakov (1999, 3) states, that “Russian journalism still very roughly knows itself and its nearest and far professional kinsfolk. Strictly speaking it still does not know precisely the address of its house in the informational world”. The American researchers note “that it is unclear in Russia and other East European countries what professionalism will mean and what the role of the journalist will be”, although the last changes give hope for them to think that “journalism is one of the few occupations that have moved toward professionalization since the reforms started” (Wu, Weaver, and Johnson 1996, 535).

It seems that the first decade of radically liberal reforms in post-Soviet Russia established practically all necessary preconditions of democracy: freedom of speech and elections, freedom of market and private property, freedom of travel and communication. However, the results of the last sociological studies on Russia, both in the country and abroad, testify rather to obstacles than to successes achieved in the building of democracy (Clarke 1996; *Middle Class in Post-Soviet Russia* 1999; Kivinen 1998, 2002; Ledeneva and Kurkchian 2000; Melin 2000; *Public Expertise* 2000; Zaslavskaya 2000, 2002). Contemporary Russia is characterised as “social formation comprising elements of emergent capitalism combined with substantial remnants of the old Soviet system, albeit without the central planning” (Simon 1999, 1).

*Financial Times* (25.9.2007) publishes the findings of the last survey conducted by Freedom House with conclusions that “democracy is on the retreat in Russia”. It also notes that “states across the world are attempting to follow the model of China and Russia by seeking to modernise parts of their economy while keeping a central grip on power”. Sergei Karaganov (2007) points to a new epoch of geopolitical confrontation of two models of development: the liberal democracy represented by the traditional West and authoritarian democracy represented firstly by China and Russia. He states that now it is unclear what model of development: liberal or authoritarian will win in the struggle for attracting of its new followers, especially in the countries of the Third World.

The appraisals by the media analysts contain both pessimistic and optimistic views on the present: “In both the communist and capitalist versions, the media were and are run by people very remote from the lives of the mass, and over whom the masses have no control whatsoever. Democratizing the media means breaking the control of those elites over what are necessarily the main means of public speech in large-scale societies” (Sparks 2000, 47). “Despite the criticism one may make of the Russian media, then, their continuing existence as free

media... is a crucial support for democracy in the country, and a sign that things are still moving in the right direction” (McNair 2000, 93).

Both the scholars and practitioners recognise that in *perestroika* the media were the main advocates of democratic values, with a decisive role in the liberalisation of society. A decade later the appraisals of media activity became rather critical, first of all because of the media engagement in political conflicts. The present state power estimates the media as “suitable instruments for inter-clan fight” (Putin 2000, 12).

The fact is that the post-Soviet media could not become economic enterprises deriving profit from consumption and private investments. “The development of the market economy in the sphere of mass media is still not very successful. Anti-monopoly laws do not work: there is no fair competition” (Y. Zassoursky 2001, 178). To survive the media have to implement rather PR function in the promotion of the political and economic interests of their sponsors. Such media activity gives cause to doubt the public character of the contemporary media and to think about them more as non-democratic instruments. After all, democracy means “the fact that information and ideas cannot acceptably be monopolized by private individuals” (McQuail 1994, 156).

The media functioning in the private interest raises a social contradiction between natural *right of the public to know* what is going on in society and the inability of media to materialise this right. However, there is a favourable democratic climate created by the Law on the Mass Media (1991) and the Constitution (1993) (Richter 2001). On the other hand, there are quasi market relations in the media sphere. It makes journalism vulnerable to be used by “various economic groups or corrupt government bureaucrats in their interests” (Y. Zassoursky 2001, 178–179).

Conceptually this research addresses the sociology of professions and theories of professionalisation on the one hand to mass communication theory, mostly normative media theory, on the other. The boom of westernisation of research arose from Gorbachev’s ‘thaw’ and gradually began to make way for a new trend termed de-westernisation (Sparks and Reading 1998; Sparks 2000; Curran and Park 2000). It mostly avoids using the western conception of norm as a criterion in the assessment of the current media-politics relations in the countries not coming into the first group of so-called developed democracies.

However, two decades ago, *glasnost* and *perestroika* had led Russia towards integration with the West and consequently it was logical to expect a gradual rapprochement of the emerging professional model of Russian journalism and the western conception of professional journalism based on needs for its political

independence and self-regulation by ethical norms. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* gave a chance to transform *state journalism* into *market journalism*. ‘State journalism’ refers here to the well-known Soviet system, which was thoroughly political-administrative by nature. ‘Market journalism’ for its part refers to emerging political, economic and professional freedoms, with their own limitations.

Anthony Jones argued, “an important aspect of the policy of *perestroika* was the attempt to introduce ‘professionalism’ into Soviet Society” (Jones 1992, 85). This meant establishing “the conditions in which decision-making could be pursued on the basis of occupational standards and ethics, rather than on the basis of political considerations imposed from the outside”, and also creating “conditions for a change in the status of those occupations that in the West are referred to as professions. This meant that they could move closer to what has been called ‘guild status’, the possibility of controlling the ways in which the occupation is pursued, making it more like a profession” (Ibid.). Discussing the status of professions in the USSR was “difficult because the use of the term ‘profession’ is itself not wholly defensible”. Moreover, Jones casts doubt on the existence of professions in the Soviet Union because those were shaped by the state and were under its complete control. The coming into being of professions “will take a considerable amount of time and we should not expect the full flowering of professions in the former USSR in just five or six years” (Ibid., 85–86).

*Glasnost* and *perestroika* led towards the de-politisation of occupations and their autonomy. Accordingly, from 1991 corporate and cooperative activities were also becoming more noticeable in journalism: the Foundation for the Defence of Glasnost and the Committee for the Defence of Freedom of Speech and the Rights of Journalists were created. “The Union of Journalists was designated a creative union in 1987, raising its prestige and increasing its control over its activities” (Jones 1992, 93–94).

At the beginning of the 1990s, the hopes for the professionalisation of journalism had solid grounds among experts: flourishing of political, economic, civil and professional freedoms, increasing partnership with western countries and welcoming of their values in Russian media. Whereas their governments and the NGOs invested money in support of the liberal reforms there, the western scholars and journalism professionals came to train and to educate media workers and students in journalism schools, and also many Russian journalists and editors were brought to visit the western media.

A review of the early studies (Chapter 5) reveals that western researchers noticed signs of rising professionalisation in journalism (Tolz 1992; Morrison

1997, Voltmer 2000), although at the same time they expressed apprehension for its future because of the unclear situation at the time (Johnson 1992; Jones 1992; Wu, Weaver and Johnson 1996; Davis, Hammond and Nizamova 1998) and the political culture (Androunas 1993; McNair 2000).

The findings of the present case studies (Chapter 7) testify that the historical chance of the 1990s to establish an independent status of the journalistic profession in Russia is gradually ebbing away. Among political and economic factors fastening journalism as the PR service of the political authority, there also is important a political culture factor including the traditional approach of those in power to the media as their tool of influence and manipulation of the society, whereas professionals increasingly perceive themselves as market-oriented employees for prescribed tasks.

The current situation in Russian journalism (Chapter 6) reveals a trend away from westernisation as welcoming the western idea of independence of the profession to de-westernisation as a return to the national tradition of etatism. Russian journalism increasingly substitutes the professional function to inform in the public interest in order *to know* for the PR function of the political power in order *to shape*. This hardly distinguishes the present so-called market journalism in the essence from the Soviet state journalism.

Moreover, the present course of the government from informational openness to informational security narrows the space of the professional freedom of journalists and again puts them in the frames of the political subordination. New generations in the profession are increasingly led to produce (self)censored journalism in non-free media by avoiding vital questions of agenda. Semi-truth raises cynicism among young journalists and transforms them to work and to live with double standards. Journalism remains the fulcrum of the old approach of violence of the State on society in Russia. The Internet increasingly becomes a refuge of free journalism with an opposition character and open discussion (I. Zassoursky 2001; Krasnoboka 2002).

For the western experts the Russian system still remains 'a black hole' and a challenge to their prognosis (Benn 1989, 1992; de Smaele 1999; Nordenstreng and Paasilinna 2002; Becker 2004). The Russian researchers observing from inside how media-politics relations are developing, feel rather free when witnessing the logics and features of the emerging Russian model (*Public Expertise* 2000; Zassoursky 2004; Richter 2007).

This research presents empirical evidence from individual journalists in the frame of a general discussion on the character of the change in the profession itself. It explores the roots and traditions of the profession of a journalist in

Russia, the process forming the professional identity of its practitioners and the defining of roles they play in society. This can enhance the understanding of what professional model of journalism emerges in Russia in the light of the changing profession itself and the changing generations of the professionals there. In brief, the research questions are:

- *What does it mean to be a journalist in Russia?*
- *What are the changes in the profession of a journalist in Russia?*
- *What conditions for the professional work of a journalist are in a big city and a little settlement?*
- *What relationships are developing between media and authorities?*

The research task demanded appropriate methodology, which arose from empirical groundwork, analysis done on the micro level of individual journalists, their attitudes to work and values, perceptions of the profession; further to the mezzo level, analysis of groups of Soviet and post-Soviet journalists representing specific professional subcultures and a process of socialisation of new generations in the profession; up to the macro level, analysis of the genesis of Soviet journalism as a profession and character of its change in contemporary Russia.

In practice, the research has been conducted as four case studies. Chronologically it started in St Petersburg, 1998–2002; continued in the Republic of Karelia, 2002–2004; then moved to other peripheries in Russia, covering nine regions of the North West, the Central and Southern parts, the Urals and Siberia, 2003–2005; and returned to St Petersburg, 2005. These case studies are reported in five publications. Earlier the St Petersburg case was presented as a Licentiate's Thesis (Juskevits 2002). Six years later after the first interviews done in the city's media in 1999, a follow-up study of St Petersburg journalists began in partnership with the Faculty of Journalism of the St Petersburg State University in 2005. Its preliminary findings are included in this overview, whereas closer analysis will be done in the frame of a new study (Academy of Finland project 'The Media in a Changing Russia').

The dissertation consists of the present overview and five earlier publications based on case studies. The present overview is composed of two parts. The first part introduces key terms and the theoretical approaches in the Soviet/Russian tradition and the western tradition; it represents ways of the historical development of the profession of a journalist in Russia including the present day. The second part pools together earlier studies on Russian journalists done both in Russia and in the West; reviews the current situation of media and journalism in Russia; presents the case studies of this dissertation and finally its conclusions.

The five original publications are the following (referred below according to their respective Roman numerals):

- I Pasti, S. (2005) Two generations of contemporary Russian journalists. *European Journal of Communication*. Vol. 20 (1) March, 89–115.
- II Pasti, S. (2005) The St. Petersburg media in transformation. *Nordicom Review*. Vol. 26 (2), November, 69–84.
- III Pasti, S. (2005) Return to media serving the State: Journalists in Karelia. In Harri Melin (ed): *Social Structure, Public Space and Civil Society*. Helsinki: Kikumora, pp.117–44.
- IV Pasti, S. (2006) Concepts of professional journalism: Russia after the collapse of communism. In Frank Marcinkowski, Werner A. Meier and Josef Trappel (eds): *Media and Democracy Experience from Europe*. Haupt Verlag: Bern, Stuttgart, Wien, pp. 73–89.
- V Pasti, S., Pietiläinen J. (forthcoming) Journalists in Russian regions: How different generations view their professional roles. In Stephen White (ed): *Media, Culture And Society In Putin's Russia*. Palgrave Macmillan.

# Part I

## Defining the profession of a journalist in Russia

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### 2 Key terms

#### 2.1 Profession in the Soviet/Russian tradition

Articles I and IV draw attention to a lingering conceptual clash between Russian and western approaches to the terms profession and professionalisation. In particular, Russian sociology determines a profession in the frame of the division of labour. Journalism, like medicine and jurisprudence, is placed on the second level of the social differentiation of specialities according to such criteria as education, intellectual complexity and level of responsibility. The first level includes representatives of science, the arts and government, while specialists who do not necessarily have a university education occupy the third level (Filippov 1998, 529). This reflects the Soviet system of values and cultural standards, which determined the prestige of professions on a gradation from (party) government work, including science and the arts, towards journalism as (party) literary work in the mass media.

According to Filippov (Ibid., 520), in the USSR, the sociology of professions has been developed since the first years of Soviet rule (initially within the confines of the problems of the scientific organisation of labour – *NOT*). In the 1960s–70s, the majority of studies were about the prestige of professions, professional adaptation, professional orientation of young people and professional career (Podmarkov and Sizemskaya 1969; Titma 1975). Only in the 1980s did researchers begin to study sociological problems of separate professions of intelligence



(physicians, teachers, engineering-technical personnel). The sociological studies on the professional labour of scientists and their professional mobility occupied a special place among others (Kugel 1983; Titma and Talyunaite 1984; Krevnevich 1985).

The sociology of professions investigates the state and tendencies of the change of the professional structure of society, the people's attitudes to the sphere of professions expressed in their assessed judgements and social behaviour. The sociology of professions is closely tied to the sociology of labour. The term profession comes "from Latin *professio*, *profiteor*; a kind of labour activity demanding definite preparation and being usually a source of livelihood" (Soviet Encyclopaedia 1983, 1070). The other source defines profession as "a kind of labour activity, occupations demanding definite preparation and being usually a source of livelihood" (Academic Dictionary of Russian Language 1987, 540). According to Strumilin (1957, 12) profession should be perceived as "the aggregate of acquired special labour skills by schooling and out of schooling when one person combines them under one definition".

In the last decade the notion of profession has changed only little. The Russian Sociological Encyclopaedia describes it as follows:

1. The kind of labour activity, occupations determined by production-technological division of labour and its functional content.
2. A big group of people uniting in a common kind of occupation, labour activity. In society there is a hierarchy of professions depending on the degree of complication and responsibility of implementing work and reflected in the public awareness of the kind of prestige of professions. (Filippov 1998, 425)

The present interpretations of profession do not exceed the barriers of the Soviet tradition, which reduced them to a question of the division of labour and high-quality production. The sociological dictionary gives the definition of profession as "institutionalised and existing in the framework of needs of society and its economy a kind of labour activity" (Kravchenko 1999, 220). Both sources mentioned here emphasise the interconnection and interaction of professional structure (the population of professions and their interconnection) with the social structure. The first notes that "the borders of profession, a number and kinds of entering specialities are inconstant and lively" (Filippov 1998, 425). According to Krokinskaya (1989, 14) "in the frame of Marxist dialectics a profession exists in society in three basic forms of living, universal and abstract labour".

The term 'professional' is interpreted as, "a person who turned some occupation, activity into his/her profession, a good specialist ... hunter-professional, director-professional". Regarding the profession, for instance



“an experienced jurist thoroughly knowing laws and all kinds of professional subtleties. To be professional: professional revolutionary, professional wrestlers, professional nurse”. Professionalisation is “mastering by profession, specialising in some area. Transition to the rank of professionals”. For instance, “younger writer”. (Academic Dictionary of Russian Language 1987, 540)

In the framework of western sociological theory of professionalism such a sense of the terms of profession, professional, professionalisation is defined as “a trivial sense ... referring to the division of labour in society and to the degree of socialisation of different kinds of activity”. It “is used to describe someone who earns a living from a particular occupation as opposed to the amateur who pursues it for other motives”. (Splichal and Sparks 1994, 34–35)

That is, one could assume that the Soviet and the post-Soviet discourses employ the term *profession* and its derivatives mostly in the trivial sense, not claiming a core of professionalism as it is understood in the West and in this way lowering the level of demands. Markku Kivinen (2002) argues that in the socialist ideology there is no detailed system position regarding the problem of professionalisation. In the USSR the professional organisations possessed different opportunities to oppose interference from outside in the process of definition of production tasks. They often met interference from party apparatus forming professional practices and managing the professional education and training. “The traditional intelligence did not have a clear position in the social division of labour. Its ethos was not attached to specialised competencies, but to endless discussion about high-flying ideas, lofty goals, the future of Russia”. There was no true labour market for specialists and specialists did not have an opportunity to implement private practice completely or partly (Ibid., 124–125).

That is, one could identify the Russian case as an instance of under-developed comprehension of professionalism. On the other hand, considering medical practice then one should admit that the terms profession and professional had and have also been used in narrower senses such as technical mastery, implying high routine skills and as the standards of professionalism legitimated by employers and colleagues (Hippocratic Oath of the Soviet physicians). Moreover, it is possible to discuss the professionalism of Soviet physicians in Freidson’s sense because they made decisions on the basis of their technical competence and not on the basis of state interference, although they were subjected to the state administration and served as state employees. However, this was not the case for Soviet lawyers and scientists.

Maybe it would be more fruitful to speak about a model of ‘Soviet profession’ as the product of the Soviet system and its ‘birth-mark’ at present. In this case,

there is a chance to scrutinise features of the development of profession in the conditions of modernisation of socialistic society according to the state planning and the compelling process of levelling of class structure and also in the new post-Soviet conditions of transforming the old system into a new one. Then one could distinguish a single occupation holding the highest status in the social stratification and occupations and meeting practically all requirements for a true profession in western theory, such as: power, prestige, autonomy, self-control and self-regulation, body of knowledge and techniques, service orientation, ethics, membership. Such an occupation was party work, which could be identified as meta-profession of the Soviet system with many other occupations as sub-professions (Soviet professions).

The Soviet past testifies that the party staff workers (mainly former specialists of various professional spheres) served as meta-professionals, specifically their competence was acknowledged as the most appropriate to be appointed and often to command in proper fields: policy, economy, industry, culture, education, journalism and so on. The Highest Party School (*VPSH*) was for them a second high education and on graduating they became top level state managers and oversaw the professional structure of society. The Soviet professionals had no conception of a detachment of their professional activities from interference of the 'native' state, the majority were adherents of socialistic views and strove to make their own contribution to the welfare of the country:

Toward 1985 the majority of the population of the country believed in the advantages of the planned economy, public property as a means of production, believed in the cultural, moral superiority of the Soviet Union over the West. Deeply believed in, deeply patriotically and quite sincerely supported the foreign policy of the Soviet government – even the policy on Afghanistan. (Shlapentokh 2000, 120)

In the 1990s, the meta-professionals continued to be required in the state policy and private business. Markku Kivinen (2002, 154) notes the fact “that the people who now occupy the top positions are largely the same as before. This applies equally to “new Russians’ and to managerial positions in general”. Timo Piirinen (1998, 37), based on Russian scholars (Kryshtanovskaya 1992; Radaev 1994; Ershova et al. 1994; Frydman et al. 1996) notes that “The former members of the *nomenklatura* who, during the period of privatisation of state property, have successfully converted their old power assets to capital, form the core of the new elite”. One could say that the meta-professionals of Soviet society occupy positions allowing them to control and to direct the developments in various professional spheres of the present society. An assumption emerges that in such

a case cardinal change in the development of status of professions including journalism is very unlikely.

With regard to journalism, its distinctive feature was among the number of professions submitting to the laws of creativity. Rafael Bukhartsev clarifies the core of the journalist's profession as:

Creative labour is always tied with the creation of something new, unknown. An existing set of professional methods and means does not contain a ready scheme relevant to the implementation of an emerging task. An act of creativity, in contrast to the acts based on the application of the known methods and rules leading to the known results, means every time a creation of completely autonomous strategy of human conduct. (Bukhartsev 1976, 3)

He appeals to Lenin, who emphasised that it is inadmissible mechanic levelling in the approach to the work of the party literary worker. The specific character is in the scope of personal initiative, individual inclinations, in the scope of thought and fantasy, form and content (Ibid., 3). Bukhartsev stresses, that "the development of Soviet journalism was tied to genre, thematic specialisation, but not to functional-operational forms. The publicistic comprehension of reality had occurred in any genre, in any theme and it could not to be separated from the gathering and treatment of a material without risk of destroying the content of the profession, its core" (Ibid., 8). He notes that journalists possessed different skills from publicist's writing, but no watershed could exist between publicist and non-publicist writing in the journalist's profession.

The essential signs of the journalist's professional approach to the phenomena of life are "when a journalist comes to the description of a situation or a problem from outside, comprehends its essence in the process of publicist writing and presents the material not from himself, but from the public" (Bukhartsev 1976, 9). Bukhartsev argues that "journalism in its creative nature is a profession the basic content of which is the publicist's comprehension of reality with inherent transformation of the forms of the cognition and also with specific means of the penetration into special spheres of the material and spiritual activity" (Ibid., 10).

The dominance of literary tradition is visible in the interpretations of terms of journalist and journalism in Soviet sources: "a journalist is a professional literary worker in journalism"; journalism is "the literary-publicist's activity in magazines, newspapers, radio, television" (Academic Dictionary of Russian Language 1985, 489). Another definition of journalism bears a political trace: "the public activity of gathering, treatment and periodical spreading of the actual social information through press, radio, television, cinema and others; one of forms of conducting mass propaganda" (Soviet Encyclopedia 1983, 441).

The Soviet journalists' handbook gives the definition of the Soviet journalism as "the most important area of the party and public activity". Whereas "every Soviet journalist must perform with the party, publicistic partiality against everything that hinders our movement forward, against any appearances of bourgeois ideology, unhealthy moods and philistinism. To perform acutely and deeply with class positions" (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky 1971, 3–4).

Departing from the official state interpretation was Mikhail Bakhtin who was repressed and forbidden in the USSR at the end of the 1920s, but whose works were permitted and opened anew mainly by the 1980s. He defined a journalist not as a party worker, but rather as approaching in the light of cultural studies: "a journalist is a contemporary first of all. He/she must be the contemporary. He/she lives in the light of questions, which can be solved in the contemporaneity (or, in any case, in the near time). He/she participates in dialogue which can be finished or even completed, can be turned into business, and can become an empirical force". (Bakhtin 1979, 356–357)

In the post-Soviet interpretation's terms: journalism, journalist, profession, professionalisation lose their political slant becoming rather neutral. Journalism is "specific mass informational activity bound with search and transmission of actual social information in rhythmical form for mass anonymous audience" (Svitich 2000, 4). The Russian law on the mass media defines a journalist who "edits, creates, collects or prepares messages and materials for the editor's office of a mass medium and is connected with it with labour and other contractual relations or engaged in such activity, being authorised by it" (Panyarskaya and Richter 1996, 8).

Luiza Svitich (2000, 111) considers that the profession of a journalist is comparable with the professions of writer, teacher, politician, statesman and public figure, representative of art and culture, scientist, historian, judge and priest. Svetlana Vinogradova (2000, 45) states that publicistics remains one of highest levels of journalistic creativity. Iosif Dzyaloshinsky (1996, 30) explains that professionalisation of a journalist is the mastering of the professional experience by adapting to the professional community and developing the process of individualisation wherein a journalist turns into the creative personality.

## **2.2 Profession in the western tradition**

In contrast to the Soviet tradition, western sociology accepts at least three kinds of labour as professions: medicine, law and science. Other kinds of

specialised activities including journalism are interpreted as occupations moving towards becoming professions. Professionalisation is seen as an extended self-assertive process of constant practice (finding one's own employment), narrow specialisation (technical expertise) and standards of conduct (code of ethics). This increases the requirement not so much for specialised skills but for certain kinds of conduct, the social cohesion of the professional community itself and 'its status relative to other groups' (Splichal and Sparks 1994, 36).

In the West, the dispute about profession is a vast reference field for examining the development of occupations. Scientists have still not agreed on a generally accepted definition of profession although a considerable body of literature exists – “often referred to as the ‘trait’ or ‘attributional’ perspective – which consists of a largely fruitless attempt to identify the elements common to all occupations” (Johnson 1993, 513). Meanwhile, the western discourse embraces very different meanings of the term profession, invoking in those cultural and historical settings of professions as they were interpreted, causing some scholars because of these differences to come to the conclusion that “the terms profession and professionalisation are virtual nonconcepts, since there is a little consensus about their meaning” (Forsythe and Danisiewicz 1985, 59).

According to Goodwin and Smith (1995, 35), sociologists usually limit the term ‘professional’ to occupations whose practitioners can meet three necessary standards: have specialised university education, be self-employed or work with little or no supervision, and abide by a uniform code of ethics that everyone in the profession follows. Splichal and Sparks (1994, 37) have included in the definition of profession such criteria as body of expert knowledge, autonomy, group solidarity within the professional community, self-regulation, licensing, authority over clients, and a code of ethics.

Beam (1990, 6–8) argues that control over the occupation's knowledge base and techniques often underlies the common attributes of professions. This leads him to the conclusion that since no occupational group has absolute authority over the terms of its work it is more helpful to think of occupations as more or less professionalised rather than to think of some occupations as professions and others as not. Thus, to summarise, profession can be viewed as an ideal type of occupation (Vollmer and Mills, in Becker et al. 1987, 19).

Magali Larson (1977, xi) suggests the general dimensions of ideal-type of profession as follows:

the cognitive dimension is centered on the body of knowledge and techniques which the professionals apply in their work, and on the training necessary to master such knowledge and skills. The normative-dimension covers the service orientation of professionals, and their distinctive ethics, which

justify the privilege of self-regulation granted them by society. The evaluative dimension implicitly compares professions to other occupations, underscoring the professions' singular characteristics of autonomy and prestige. The distinctiveness of the professions appears to be founded on the combination of these general dimensions. These uncommon occupations tend to become "real" communities, whose members share a relatively permanent affiliation, an identity, personal commitment, specific interests, and general loyalties.

According to Terry Johnson (1993, 513–514) two questions have governed social scientific thinking on the modern professions. First, "to what extent have professional occupations been a unique product of the division of labour?" Here the main reference is addressed to Weber (1967, 1978) who "saw professionalisation as a process crucial to the emergence of modern society, with the rise of occupations characterised by 'rational' criteria of recruitment and performance". The second question posed the problem "do the professions perform a special role or function in modern society?" Here the appeal is to Durkheim (1950), "who argued that in industrialising societies, increasingly fragmented by a 'forced' division of labour, the 'occupational corporation' or profession was the only institution capable of generating a new moral order, mediating between the bureaucratic regulation of the modern state and the anomic individual".

However, since the mid-1960s, as Johnson (1993, 515) points out, there has been a loss of faith in professional altruism, an increasing focus on monopolistic professional power as an exploitative force, and scepticism about the beneficial effects of professionalism as a strategy for collective, occupational advancement or mobility (Friedman 1962; Gilb 1966; Navarro 1976). With the emergence of 'monopoly' theory, professionalism was identified as both a collective strategy for monopolistic control over occupational jurisdiction (Larson 1977) and a system of exclusionary practices, significant in the formation of the division of labour rather than a product of it – part of the wider process of class formation (Parkin 1979).

Kaarle Nordenstreng (1998, 125–126) distinguishes two main strands of thought or approaches in the sociological discussion on profession: "Functionalist" and "neo-Weberian" promoted two opposite views on professionalism. The positive view taken by the functionalistic approach suggests that "professions brought much-needed social cohesion and new morality into the process of modernisation, with scientific specialisation (Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1933) and social service" (Marshall 1939). The critical view taken by the neo-Weberian approach perceives "professions as bastions of narrow and elitist



interests which “serve in modern society as repressive mechanisms undermining democracy and turning active citizens into passive consumers”.

Nordenstreng suggests that the evolution of journalism as a profession “provided a textbook example of a functional approach” although “reflections around media professions over the past two decades include more and more critical voices... and this one can indeed speak of a democratic shift”:

...When a media-centred paradigm is replaced by a citizen-centred paradigm, one is also moving away from a functional approach to a critical (neo-Weberian) approach. ... More fundamentally, however, it was a paradigm shift away from an approach which understands media and journalists as the owners of communication rights and freedoms toward a paradigm whereby it is the citizens and their civil society that should be seen as the ultimate owners of freedom of information (Nordenstreng *Ibid.*, 126–127).

However, when the question is posed directly whether journalism is a profession or not, scholars prefer to discuss journalism more as an occupation than as a profession, the more so as there is no internationally recognised definition of who actually is a journalist (Splichal and Sparks 1994, 4; Alleyne 1997, 111–112). According to Bromley (1997, 330) “While strictly speaking, neither a profession, nor a craft, it has displayed many of the characteristics of both”. Lambeth (1992) has suggested the definition of journalism as a craft with professional responsibility. Some authors argue that journalism is becoming more professionalised (e.g. Splichal & Sparks 1994; Lambeth 1992, 106; Cohen 1997, 97). There is some authority, increasing stress upon special or at least higher education, in most cases ethical codes and a specific culture (Školkay 1998, 312). The professionalism of journalists is defined as impartial, fair and accurate reporting (Corner 1995).

Nevertheless, “journalism remains a very permeable occupation; mobility between journalism and public relations is quite common, as is mobility between journalism and other forms of writing” (Abbott 1988, 225). Yet the argument that journalism is not a profession stems from its accessibility: “While there are schools, associations, degrees, and ethics codes, there is no exclusion of those who lack them” (*Ibid.*). John Merrill (1997, 334) perceives journalism not as a profession, but as a craft, a commitment open to everyone irrespective of education. He states that the more journalism becomes a profession the more it will reject innovations, frighten off irrepressible dilettantes and contribute to the promotion of second grade specialists. Journalism will narrow pluralism and journalists will not think about the public interest but first about their own interests.

In the course of the twentieth century a number of non-professional occupations (for instance, nurses, entrepreneurs, journalists) attempted to lay a claim to professional status when they professionalised themselves by forming occupational organisations and fostering a public image of their ethics, specialised knowledge and training. Owing to their attempts hybrid occupations got the definitions as the ‘semi’- or the ‘sub’-, or the ‘pseudo-professions’ (Etzioni 1969). However, the ‘monopoly’ theorists claim that the identification of an occupation as professional has less to do with the reality of a division of labour in which a colleague association effectively controls its own work practices than with the collective strategy of professionalism as a means of occupational advancement (Johnson 1994, 515).

### **2.3 Professionalisation versus proletarianisation**

In the West, professionalisation movements rose from the development of the civil society in the late eighteenth century as a “variety of efforts by elites or counter-elites within the ‘classic’ occupational fields of medicine and the law” to transact their services on the market. “These markets, for a large part, had to be created as much as protected” (Larson 1990, 26). Both the United Kingdom and the United States were in the process of the organisation of market economics and committed at least ideologically to *laissez-faire*. Continental Europe experienced a similar process; thus, in Germany in the nineteenth century the guilds of the medical elite were reinstated, likewise in France elite schools for state engineers, military and civilian *génie* (Ibid., 27) (civil engineers).

Nevertheless, the historical developments of the professions had their peculiarities in every country. Michael Foucault (2006) distinguishes the development of medicine in three countries as three different trends: state medicine in Germany, urban medicine in France and manpower medicine in England. He notes that Germany provided a paradoxical example of the appearance of modern medicine in the culmination moment of etatism: at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries in Prussia state bureaucratic medicine was established with the complete standardisation of the profession through the organisation of state medical knowledge, subordination of physicians to the general administration and their integration into the state medical organisation. Later from state medicine there emerged the great clinical medicine of the nineteenth century.

France at the end of the eighteenth century showed an example of the development of medicine based on the phenomenon of urbanisation, where



medical services were developed together with the municipal structures. It was medicine of living conditions and environment fighting against epidemics, infections, pollution of air and water and producing a new notion 'hygienic'. It was utterly unlike state medicine in Germany (*Staatsmedizin*) being far from state medicine and attached to small associations of cities and their districts.

In England in the nineteenth century an explosive growth of industry and the proletariat gave rise to a new direction in the development of medicine pursuing medical control of manpower. 'The law about poor men' in fact, had turned English medicine into social medicine although there were some projects of state medicine of the German type and inspired by the French system of urban medicine. But as Foucault (2006, 106) concludes, if the German system of state medicine was burdensome, French urban medicine represented a generalised project of control not being a convenient tool of power, so the English system pooled together all three existing systems of medicine: medicine of aid addressed to the poorest people, administrative medicine aimed at such common problems as vaccination, epidemics and finally, private medicine for those who could afford it for themselves.

In journalism the professionalisation movement began as a response to "the perceived failings of the mass newspaper press, especially its commercialism but also its lack of political independence" (McQuail 2005, 173). It passed along the way towards self-organisation: the establishment of professional associations, press councils, the drawing up of principles of good practice and codes of ethics. Press councils voluntarily began to serve as mediators between the public and the mass media "to adjudicate on complaints from any party affected by the media" being guided by the codes of ethics, whereas the media acknowledged these codified professional standards of conduct as well as a responsibility to the public (Ibid).

After the Second World War "the movement towards codifying journalistic practice" started in the USA "before the 1947 Hutchins Committee Report" and then spread all over Europe. This general process of professionalisation of journalism was also motivated by "the wish of the media industry to protect itself from criticism, and especially from the threat of external intervention and reduced autonomy" (McQuail 2005, 173; Laitila 1995).

According to Hallin and Mancini (2004) the western media show three general types of media models identified as: (1) the Mediterranean or Polarised Pluralistic model, (2) the North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist model and (3) the North Atlantic or Liberal model. Each of these differs in its history and specifics of the development of society, media and professionalisation

of journalists. However, in spite of national features they share a common system of beliefs, which incorporates so-called 'western' understanding of professionalism as objective reporting and journalistic 'detachment'.

That is, the western discourse on professional journalism focuses on the demands of certain occupational standards and conduct with the idea of establishing independent informational expertise. This is accompanied by the promotion of equal access and participation of citizens in public debate. The professional is required to have a sense of responsibility towards the public and at the same time to be an opponent to those in power (I). As Weaver (1998) research reveals the western democracies have been supported by such basic journalistic roles as disseminator, interpreter and adversary.

In the Communist countries the concept of professional journalism was utterly different from what it was in the capitalist West. In the introduction to the first Russian publication of *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert et al. 1956) the Dean of the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University, Yassen Zassoursky (1998, 7) proposes two different approaches to journalism: *journalism as a tool of the political authority* (the Communist countries with Communist ideology) and *journalism as the fourth estate* (the capitalist West with liberal ideology). If the first approach cemented relations between journalism and the State as internally indissoluble with media operating as an integral part of the State machine; the second approach, on the contrary, expected from the media, free from the State, an independent control of the government and business in the public interest. (IV)

Thus, the USSR was laying the foundation of 'etatist' journalism, as state service in state media designed for state tasks whereas the Soviet media were seen as antagonists to the West (Buzek 1964; Inkeles 1968; Bogdanov and Vyazemsky 1971; Hollander 1972; Bukhartsev 1976; Lauk 1997, 2005). The instrumental role of the Soviet media needed in *propagandists, agitators* and *organisers* (Lenin's types of the professional roles of the Soviet journalists) who were accepted and politically educated for State jobs. The journalists with pro-State thinking perceived themselves as the supporters of the social order and policy aimed at the formation of a new Soviet man with "a high level consciousness: collectivism, socialist patriotism and internationalism, personal responsibility to society" (Petrosyan 1969, 44).

The post-Soviet media remain a challenge for research. The present individual uncertainty of a journalist with a lack of social protection, a crisis of his/her professional identity contrasts drastically with the Soviet past of state stability, privileged journalistic status among other occupations, and the

professional identity rising from the political education and prescribed repertoire of the state roles (propagandist, agitator and organiser) for the needs of the state construction of the USSR.

The first case study of St Petersburg journalists, 1998–2002, reveals their utterly different perceptions of professionalism including the ideal hypothetical type of an independent, honest journalist and the real type of colleague earning money from corrupt articles (I). Emerging roles of *propagandist*, *organiser* and *entertainer* are required by the present agenda mostly in the interests of the government and economic groups. The study of regional journalists, 2003–2005, finds a high level of tolerance of corrupt practice and censorship among young generations of journalists (V).

The theory of professionalisation does not come up enough in the analysis of the developments of Russian journalism, its twin, the theory of proletarianisation explaining reverse processes to the development of professionalisation is needed. Magali Larson (1979, 623) reminds us that proletarianisation is the other side of professionalisation. Andrew Abbott (1988, 329) looks at deprofessionalisation and/or proletarianisation as just professionalisation in reverse.

In contrast to the western approach, Russian discourse attaches the term proletarianisation to a certain historical period giving its interpretation as “inevitable in the conditions of the capitalism process of the ruination and impoverishment of small producers (peasants and craft-artisans) and their transformation into proletariat, employers’ (Academic Dictionary of Russian Language 1987, Vol.3, 498–499). According to Filippov (1998, 422) contemporary sociology rarely uses this term.

In the West, sociology of work and professions uses the term *proletarianisation* widely. Thus, Eliot Freidson (1986, 110) divides authors on the theme into two groups. The first group argues that the professions of the past with characteristics of high prestige and public trust will be deprofessionalised because of changes in the attitudes and behaviour of the public and in the character of their knowledge (Haug 1973, 1975, 1977; Burnham 1982; Barber 1983; Rothman 1984 and many others). The list of references includes the rising educational level of the public, which narrows the gap between the professional’s knowledge and the client’s, and thus erodes the professional’s authority; the standardisation and routinisation of knowledge; computer technology removing control over practice from the hands of practitioners; the other rising occupations, which are taking over the traditional areas served by the professions, thereby destroying their monopolies.

The second group of authors inspired by Marxist theory pays more attention to the place of professionals in the capitalist political economy and their relations to the owners of capital. They look at professionals as workers, how their changing position over the twentieth century parallels that of manual labour in industry over the course of the nineteenth century, when independence and the ability to control their work was lost (Oppenheimer 1973; Larson 1977, 1979, 1980; Derber 1982; McKinlay 1982 and many others). There are two factors central to the process of proletarianisation: professionals become employed and they are employed in bureaucracies.

“On becoming employed, the professional cannot be independent, free to choose what work to do and how to do it. And when employed in a bureaucracy, the professional becomes subject to strict control that routines and, [...] deskill professional work” (Freidson 1986, 111). That is, the trend for proletarianisation is from self-employment in an individual free practice to employment in large bureaucracies. In this case what distinguishes the professional from working-class proletariat, “the formal definition of working class is that class, which, possessing nothing but its power to labour, sells that labour to capital in return for its subsistence” (Freidson 1986, 119; Braverman 1974, 378).

The British sociologists give the interpretation of the term in the frame of the second group interests. Proletarianisation is seen as a process of transformation of some part of the middle class into the working class. They distinguish between proletarianisation of action and proletarianisation of conditions. The first includes the analysis of behaviour in the period of voting or inclination to join trade unions. The second includes market, labour and status dimensions, such as wage, length of vacation, chances of professional career, fringe benefits, relations with employer, degree of autonomy and status in the white-collar workers' community. The more white-collar workers approximate blue-collar workers in these indicators, the more arguments there are to speak of their proletarianisation (Abercrombie et al. 1999, 246).

However, proletarianisation of conditions does not always and not at once lead to proletarianisation of action, although many sociologists, especially Marxists, claim that proletarianisation and de-skilling are to be expected among a significant part of the middle class. Thus, according to the labour process approach, the development of capitalism leads to de-skilling and proletarianisation insofar as the evolution of industrial technology and organisation of work have been defined by a demand for capital in supremacy over the labour process. This has been reached by means of the introduction of scientific management in the organisation of labour and new technologies independent of workers' qualifications which leads to de-skilling labour (Abercrombie et al. 1999, 334).

Johnson (1972) and Parkin (1979) examine the relationship between professionals and the state power, their dual position, on the one hand, as representatives of the class implementing functions of capital, on the other hand, how individuals implement the functions of a collective worker. A new tendency is that professionals have been increasingly involved in the work of the bureaucratic organisations of the state and private sectors of the economy instead of remaining independent. Therefore some professions can be subjected to proletarianisation because of their coming subordination to increasing bureaucratic control and strategies of rationalisation (Abercrombie et al. 1999, 249). Another opinion comes from Murphy (1990, 76) that professionals but not professions have been subjected to proletarianisation: “Professions have become bureaucratized, but they have not become proletarianised”.

The next chapter presents the evolution of journalism in Russia before the USSR, during the USSR and after. The analysis seeks grounds for the traditional status of journalism, mostly designed to serve state interests, as a tool of the government. Journalism as an occupation is examined in the light of the theories of proletarianisation and professionalisation.

## **3 Being a journalist in Russia: Historical developments**

### **3.1 Before the USSR**

Nicolay A. Polevoi, writer and historian, first introduced the word ‘journalism’ into the Russian language. The first attempt to expound the history of Russian journalism was also made by him in “The Review of Russian newspapers and journals from their beginning to 1828” (Zapadov 1963, 177). In the eighteenth century the register of the Russian press included 133 publications, a comprehensive description of it was made in the historical review of the press, 1703–1802 (Neustroev 1875). In the nineteenth century the number of newspapers and journals, as well as the volume had grown to such an extent that none of the attempts of Russian researchers undertaken in 1914, 1917 and 1925 to describe the press of the nineteenth century was successful. However, some contribution was made in 1959: a selected annotated review of Russian newspapers, journals and almanacs published in the eighteenth – nineteenth

centuries was represented by the reference book “Russian Periodical Press, 1702–1894” (Zapadov 1963, 13–14).

It is mysticism or a quirk of fate that journalism in Russia originated in a personal initiative by the Tsar, Peter the Great, the founder and editor of the first Russian newspaper *Vedomosti*. Later, Ekaterina II, empress of Russia, 1729–1796, (reigned 1762–1796), started a tradition of women’s press and the professional participation of women in journalism. She was a founder and contributor to a magazine *Vsiakaia vsiachina* in 1769; published *Sobesednik liubitelei rossiiskogo slova* in 1783–1784 (Farris 2001, 286). According to the name index of Beliaeva’s *Bibliografiia periodicheskikh izdanii Rossii, 1901–1916*, more than 850 women were active in publishing and editing (Ibid. 281). Later, Lenin, the founder of the new Soviet state, gave rise to a new type of proletarian press, the important component of party and state apparatus. In the documents he identified himself as a journalist, a literary man (Bogdanov and Vyasemsky 1971, 5).

The first newspaper *Vedomosti* recruited for the job educated people with literary talent, such as Fedor Polikarpov, a director of a printing house in Moscow and the first editor-in-chief, who wrote poems; the translators Boris Volkov and Jakov Sinjavich, of whom the latter became the first Russian reporter. In 1728 the government charged the Russian Academy of Science with issuing *Vedomosti* therefore many scholars and students of the Academy, including foreign students, were involved in journalistic work, among those were M. V. Lomonosov and G.F. Miller (Zapadov 1963, 20–22).

In the 1830s the amateur writing for the press began to change into a professional occupation. Some factors emerged for this. Alexander F. Smirdin, a publisher and bookseller, first introduced the fixed author’s payment of 200 rubles a page, and of 1000 rubles and more a page for famous writers. This provided an opportunity for those to come into journalism who did not have another source of livelihood. That is, the introduction of honoraria contributed to the democratisation of literature and journalism as well as to the professionalisation of the writer’s and journalist’s labour.

In the history of Russian culture, literature and journalism developed together enriching each other; some writers and journalists had the role of public teachers. For instance, Alexander Pushkin was not only a great national poet, but also a talented journalist and critic. He published and edited *Sovremennik* (Contemporary), one of the best Russian journals of the 1830s and *Literaturnaya gazeta* in 1830 (Zapadov 1963, 162–163). Many writers started their careers in journalism (V. Belinsky, A. Chekhov, M. Gorky), others were connected with the occupation of journalism for a long time or for their whole lives, establishing their



journals and newspapers (the brothers F. M. and M. M. Dostoevsky, A. Gertsen). They used journalism as a public tribune for their activities and perceived their mission in producing mental pabulum for the satisfaction of the intellectual demands of the citizens.

On the one hand, this was the same as American journalism in the 1890s: "Journalism was traditionally conceived of as a literary genre rather than a specific of technical writing" (Carey 1969, 32). The western researchers find common paths in the development of journalism in the Tsar's Russia and in the West: the rise of the mass-circulation press, its commercialisation and movement to independence, the search for professional models, serving the public and its contribution to the rise of civil society (McReynolds 1991; Marker 1996; Norton et al. 2001).

However, their studies also emphasise that political and socio-cultural differences existed between Russia and Europe. Richard Pipes (1990) is convinced that early capitalism Russia did not develop towards democracy. The autocracy (*samoderzhavie*) laid the foundation of the police state with the aim of keeping order and not to allowing social outburst in the country. Grabeljnikov (2002, 4) points out that from the very outset in Russia journalism was the state, a serious matter guarding the governmental interests, and those who criticised the authority and the order by means of journalism felt the consequences in their own fates (Sumarokov, Novikov, Fonvizin, Radishchev, Krylov). The political authority had been assumed over such mechanisms of control of the press as state censorship and sanctions. The history of censorship in Russia is a part of the history of Russian journalism (Zhirkov 2002).

Nicolay Novombergsky (1906/2002, 322) dates the beginning of the state censorship in the press from the cradle, since the eighteenth century. His historical review of police legislation proves that the autocracy strove to settle "the peace of the grave" in the immense Russian territory suppressing the highest one-off freedoms – a freedom of speech by numerous enactments and rules of censorship: 1804, 1826, 1828, 1865, 1882. The Civil law and criminal law together with administrative persecution served as a habitual tool of punishment for critical journalists and the press. After the Socialist Revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks continued the tradition of censorship of the press since it established the Soviet *Glavlit* in the 1920s.

Abram Reitblat and Boris Dubin (2006, 4) point out an absence of autonomous and energetic social forces able to resist the autocracy. The long distances and poor communications in Russia contributed to the formation of centralised and rigid political control of all spheres of life in society and delayed

the modernisation processes: the rise of centres and agents of collective action, the development of connections between them, the formation of common mediators, such as money, press and literacy.

In their analysis of the development of the literary process in Russia, the researchers draw attention to how literary journals were setting a structure for the whole literary system. Since the 1830s the literary journals which rose to prominence regulated the literary process in a such way that relations and connections in literature were developed not in the form of self-organisation, on the horizontal, but were imitating a form of vertical, hierarchical organisation which was clearly divisive, with the influential centre appropriating all basic resources and the periphery adopting directives, purposes and patterns received from the centre. It was completely different from the development of the literary system of western countries (Ibid).

In the capital cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow the press had better economic conditions than on the periphery in retail, circulation, readership, advertising, governmental subsidies and the journalistic labour market. The capital newspapers and journals, especially those with a pro-governmental orientation (*Novoe Vremya*) had influence and a high position in society, such journalists, for instance, as M.H. Katkov enjoyed authority in the influential circles and exerted power over everyone with their articles, even ministers (Eliseev 1880, 135). The difference in income among journalists was striking. Thus, the famous reporter V.M. Doroshevich had an annual income of forty thousand rubles early in the twentieth century, whereas the typical reporter averaged two hundred rubles per month, “while the best earned between five hundred and seven hundred rubles” (McReynolds 1991, 156).

By contrast, on the periphery a correspondent was “an unselfish and unlucky creature, earns little but is hit like a cutlet by denunciations to the authorities, anonymous letters and threats, eviction from the flat, refusal of service in the food shop” (*Kurjer* 1904.9.12). Mikhail Olminsky wrote:

“... educated Russian seldom pronounces the word “correspondent” without a contemptuous grin.... A correspondent is not a writer, as a *feldscher* is not a doctor. But let us suppose that correspondents are the *feldschers* of literature. Does the *feldscher's* work really deserve the contemptuous grin because it is something less than a doctor's work? Much is strange in the position of a correspondent... On the one hand, one has to blush for the profession, on the other hand, as only they recognise that you are a correspondent, at once they begin to ask “describe that”, “unmask that person”. Consequently, not only editorial offices are needed in the correspondent's services”. (Olminsky 1902)



By the end of the 1880s, with the beginning of the development of capitalism in Russia, journalism as well as other occupations began to make efforts towards professionalisation operating on the same logic as in the West. Thus, after 1894 with the First Congress in Antwerp, the next International Congresses of Journalists had been held annually in different countries of the world, the Russian journalists participated in some of them. The Congresses raised questions about professional associations and education (Berezhnoi 1997, 17). That time in Russia saw the heyday of professional associations of journalists and their specialised editions, likewise a growth in the number of newspapers, circulations and publishing houses.

Alexander Berezhnoi lists the following events. In 1896 the Union of Mutual Aid for Russian Writers was established; the professional editions appeared: "The Handbook and Notebook-Calendar of the Press Worker", reference books "The Press World", a journal *Novosti pechati* (The Print News). In 1904 the first journalism school opened, but survived only a few months. In 1905 the Tsar's manifesto (17 October) permitted freedom of speech and professional unions, whereupon several journalistic organisations were established: the Union of Journalists, Book Publishers and Book Printers; the Union of Defence of Press Freedom uniting all dailies and many monthly editions of St. Petersburg. The First Congress of Writers and Journalists was held.

In 1910 the Second Congress of Writers and Journalists was held. In 1912 a new literary and scientific-popular journal *Sotrudnik pechati* (The Press Contributor) was launched for the self-education of journalists and a new supplement, the literary-critical review "Contemporary Press" in the journal "The Print News". In 1914 there appeared a journal "The Journalist". In 1915 N.P. Pokorskii published an educational aid "How to correspond for newspapers". In 1916, a new education aid "The Guide for Beginner Correspondents" by the brothers P. and D. Kumanov was published; the Charter of the All-Russian Society of Editors of Dailies was adopted aiming at the investigation and satisfaction of the professional needs of its members and the defence of the professional interests and rights. In 1917 the All-Russian Congress of Editors of Dailies was held (Berezhnoi 1997, 17–18).

By the beginning of the twentieth century the Russian printing industry showed an economic upturn. In 1913 the country had the second place in the world for the number of books published. The professional movement of printers started in St Petersburg in 1838 from the establishing of the first mutual aid fund of printers. At the beginning, for the defence of their economic interests, and later including the fight against censorship and for freedom of speech, the

printers established their professional unions, to hold the congresses, to publish the numerous professional journals, among them in St Petersburg: weekly *Naborshchik* (The Typesetter) (1902–1904), *Naborshchik i Pechantyi Mir* (The Types-Setter and Press World) (1905–1917), in Moscow: *Pechatnoe slovo* (1906–1907), *Pechatnik* (1907); Samara *Tipographskiy listok* (1905). After October 1917, the professional movement of printers was turned into the union of Red Printers. The former principle of the movement “Neutrality is a necessary condition for the normal development of the professional movement” was abolished (Berezhnoi 1996).

The development of medicine testified that “early twentieth-century medicine in Russia was following a typically European path”: the establishment of medical associations, such as the *zemstvo* (local government) physicians, the Pirogov Society of Russian physicians, the increase in physicians and their professional consolidation, “planning a health service dominated by the medical profession”; strengthening the medical profession’s position in the health service (George and Manning 1980, 107–108; Navarro 1977). However, the coming to power of the Bolsheviks and their new political course from capitalism to socialism led to the abolition of private practice, the loss of the political independence of the profession, the replacement of the Pirogov Society with a new and single Medical Workers’ Union in 1919, the opening of Workers’ Faculties “to expand and proletarianise the medical profession”, decreasing pay, total worker-class control everywhere (Ibid). Soviet power abolished the free status of professions by transferring them into state service, the process of professionalisation was interrupted for the long time.

### 3.2 During the USSR

The Soviet media traces its history from the newspaper *Iskra* and Lenin’s political testament for them published in 1901: “a newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser” (Lenin Vol. 5, 11). The function of the newspaper was to be an instrument: a collective organ of propaganda for the ideas of the party and a collective centre of organisation of both the party itself and the vast proletarian masses around the party. Such a newspaper mostly responded to the tasks of Russian orthodox Marxists “bringing to the forefront the revolutionary fight of the proletariat being guided by organised a minority inspired by a conscious proletarian idea” (Berdyayev 1997, 337).

The October Socialist Revolution brought the Bolshevik press privileged status, decrees on the press (October 27, 1917) and the state monopoly over advertising (November 4, 1917) closed no Bolshevik newspapers nor deprived them of any income, requisitioned printing houses for Bolshevik editions (Bodganov and Vyazemsky 1971, 18). The Bolshevik press achieved a monopoly over information with the support of state financing and the elimination of all competitors. An exception was the short period of the new economic policy (*NEP*) begun in the 1920s and given the rise of independent newspapers and journals, private and cooperative publishing houses in the capital cities and province: Odessa, Pskov, Saratov (Zhirkov 1999, 14).

However, a decade later the market-oriented *NEP* was displaced in favour of state regulation, independent press and private publishing houses ceased to exist, whereas the state press (Soviet press) was to assist in ensuring *the successful transition from capitalism to communism*. Its central tasks became propaganda, mobilisation and organisation of the masses into a new economic and political system as well as the formation of a new Soviet man, *homo Sovieticus*. According to Lenin's planning, newspapers became the organs of different level party organisations, whereas the party committees (propaganda sections) coordinated the work of the editorial offices (Lenin Vol.12, 101; Vol. 24, 338–340).

In terms of the proletarianisation theory, there occurred a *proletarianisation of action* and *proletarianisation of conditions*. The first included a shift of non-proletarian staff by the proletariat staff. Before journalists included mixed profile persons from the (petty) bourgeoisie, members of the lower middle class: "sacked teachers, half-educated students, expelled seminarists (students of theological college), officials forced to hand in their resignations for reasons beyond their control" (Volkov 1925, 16–17). In their 'Guide for Beginner Correspondents' the brothers Kumanov (1916, 40) wrote that "every literate person is able to write correspondence for a newspaper. The labour of a correspondent takes so little time that everyone has time to do this as a means of earning without prejudice to his official and professional work".

The Soviet rule from the beginning introduced the policy of "*orabochivania*" (proletarianisation) of journalistic staff (Svitich 1998, 197). The newspapers were designed "to safeguard working-class interests" and to lead the fight against class enemies and those groups of workers who "were attached to the habits and traditions of capitalism" (Lenin Vol.37, 90, 91). Additionally, the party inspired the mass movement of workers' correspondents proceeding from Lenin's idea of working-class control over the press. Thus, after the end of 1918, the newspaper *Pravda* began to initiate meetings with workers' correspondents. Sooner

the party established a special institute to guide the movement of workers' correspondents (Bogdanov and Vayzemy 1971, 53). The first Soviet journalists were also enrolled in the new state trade unions (Ibid., 189).

In their level of payment, quality of nutrition, living conditions, length of vacation the first generations of the Soviet journalists differed little from the workers. According to Dembo (1927) the journalists had extremely hard financial and housing conditions, the salary did not cover the expenses of a family. For quality, what Dembo calls nutrition heads of printing houses occupied first place, then in descending order – technical editors and those responsible for the issue, literary workers, editors and heads of rooms (Svitich 1998, 211).

The proletarianisation of conditions also included loss of autonomy and subordination to bureaucratic control by the Communist Party. The employment status changed since the labour market began to be regulated by the state. Freelance work and self-employment in Russian journalism were replaced with staff positions and appointments by the party committee responsible for the recruitment to the editorial offices. Working-class origin and party membership making accessible “only rank-and-file workers and the poorest peasants” who “really were oppressed during capitalism”, (Lenin Vol.39, 224–225), became crucial for entering journalism, whereas the occupation itself became closed to outsiders.

In this way, “the revolutionary worker-class party” (Ibid.) began to elitise journalism as one of the pillars of a new Soviet proletarian culture. Art was also enlisted in this task; in 1917 a special organisation *Proletcult* (Proletarian culture) was established and worked until 1932 to develop amateur talent activities among the masses in the sphere of art, especially literature and theatre (The Soviet Encyclopaedia 1983, 1064). A new creative method in literature and art, socialistic realism, began to take shape at the start of the 1920s in order to aesthetically express a conception of the world and man being socialistically aware, to show life in the light of socialistic ideals (Ibid., 1243).

As mentioned, the Soviet press was primarily designed to be the state political institution, newspapers became organs of the Communist party, whereas a journalist was to be “a party literary worker” (Lenin Vol.12, 100–101). The party totally administered the press on the basis of the decisions adopted by the VIII, IX and XIII Party Congresses making the press the Marxist-Leninist expressions of the famous formula of a collective propagandist, a collective agitator and a collective organiser; the journalists were educated as ‘social activists’ (Talovov 1990, 40).

For these reasons the party laid the foundation of Soviet journalism education: in 1919 a school of journalism in the Russian Telegraph Agency in Moscow, in 1920 an Institution of Journalism in ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) in Petrograd, in 1921 an Institution of Red Journalists, in 1926 a newspaper chair at the Faculty of Language and Material Culture at Leningrad State University and sections for Journalism at the Communist Universities all over the country (Voroshilov 1999, 42). Correspondingly, the criteria of professionalism of Soviet journalists lay in the development of skills for the writing of politically biased news, reports and essays, which was defined as *publitsistika*: “the literature on public-political questions. The publicist materials state not only facts owing to which a reader draws conclusions himself, but they also include different reasoning, summarising, proposing these or those conclusions” (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky 1971, 677–678). As put by V. Stepanov, the editor-in-chief of the journal *Kommunist*: “from the beginning to the end a newspaper mainly consists of publicists’ materials” (Ibid., 259)<sup>2</sup>.

A process of the intellectualisation of Soviet journalism via highly specialised education at universities was in line with the process of its proletarianisation according to Lenin’s testament of how to make a newspaper. In particular, how Lenin insisted that it is a misconception that the newspaper can be made only by journalism professionals. Its vitality has been provided by an active intake of revolutionary proletarian blood when for five leading and constantly writing literary persons and journalists in the newspaper five hundred and five thousand of workers, non-staff editorial authors are involved (Lenin Vol.9, 107).

The *rabkors* (the workers’ correspondents) in close contact with the party committee and editorial offices got assistance in education and correspondent’s work, in particular advice on the choice of topics for publications, participated in regular meetings and All-Russian Congresses of *Rabkors* organised by the Party. In 1930 they were more than 2 million (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky 1971, 53, 56). In fact, the writing of articles for the press was a second (of the political profile) job of a worker via his basic job to ensure special knowledge in what was written. Often such a worker *rabkor* was a party member and acted as a voluntary controller within the economy and among the people with the privilege of voicing his/her opinion as if from the labour collective on current questions for public discussion in the press.

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2 In pre-Soviet Russia this term had another meaning: “Publicists are full advocates of the wishes and strivings of society. The role and duty of any honest publicist is to give correct explanations of facts and events, which give material for accusation, to find arguments for the advocacy of young life’s ideas and beginnings” (Gerenshtein 1897, 3, 6).

According to the party decision, beginning from 1956 editorial offices established their own special 'non-staff rooms' (*neshtatnye otdely*), which organised the work as staff rooms of the newspaper but with the participation of non-staff correspondents. They had been recruited from workers, agricultural workers (*kolkhozniki*), teachers, scientists, party workers, trade unions, Komsomol activists who produced articles for the newspaper in their free time (Gurevich et al. 1970, 123–125). In Leningrad, for example, 37% of all journalists were active worker-peasant correspondents (*rabselkory*) before coming onto the staff (Kuzin 1971, 159).

Such a state policy for the organisation for the feedback of mass readers and their newspapers via the network of *rabkors* and readers' letters to the editorial offices aimed to embody in the practice the idea of the development of the proletarian democracy. In turn, the proletarian democracy was established on the dictatorship of the proletariat after the victory of the Socialist Revolution in 1917. According to Lenin (Vol. 37, 105) the Soviet rule is one form of proletarian democracy with the factual participation of the masses in government that fully contrasts with the formal democracy of the bourgeoisie that imposes its dictatorship over the oppressed classes.

From the beginning specialisation as a part of the professionalisation of journalistic labour was developing as literary, editorial, mass (worker-peasant correspondents and bureau of investigations), printing (Gus 1930). The studies on the Leningrad journalists of the 1960s–1970s revealed that the journalists of the central, republican and regional newspapers had narrow specialisation, whereas their colleagues from the district and factory press acted as all-round craftsmen (Kuzin 1971, 168). The forming of journalistic specialisation continued long enough, the journalists sought their topics on average under 31, then at the age of 31–40 the thematic orientation of the journalist emerged and at the age of 41–50 the journalists were characterised by "thematic flourishing" (Ibid.,169).

Although every type of media (newspaper, radio, television, information agency) had its own specialisation of labour, the basis for organising was common: the division of labour between the journalists of the newsroom, their co-operation for the output of production and implementation of personal and editorial duties. The last included a working schedule for a week, month, quarter with norm-fixing volume: 40% of the journalist's own materials under his/her name that were paid for and 60% of the materials were done by the journalist but under the name of non-staff author (Gurevich 1986, 38–46; Gurevich 1984).

For example, a journalist gathered material from some specialist, wrote an article on the basis of the material received, but signed this article for the



newspaper under the name of this specialist and an honorarium for the article was paid to the specialist as if the specialist was an author of the article. In this way, the rule established by Lenin to involve the masses in the production of the press had been kept throughout the Soviet time in the media. There were of course, cases when non-staff authors wrote for the press, but mainly the journalists wrote such articles and had to sign them (in sum 60% of all their articles per month) as if non-staff correspondents. This system of payment of a honorarium 40% to 60% was under rigid state control, every editor-in-chief of the media had to follow for the order.

In addition, journalists of the local press could get a bonus for good work from the income of the newspaper from advertising (the party decree of 1968). Advertising occupied a fairly modest place in the Soviet press, “except specialising advertising editions the advertising could be in the last pages of the evening city and district press. The central mass newspapers avoid advertising (Gurevich 1994, 103). After the adoption of the Law about Mass Media in 1991, as Voroshilov (1999, 264) points out “the famous rule 40% to 60% was forgotten, a staff journalist works only for him/herself”. Between journalists a real competition started for column space and broadcasting time. For the sake of their honorarium journalists came to write with ‘cosmic’ speed often to the detriment of quality.

A process of self-regulation of journalists was under state control and followed for state politics. The Union of Journalists of the USSR (the First Congress, 12–14 November 1959) was a successor to the first local unions of the Soviet journalists which emerged in 1918 to support the young Soviet state. Later they were transformed into sections of the press workers within the state trade unions, regularly held the Journalists’ Congresses in Moscow with the participation of the leaders of the Communist Party (Bogdanov and Vayzemsky 1971, 189–192). As documented by the last Congresses, the Union of Journalists of the USSR was a creative organisation aimed at the political and professional education of journalists although without real opportunities to protect journalists (Union of Journalists of the USSR 1982, 1987).

In this way, professionalism in Soviet journalism had been legitimised firstly via politically oriented high education, the development of propagandist-publicist skills in the media practice, joining the professional union of journalists under Party guardianship and finally Party membership. The Party guidance of the press was a natural matter, as the majority of the media were organs of the party committees of different levels. Consequently, the professional way of a journalist, a state worker, was intimately connected with the perspective of admission to the Party, whereas the Communist Party was in fact the first instance certifying



professionalism in journalism. On becoming a member of the Communist Party the journalist got wider opportunities for a professional career and social mobility, in particular making a political career. As a rule, a journalist, as a member of the Party occupying a higher post, also got better wages, material and symbolic goods, access or belonging to the political elite (*the party nomenklatura* including a list of the most important posts)<sup>3</sup> with some its privileges. Regarding payment, journalists of the 1960s–1980s belonged to the sufficiently well paid group of state specialists although this varied depending on the type of media (Svitich 2000, 188).

The prestige of the journalistic occupation arose from the combination of state, party and public activities not accessible to everyone. Employed by the state in the state media, the journalists possessed the ‘sacred’ monopoly to bring society the truth on all aspects of life, as well as to form and to publish in the press feedback from society to the state. On the one hand, they were a part of the political elite (messengers and propagandists of the party), editors-in-chief had been appointed by the Party and belonged to the Party nomenklature. On the other hand, they were a part of the cultural elite, the labour intelligentsia preferably recruited journalists from the working class. As a whole, Soviet journalism can be seen as a proper buffer between the political authority and society.

During the Soviet rule journalists’ status achieved homogeneity, being built into the vertical structure of the state political system. Leonid Ionin (2004, 17–18) considers that the Russian centuries-old political tradition of autocracy (*samoderzhaviya*) was destroyed at the start of the twentieth century by the coming of the Bolsheviks. In its place they forcibly introduced a totalitarian political canon: “At first Stalin destroyed the right opposition, then the left opposition, then, as he himself expressed it, the right-left opposition; in the policy “a step to the right’, “a step to the left” and in general any independent significant step came to be considered as an escape. There were shootings without notice – virtually”.

Ionin defines the Soviet political canon as the aggregate of unshakable rules based on three principles: integrity or totality (the single and invariable political system everywhere), hierarchy or vertical (hydraulic principle from top to down) and purposefulness (the justification of the political system was based on the future). It represented a mono-stylistic culture where the party workers performed as experts and regulated the cultural development of the society. The

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3 On the history and genesis of *the party nomenklatura* in the USSR see Voslensky (1991)

collapse of Communism destroyed the Soviet political canon and mono-stylistic culture, whereupon there emerged conditions for poly-stylistic culture and true professionalisation of literature and other occupations:

Great Russian literature of the nineteenth – twentieth centuries was flesh of flesh of Russian despotic regimes. Russian freedom killed Great Russian literature. Now writers gradually become professionals, intellectuals, as their colleagues in the West, and accustom to live in the market. (Ionin 2004, 221)

Within the tradition of despotism there was always resistance to the regime, for instance dissidence. As critics of the regime, journalists and writers introduced the language of metaphor to write between the lines. In the Soviet time independent publications from *Samizdat* and *Tamizdat* developed a dissident-minded approach and taste for freedom together with increasing contra-art of the underground, mainly in the big cities. Even private diaries fixing the events of private life and society written for oneself (secretly) continued this tradition of internal resistance to despotism (Manjkov 2001). Those who left Russia launched independent editions, thus the Russian immigrant press abroad began from Alexander Gertsen, who established the first Russian revolutionary newspaper *Kolokol* (Bell) in London, 1857–1865.

By the middle of the 1980s, the Soviet media represented the powerful informational-propagandist apparatus of the state including 14,000 periodical editions, 200 central and regional publishing houses, 5 programmes of the Central Radio and 8 programmes of the Central Television, about 120 regional TV and 140 radio studios; the Telegraphy Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) with 14 republican agencies, 6 sections and 72 correspondents' bureaus in the Russian Federation, and the Agency of Political News (APN) with about 140 correspondent's bureaus in the USSR and abroad. At the universities the number of journalism schools had grown to 24 (Ovsepyan 1996, 138–140).

The Soviet journalists had been called *podruchnymi partij* (the assistants of the party), which meant the highest recognition of their services to the state, and many journalists had been proud of such appreciation. Many of them shared optimism about life and were devoted to the profession designed for the correction of defects on the way to communism and deviations from communist morality. They believed in and served ideals of communism to approach a glorious future for the next generations by acting in the vanguard of the Party.

Grabeljnikov (2000, 7) draws attention to such recurrences in the political history of Russia that the coming of a new state leader begins from new reforms in the media. That is, power is ultimately attributed to the media as its tool. In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev began his new policy of *glasnost and perestroika* with

the aim of speeding up the communist building in the country. He employed the same traditional Bolshevik approach to the media based on the “V.I. Lenin assumption: ‘A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser’”. The media of the *glasnost* time were defined as the instrumental *glasnost* model (Y. Zassoursky 2001, 160), “glasnost-oriented propaganda machine”, 1985–1990 (I. Zassoursky 2001, 86).

Initially opened as *fortochki*<sup>4</sup> for fresh air after long years of being stifled, those permitted freedoms unexpectedly had made a fatal draught for the whole closed system. The Soviet Union was blown away as if suddenly, instantly, practically without bloodshed and resistance. For everybody at the beginning it was hard to realise and to believe that this had really happened. After the collapse of the USSR no alternative except westernisation was seen, the transition from Soviet communism to western capitalism.

Summing up the stages of the development of the journalistic occupation from Lenin to Gorbachev in relation to its past, one can conclude that historically Soviet journalism is an artefact, a product of the forced proletarianisation of the previously fairly free occupation. Established as the state service for political tasks of the Communist Party within the country and abroad it was elitised regarding status and social privileges. By means of journalism the Soviet leadership had enhanced the political tradition of etatism stemming from the centuries-old practice of despotism of the State over an individual, whose rights and freedoms remained undeveloped.

### 3.3 After the USSR

The first government of Gaidar had taken a radical course toward the dismantling of the Soviet system and laying the foundations for a western type of society. The media entered this general process of westernisation passing through liberalisation, de-politisation, privatisation, capitalisation and commercialisation. The attempt to transform Soviet journalism into market journalism started. “State journalism” refers here to the well-known Soviet system, which was thoroughly political-administrative in nature. “Market journalism” for its part refers to emerging political, economic and professional freedoms (with their own limitations)”. (IV)

The media stopped being organs of the party committees, and correspondingly lost control of their policy and production, whereas the party

4 *fortochka* means a small hinged pane for ventilation in window of Russian houses.

organisations ceased to exist in the editorial offices; the old system of the state planning of media content for a year, quarter, month, week being approved in the Party committee also collapsed<sup>5</sup>. The abolition of state censorship (media laws of 1990, 1991) dispelled journalists' fear and almost buried their habit of self-censorship.

The freedom to establish media for any party, organisation or individual (the laws on the Media and NGOs in 1991) generated a media boom and turned journalism into a popular profession. Thus, this empirical research finds that in St Petersburg compared to the Soviet period, the number of city media increased many times over, from 118 in 1991 to more than 4,000 in 2001 (II). The media began reforming their budget, staff, content, audience and etc. The first money earned from advertising appeared in the editorial cashbox enabling increasing payments depending on the volume and quality of work done. Journalists began really to compete with each other over the number of lines and the quality of the texts. They got the freedom to choose media, to move from one media to another in search of better pay and working conditions, to combine work in several media. That is, media and journalistic labour became commercialised.

Like other enterprises, the media started their mass privatisation, in this way entering the road to independence and autonomy from the State. Often the staff of editorial offices became founders or co-founders of their editions. The media turned into joint-stock companies and journalists into owners of shares, at least in the press. Thus, in St. Petersburg the majority of the city media were privatised by 1998, the city media budget clearly demonstrated the basic income from advertising (78%) and the rest from State subsidies (22%) (II).

The media began to follow western journalism standards in the presentation of news (division between fact and comment, striking headlines), choice of topics for news (more interest in human life than production, topics earlier forbidden by censorship), writing texts (the citing of sources, impartial approach to event covered, and diverse opinions). They introduced new genres (investigative reporting) and methods in the work (hidden microphones and cameras, using confidential information without reference, using false identity and etc.). They began to neglect the Soviet journalism traditions such as work with letters to the editorial office, establishing their own correspondents' networks in enterprises, preparing texts on behalf of authors outside the staff.

The beginning of the 1990s had been seen as "the Golden age of Russian journalism" and "a new fourth estate media model" (Y. Zassoursky 2001, 161). The

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5 Yeltsin's Decree on the dissolution of the CPSS and its organisational structures came into force on 6 November 1991.

media tried to serve the public interest offering a pluralistic view of events. The coverage of the first Chechen war, 1994–1996, was possible from different points of view, not only as state propaganda. Some journalists came to see themselves as free professionals and moved up from staff work to freelancing preferring self-employment status instead of employment status (Pasti 2004).

The western influence appeared more in those media from which the western investors came. Thus, in St Petersburg the first tabloid *Peterburg Express* and the first FM (frequency modulation) Radio *Baltika* had Scandinavian co-founders, which introduced a new staff policy: short-term contracts for workers instead of the previous permanent employment. These media began to develop a new competitive approach to occupy a niche in the market. This demanded knowledge about the audience. They started sociological research on their audiences, introduced new formats (tabloid and cellular radio programs) to produce information and entertainment for targeted groups of city-dwellers. Soon they achieved economic success, and their journalists enjoyed good wages. In contrast to the new media, the traditional media established in the Soviet time could not rapidly recover from the loss of their previous exclusive rights and privileges: state financing, management and distribution; they suffered from a lack of knowledge and skill in market strategy, dwindling of circulations, the loss of professionals due to low wages and their delays (II).

Liberalisation had caused occupational transitions. Thus, from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s, some of the famous and authoritative journalists and editors moved up from journalism to more visible areas, such as politics and business. In 1989, 92 journalists were elected USSR people's deputies in the Supreme Soviet. In 1990, 55 journalists became RSFSR deputies (Tolz 1992, 107–108), some were elected as deputies of the regional and city councils of the people's deputies. On the other hand, a rise in economic and political services had required new specialists in advertising. Many experienced journalists were invited to establish and to lead the PR sections of the governmental and commercial organisations (III). Whereas many old journalists left the profession, new people from other jobs came into journalism. The increasing number of media needed workers; the new generation was crucially different from the Soviet generation in its background, its expectations of journalism and the ability to combine different professional activities (I).

Along the way, the liberalisation of the occupation had destroyed the previous mechanism of the professional socialisation of a journalist including such binding stages as state selection for the education, the state appointment to work in the media organisation (*raspredelenie*), joining the Union of Journalists under the

state and often affiliation to the Communist Party, at least among those aiming at advancing in their social mobility. Journalism became open to any aspirant, as it had already been a hundred years ago, in the epoch of early capitalism in the Russia of the 1880s. However, the political independence of journalism granted by the state at the start of the transition from communism to capitalism included not only a perspective for its professionalisation, but also proletarianisation.

Thus, the liberalisation of the 1990s had opened occupational transitions, in particular the departure of the experienced journalists from the profession, mostly to politics and business and a mass intake of non-specialists from outside. In the terminology of Derber (1982, 169) the coming of untrained workers into the profession is an example of “technical proletarianisation”. Among the consequences were such increasing phenomena as journalist’s illiteracy in press and broadcasting, mixing of genres of information and advertising, plagiarism, corruption soon became evident.

Beginners often took a negligent attitude to the older journalists. To some extent, it stemmed from the increasing wave of criticism and revisiting of the Soviet past in society including journalism. In addition, beginners tried to gain a firm hold in the new professional environment by distancing themselves from the older generation. They were convinced that the era of market and freedom demands new approaches and values in the profession and that there was nothing to learn from the Soviet generation. Thus, the former editor-in-chief of the magazine *Itogy* of the company “Media MOST”, Sergei Parkhomenko (2000, 384–389) argued that two generations of contemporary Russian journalists represented two different professions: the people working with information (the post-Soviet practitioners) and the people working with themselves (the Soviet practitioners):

... journalism, in my view, till 1990 worked *without sources*. The primary source was the author’s brains. On rare occasions there was a certain simulation of the source: “a reader’s letter”, TASS or something like that. But the primary content of the text was the author’s thoughts. Till the end of 1990 in journalism there was not *a problem of speed*... There were no perceptions of the type “I am first, you are second”... In the absence of competition and the perception about *what* information proceeds from the source, ‘a certain race’ had an abstract character. I consider that this profession did not exist until the categories of source and tempo became dominant in journalism. (IV)

The new generation of the 1990s positioned itself as non-successor of the Soviet generation both on the level of individual work relations and on the level of collective agreements, in particular ignoring the Union of Journalists, which by this time had lost state patronage and learnt to survive unaided. The old



professionals began to lose their control over the basis of knowledge and skills, technical and ethical decision-making and the whole work process. They had been apparently levelled to the new generation losing their previous positions and prestige.

This became a drama of the old professionals, who supported *perestroika* and *glasnost*, who aroused the people from passivity and organised their mass participation in the political debates via the late Soviet media. However, after the collapse of the USSR the new generation which entered the media had presented a claim to the old generation apropos of its obedient serving the Soviet system. Recent “knights of *perestroika* and *glasnost*” began to be perceived as ‘dinosaurs’ of the Soviet ethics, inappropriate to a new era of market fundamentalism.

Excerpts of the interviews with St. Petersburg journalists in 1999 reveal opinions on the profession from the old generation (first excerpt) and the new generation (second):

A value of the profession is that you are above the city and you know everything. I am able to find a topic at every turn in the city. The people need my work, they call, swear. I am far from the thought that I can influence everything, but to tell without false interpretations, to bring them the truth in order that they know (R.10).

This profession is the second most ancient one. Here you trade in everything that you can, mainly in order to get information. I cannot do many things, but I feel if I do not do it, I shall be a poor journalist. So I have to swear, deceive someone. I do not feel very good after this. When I return home... There are no values in the profession, but there are human values, which I to have to crush in myself (R.19).

The profit motive was inherent in 25% the new generation of journalists entering St Petersburg media since the 1990s. But the official salary remained very modest. Proletarianisation of conditions began when the media met with economic difficulties. With the termination of state subsidies for the media and their own inept management, newspapers came to experience a severe lack of funds both for production and payment of salaries.

Moreover, “high monopoly prices for newsprint and distribution increased the production costs of the press” (Y. Zassoursky 2001, 161). In St Petersburg after a series of bankruptcies and searches for investors, leading information newspapers and television, the 5<sup>th</sup> channel handed over their shares of ownership to new owners, mainly financial and industrial capital as well as the government. Before, journalists as owners of shares could participate in the distribution of profit and other decisions, but by the end of the 1990s they finally lost their shares and right to control and profit (II). In this way, de facto and de jure they



turned into salaried workers “or proletariat who produce wealth but neither own nor control any means of production” (Johnson, 2000, 285). The media became heavily dependent on outside investors.

A second job and paid commissions (hidden advertisement, black PR, commissioned articles) became a remedy to improve family budgets in conditions of delays of salaries, weak control and informal permission of the editors. Thus, the study of the St Petersburg media finds that one third of respondents had a second job in other media or in the PR sections of commercial organisations. Between the official salary of the staff job and additional income from the second job, there was a huge difference amounting, for instance, to 500 to 4,500 rubles (12 to 112 US dollars) per month, in the case of one of the respondents. Likewise the approach to the basic job was often to treat it as hackwork (II).

The regions developed unevenly (Zubarevich 2007). The local media markets suffered from a lack of advertising and purchasing power of the population. To survive the local newspapers had to seek the protection of the State, in particular to ask the municipalities again to become their founders as they were the most solvent there (III). The study of the Karelian media finds that for many journalists having a second job became the norm because their basic income was not enough to make a living and in some media delays of payment were frequent. Thus, in Petrozavodsk many journalists had a second job. They were teachers – privately and officially, developed their own businesses, rented out housing, sold spare parts, wrote brochures to order, wrote advertisements and books for enterprises and organisations, and articles for other media. During elections, the professionals wrote political articles for opposing candidates (III).

The study of the regional journalists, 2003–2005, revealed that a second job remained the professional norm for all three generations of journalists; nearly half had some other jobs besides the main job and one third worked in several media (V). The follow-up study of St Petersburg journalists, 2005, showed that nearly half combined the main staff job with a second job for other organisations. That is, a second job was not only evidence of the commercialisation of journalistic labour but also a component of its proletarianisation insofar as it undermined the development of skills and professional identity.

The occupational transitions of professionals can be interpreted as additional evidence of their proletarianisation. Thus, those Soviet educated and experienced professionals who left their media and moved up to the PR service of the state and private sectors, began to be proletarianised (de-professionalised) because they turned into officials subjected to bureaucratic control. They left the relatively free occupation of journalism in the 1990s with its opportunities for personal

autonomy and self-employment and engaged in state service and the service of private companies. In the terminology of Derber (1982, 169) it is an example of “ideological proletarianisation” when professionals move up from free to salaried job and lose the freedom to define objectives.

The occupational transitions of representatives of the new generation of the 1990s showed cases of distant mobility inherent in both low and middle class people. Thus, the study of the St Petersburg media found that in the search for better payment and opportunities both manual workers and engineers from industry, sportsmen, lecturers from universities moved into journalism (Pasti, 2004). In Amurskoyi region journalism became a mass profession, out of 60 operating media, 50 had no journalists with special education. Among new journalists there were former teachers, party workers, producers who came to earn money, to get more convenient working conditions, to achieve elite status in society and to satisfy their ambitions. They had no high professional level and lacked ethical knowledge of the profession. They likewise had no desire to learn the code and observe the norms (Kobzar 1999, 11–12).

The study of the Karelian media notes an interesting case in Kondopoga. The director of the paper mill personally formed the staff of the editorial office (the mill was a founder of the newspaper). He had enticed the most experienced and best educated journalists, given them higher salaries than in the local newspaper and also transferred a telephonist to a journalist's post in the newspaper. That is, for the director controlling output of ‘his’ newspaper (content) there was no difference between qualified professionals having a journalism diploma, experience, public reputation, membership of the professional union of journalists and the workers of his plant (III).

This reveals the persistent Soviet approach to the forming of the editorial staff, a basic principle of mixing of intellectuals (professionals) with manual workers (non-professionals) making the newspaper together. Interestingly, the newspaper started as a factory newspaper in the 1930s but during the last decade turned, in fact, into a competitor for the local newspaper over such criteria as circulation (greater than that of the local newspaper), distribution (subscription and retail), audience (the town and local residents), agenda, all the topical spectra inherent in the local press, best job offers for journalists over salaries, conditions and social security. The newspaper operated as the propaganda sector of the company, as the vehicle of the director's policy in the locality, and as a source of information for the population. Regarding the level of payment and social privileges the journalists of the newspaper were equal with the workers of the mill.

The Novgorod region gives one more proof that the Soviet approach to the media as a tool of the government remains a basic one. An editor-in-chief of the local newspaper was retired and the head of the administration appointed the chief physician of the local sanitary-epidemiological station to the post of the editor-in-chief of the local newspaper (*Tsena slova* 2002, 256). That is, the chief physician received the political appointment from the local authorities; here, as before, professional knowledge is not important, but the personal confidence, in the given case of the head of the administration of the locality in the chief sanitary physician of the locality. Thus, who he has a power, he de facto possesses a newspaper.

Proletarianisation of conditions for the majority of journalists through income and elitisation of the minority is a part of the general process of polarisation of contemporary Russia. With the beginning of market reforms researchers point to an increasing difference in income between the journalists of Moscow and the regions, journalists of state and private media, press and television. Some editorial offices made the size of payment a business secret. Nobody knew how much a colleague earned, the money was given in an envelope and everyone signed on a separate paper. An editor-in-chief could at his discretion increase or decrease the salary of a worker (Voroshilov 1999, 272).

According to the data of the Union of Journalists of Russia, in 1997 the journalists of the regional media on average had only a third of the average monthly salary over the country; 40% of journalists earned \$50–100 a month, 60% of them \$100–120. On the other hand, Tretyakov, the editor-in-chief of *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, proposed to his fellow editors to fix an agreed maximum for a journalist's monthly salary in Moscow at \$1,200–1,500 (Glasnost Defence Foundation, 1997).

In the words of the St Petersburg journalists in 1999, a city journalist earned on the average \$100 a month, whereas in Moscow a journalist earned \$1,000. Another source reports that in 1997 the majority of the Russian journalists had an average salary up to \$20 (500 rubles); the gap in incomes reached 50 times between the majority of the journalists and their elite (Avraamov 1999, 60, 64)<sup>6</sup>.

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6 The rating of the ruble to the US dollar was used as that equivalent at the moment of gathering the empirical material, the end of 1999, when the Euro was not yet in the money-market. Moreover, the rating of the ruble to the dollar was an essential characteristic of the 1990s, when the official salary was paid in rubles but the people including the respondents counted their budgets and conveyed money operations both in rubles and dollars. Everyone followed for the rate of inflation to stable currency.

In Karelia in 2000–2003 the average journalistic wage varied from 5,000 to 9,000 rubles a month depending on the media. Thus, in the republican government's paper *Karelia* the average wage was 5,000–8,000 rubles (about 165–300 euros), whereas in the daily *Kurier Karelii* and in the state *GTRK* (State Television and Radio Company) *Karelia* it amounted on average to 4,000 rubles (130 euros). In the local press the wage varied from 3,000 to 4,000 rubles, whereas the Kondopoga paper mill paid the journalists of its newspaper 7,000 rubles. At the end of October 2002 the average per capita income per month in Karelia was 3,808 rubles (III, 121).

The study of the regional journalists 2003–2005 revealed that one third of the journalists earned between 6,000 and 10,000 roubles, which was equivalent to 170–300 euros (average exchange rate of 35 rubles to 1 euro in May 2005). One third of the journalists earned less than 6,000 rubles (less than 170 euros) and one third earned more than 10,000 rubles (more than 300 euros) (V). The new study of St Petersburg journalists, 2005, revealed that the majority of the respondents earned on the average between 10,000 and 20,000 rubles a month.

The way into the media elite was tightly linked to serving the interests of those in power, especially in *zerohour* (elections and privatisation campaigns). It changed the attitudes of those media and journalists who advanced lay fraternising with the government. Such journalism turned into elite journalism on the level of income, status, social privileges and political values. The analysis of the social mobility of St Petersburg journalists of 1999 reveals that those journalists who left journalism for the PR service of the government now occupy high posts in the leading media.

The study of Karelian media finds that media owners, businessmen, who were politically loyal to the government and supported it during the elections got in exchange economic and administrative loyalty from the government, such as the low rent and taxes on land for their private media, access to information and the accreditation of their journalists, and favourable conditions for peaceful work. In response, the government decisively supported the loyal media owners who voted in the deputies (the deputy's mandate ensured the deputies' immunity for four years). That is, fraternising with the government and playing under its rules appeared as a necessary precondition for the successful development of their basic business, lying as a rule in the economic sphere (enterprises, resources, trade). The new media owners did not invest capital in their media, keeping it as a tool of political propaganda and PR service of their business (III).

The rise of the inequality in property and status led to the growth of social privileges, such as exceptional rights and advantages of elite, representatives

of the government and business. In 1999, in their interviews, the St Petersburg journalists pointed out that media bosses turned journalism into private business, there appeared such a tendency for nepotism with the coming of the children of the elite to the best positions in the profession in managerial posts and television. As one respondent said: "This easy access to the profession has negative sides because daughters, granddaughters, and nephews have been brought into journalism".

In the opinions of the students of the capital universities today family background became a decisive factor for getting well-paid positions in media and the PR service for graduates of the schools of journalism. Moreover, journalism education became elite, owing to the new specialisation of Public Relations in the schools of journalism. In the media young journalists began earning about 2,000 rubles a month (about 57 euros), whereas in the PR service of a big company or bank a graduate of a school of journalism begins at about 40–50,000 rubles (1,400 euros) a month (V).

The coming of elite children to top managerial positions is a phenomenon occurring not only in the media market and the PR service, but also in state offices and in business companies. It shows the present Russia as a developing country: "in more economically developed countries the direct effect of parental status on respondent's education and the status of the current occupation is weaker than in less developed countries" (Ganzeboom et al. 1991, 284).

Natalia Zorkaya (2005, 1) distinguishes the new media elite from the old one in its character and interests. She notes that during *perestroika* the old media elite only actualised the problems of the Soviet epoch but had no time to work with these problems because of the changed reality, its own crisis and because many journalists left the profession. The new elite took a course for market demand, commercial and reader's success that turned out primitively both in ideas and content. The new generation are mostly interested in self-presentation; they do not produce new ideas and independent points of view. A significant part of the journalistic community, especially on television, chooses a specific model of work with information, events and problems. The main one is imitation, making a practical joke of this process on the passive mass. The researcher notes that social snobbery developed in journalism, self-satisfaction and confidence in their sharing exclusive knowledge give specific, ritual and even 'intimate' features of journalists' communication with the audience, like a journalist guru giving communion to a profane reader/listener to intimate communication with the journalist (Ibid., 12).

Boris Dubin (2006a, 9) uses the term mediocracy instead of the term media elite. He notes that mediocracy began to be formed in the middle of the 1990s in close alliance with the government. The young pragmatically minded heads of the media and journalists denied independent articulation of political interests in exchange for the opportunity to occupy leading posts in the new media system, in this way making a choice in favour of their adaptation to the political power and its technological servicing. The researcher emphasises that the merging of top media managers with the state and business elite has been based on demonstratively anti-western ideological attitudes, the stressing a specific Russian way, Soviet symbols of a Great Power and its prestige. The recent studies reveal increasing Soviet discourse in the political and news coverage and also in entertainment programmes (Dubin 2006c; Fossato 2006; Zvereva 2006).

According to Boris Dubin (2005, 7–8) after all the social-economic and political upheavals of the 1990s in the present media system the traditional USSR and definitely pre-Soviet Russia signs emerge, including the centralised hierarchical character of monopolistic governing of the society with archaic division of the centre and periphery, top and bottom of society, organisers of social-political performance and its public. Mass communication means here uniform communication without alternatives; the massovisation is equivalent to the homogenisation of the audience, whereas the mass means only an ability to receive the mass signal. The researcher considers that Russian society is not developing as a democracy of participants but that it has been preserved as a the community of spectators (Ibid 7–8).

The term mediocracy has been introduced in the professional and official discourses and widely used in the work of the pro-governmental organisation *Media Soyuz* (Media Union). It was established in 2001 in Moscow, the famous journalist Alexander Lybimov (the program *Vzglyad*) became its first President and Elena Zelinskaya a vice-president and also vice chairman of the Commission on the Freedom of Speech of the *Obshchestvennoi palaty* (Public Chamber) established on a Kremlin initiative. Branches of the *Media Soyuz* were opened in the regions<sup>7</sup>. In advance of the elections, 2007–2008, *Media Soyuz* began a new educational project ‘Mediocracy’ aimed at the young generation of journalists with the support of the All Russian political party *United Russia* (*Edinaya Rossiya*). More than 1,000 journalists representing 81 regions are involved in this project, they cover the social-political agenda in their regional media, participate in the forums, assemblies, the Internet conferences organised in the frame of the new project. In essence, *Media Soyuz* is a prototype of the former Soviet Union

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<sup>7</sup> more information: [Http://www.mediasoyuz.ru](http://www.mediasoyuz.ru), <http://www.mediocratia.ru>



of Journalists with the same aims at the political and professional education of journalists under the state. To some extent it performs as a competitor of the present Union of Journalists of Russia in recruiting new members for its organisation.

The development of the Internet and web-journalism gives cause to return to the views of researchers about the possible proletarianisation of the old professions under the impact of technical progress. In particular, they predicted that the professions of the past would be deprofessionalised because of changes in the attitudes and behaviour of the public and in the character of their knowledge, including its rising educational level, the standardisation and routinisation of knowledge, the development of computer technology (Freidson 1986, 110).

A multi-media journalist of the present Russia hardly comes into the traditional frames of perceptions on a journalist of any media system. Ivan Zassoursky (2006, 134–143) draws his/her portrait as a person doing journalism of the twenty-first century “just for fun”. Among his heroes are “a one-man band: Roksi” who has time to combine different jobs, as an editor on television, a producer of journals (photos and articles), a columnist of news in the Internet cite; “an integrator of the community, Anton Nosik”, a businessman, administrator and journalist, who started *Gazeta.ru*, *Lenta.ru* and many other big informational projects including *Live journal* (<http://www.livejournal.com>); his brother Artem, an active participant of the net community of drivers, who produced news events among the Internet users when occasionally a witness of a scene of violence of a militiaman against a driver in the Moscow street and told about this case in the net forum, the story got wide publicity.

That is, in principle anybody at any time having a wish and means for multimedia can turn into a multimedia journalist, and produce content and communication in the free space of the Internet without any need for education in the traditional media. The researcher notes that today endlessly different individual and common projects become new means of communication and a mass phenomenon. “Probably, today we finally come to that time when the role of *samizdat* (the under-cover writing) becomes not less, if not more ‘serious’ than the role of ‘big’ media” (Ibid., 142).





# Part II

## Studies on Russian journalists

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Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* opened up the country to the western world and immediately had an effect on the scale and character of research on Russia both in that country and abroad. As distinct from the Soviet science self-isolated from the West by the shield of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, contemporary Russian science is an active partner of the West. This means that plural and independent expertise of Russian journalists, media and society has been developed beyond geographical borders and political situations<sup>8</sup>.

The partnership of Russian and Western institutes enriches the research development. Thus, the first joint projects of the research of journalists started immediately in the 1990s (Svitich, Shiryeva and Kolesnik 1995; Wu, Weaver and Johnson 1996; Davis, Hammond and Nizamova 1998). New independent centres for monitoring and research on journalists emerged: the Glasnost Defence Foundation, the Centre for Journalism in Extreme Situations, Memo 98. This research is also an outcome of the partnership between the University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication and St.

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8 There is growing a tradition of discussing Russia's questions in different formats, to take, for instance: the regular World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies held every five years in Europe, the last VII World Congress of ICCEES was in Berlin, 25–30 July 2005; The International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) Annual Conferences; The British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies (BASEES) Annual Conferences in Cambridge; Annual Conferences on Russia and East Europe (VIEPÄ) in Finland; Annual Symposiums of Inter-Disciplinary Academic Centre of Social Sciences (Intercenter) "Where Is Russia Going?" in Moscow and etc.

Petersburg State University, Faculty of Journalism. Part II includes both Soviet and post-Soviet studies of journalists done in Russia and abroad as well as the present case studies carried out in the frame of nine years of research for this doctoral dissertation.

## 4 In Russia

The Soviet studies on media and journalists were carried out under the political influence of the party organs. For instance, *gazetnaya* (newspaper's) sociology was initiated by the practical needs in the building of socialism: the necessity for scientific management of press activity, its monitoring and improving by audiences' opinions, an attentive registration of results of the ideological affect of the press on society. At the same time, concrete sociological and social-psychological studies provided journalists with the knowledge of those regularities "which were not seen by a naked eye" (Alekseev 1971, 126).

Konstantinov and Kelle (1969, 516–520) refer to USSR Marxism as a living, creative method of cognition, of investigation of constantly developing and changing reality. All the social sciences relied on the method of historical materialism in their research and applied it in accordance with the particular features of their respective subjects. Yadov (1995, 14) states that from the end of the 1950s and until the middle of the 1980s Soviet sociology was dominated by the Marxist orientation. Scholars tried to establish the connections between the sociological studies and the social philosophy of Marxism – historical materialism. As a result a three-level conception of sociology was created: historical materialism as the general sociological theory, which sets the standardized way for the construction of particular sociological theories, and those based on the generalization of social facts. This conception had played its role in the establishment of Soviet sociology and allowed setting the status of *concrete (konkretnykh) sociological studies* and at the same time impeded the inclusion of Soviet science in the process of the development of world sociology.

According to Vihalemm (2001, 79) "until the late 1950s, empirical social sciences did not exist in the Soviet Union. These were much more close to religion than to science". Shlapentokh (1987, 13–32) specifies: "The years 1958–1964 have been called the embryonic period of Soviet sociology". In 1958 the Soviet Sociological Association was established and in 1961–1964 the first sociological research units were established in Moscow, Leningrad and Novosibirsk. The years

1965–1972 have been called the golden age of Soviet sociology (Shlapentokh 1987, 33–56). The years 1973–1975 have been called the time of purges in Soviet sociology (Shlapentokh 1987, 13). Repression struck mainly against critically oriented academic media sociology (Vihalemm 2001, 79, 81).

The St. Petersburg sociologist Boris Firsov sceptically recalls the sociological studies of that time: “Socialist realism was ‘a creative method’ not only for aesthetic comprehension of reality, but also for social cognition of it. It had got sound *‘propisky’* in theoretical concepts on society and in the system of concrete proofs, which were built on this theory” (Firsov 1997, 7). His interpretation of the *concrete sociological studies* of the Soviet time is the following:

In the inertia of the Stalin epoch the notion *sociology* has been tied to the notion of bourgeois science. It was permitted to consider no bourgeois only the investigation of various social phenomena by means of quantitative methods, rather that part which had recognition of social loyalty. In this reservation sociology was put under the pseudonym “concrete social studies” (Firsov 1997, 28)

The Estonian media researcher Epp Lauk argues that “during the Soviet time it was almost impossible to make any deeper analysis of the development of the media as a social institution or to introduce the ‘western’ theories into media research. Marxism-Leninism served as the basic universal theory and methodology for all the humanities” (Lauk 1997, 8). In the opinion of Vihalemm (2001, 81) “Estonian media research could continue to develop more freely compared to the total ideological control exercised over the studies of Russian-language central press and broadcasting in Moscow or Leningrad”.

However, in 1967–1974 “a comprehensive study of public opinion was conducted in the city of Taganrog as well as in Moscow and Rostov-on-Don” (Grushin and Onikov 1980). In the framework of the given study the method of in-depth interview was first applied in research on journalists. In particular, journalists of the Rostov region were questioned regarding the activity of media as sources of information and as channels expressing public opinion. The data of the inquiry among journalists were compared with the results of other procedures of the project: surveys of publishers, population, and content analysis of various sources of information (Svitich and Shiryaeva 1997, 43).

Developed for the political and economic needs of socialist construction, the Soviet empirical research, nevertheless, gathered abundant factual material on the media and its workers and today this serves as valuable documentation for researchers of the Russian media and workers (Märkälä 1973, 1976; Remington 1985; Svitich 2000). The first studies on the journalists laid the tradition in the

exploration of professional media personnel, working conditions and payment of journalists, the craftsmanship (professionalism) of journalists, psychology of journalism and journalism management.

In contrast to the Soviet era, the post-Soviet studies of the 1990s were developed with the widest opportunities for the promotion of various theoretical, methodological, topical concerns; contemporary researchers had limitless possibilities for collaboration with western colleagues. The adoption of laws about mass media and more than a hundred legislative documents regarding media in the 1990s gave birth to new areas of research such as journalistic jurisprudence and ethics (Prokhorov 1996; Korkonosenko 1998, 2000; Avraamov 1999; Lazutina 1999, 2000).

## 4.1 Social profile

The first sociological studies on journalists explored editorial staff regarding age, sex, education, experience, party membership. They appeared in the 1920s with the establishment of chairs and sociology departments in universities as well as the sociological university in the country. Many of them were conducted by the party committees or with the aim of obtaining information on who works in the press and under what conditions (Svitich 1973, 6; Vinogradova 1998, 74).

Thus, according to Bonus (1920) from May 1920 the training department ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) gathered data about 190 editorial offices and 452 journalists – their education and writing experience (Svitich 1998, 197). The first studies were sufficiently wide in their coverage of media and restricted in content: the social origin of journalists, level and type of education, party membership, job conditions and budgets of editorial offices. Party membership and worker's origin were decisive for entering journalism.

Sociology of journalists' studies developed as a part of the party work aimed at establishing a new media system in the country. The new media system was intended to become "the most important part of the party and state apparatus" (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky 1971, 20). In 1923 the Central Committee of the RKP(b) (Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks) issued an instruction about registration of the local press with a detailed programme how and what information should be gathered in editorial offices; for this the party enlisted the services of the central bureau of the section of press workers (*Izvestiya* of Central Committee RKP(b) 1923, 77–78 ref. Svitich 1998, 197). As Svitich (1998,

198) argues in the following years: 1923, 1926, 1927 and 1929 the editorial offices in Moscow, Leningrad and remote provinces (*guberniya*) became objects of research: Lebedev 1923; Ernst 1924; Voroshilin 1926; Mariinsky 1927; Gus 1930.

In the 1930s sociological studies no longer seemed so important, the Party committees possessed significant, complete information about the state of the media and their workers. Moreover, sociology itself was under the suspicion of the authorities as a bourgeois science (Firsov 1997, 28). Only after the death of Stalin did a new course proposed by Khrushchev in 1956 begin to change the political and spiritual climate in the country, awakened social life and raised questions of the human being. Sociological services became to be much in demand and there was a requirement for information for pilot concrete reforms. Sociologists were permitted to introduce new quantitative methods, among which interviewing and questionnaires to ordinary people became especially popular. Scholars took a look at the role of media and journalists by investigating public opinion. The first audience studies appeared. In 1965 the audience of the Moscow region was surveyed regarding its preferences regarding time of broadcasting and programme topics (Grigorjeva 1966; Sumakov 1966). In 1966–1970 national surveys were conducted on the readership of the central newspapers *Izvestiya*, *Pravda*, *Trud*, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*; in 1971 sociologists conducted an opinion poll about the work of the mass media, in 1976 they conducted a repeat survey on the readership of *Pravda* (Firsov 1997, 27).

Several audience studies were done in the Leningrad region: on the programme ratings of two central television channels (Struzentsov 1966), on sources of receiving information and its effectiveness for people in decision making (Yadov 1966); on the structure of the audience of Leningrad television and its choice of programme (Khmara 1966); on the structure of the audience of the district papers *Vyborgskii Communist* and *Znamya Truda* (Igoshin 1969).

The Party remained the basic customer and consumer of sociological information and the studies had mainly an applied character. The first extensive studies on journalists were conducted in Leningrad 1966–1967 and 1970–1971, when a sector of the press of the regional party committee (*obkom KPSS*) conducted a detailed investigation of editorial staff. For this the party organ used both traditional ways (media reports on the staff, visits of the Party brigades to the editorial offices and personal conversations with the media workers, reviews of newspapers) and the assistance of sociologists. In particular, they made a 'personal card of a journalist', a questionnaire 'journalists about themselves' and special statistics cards on the change of workplace, incentives and penalties of the journalist. Twice discussed in special meetings of the *obkom of KPSS*, the study

results became the basis for the party decisions on the improvement of editorial policy in the media (Kuzin 1971,161).

At the end of the 1960s a similar study on the journalistic workforce was conducted by E.F. Romanchuk in seven republican newspapers covering 200 journalists (*Voprosy teorii i praktiki massovykh sredstv propagandy* 1970, 328–345). Both the Leningrad and the republican studies revealed a tendency to spontaneous migration by journalists. Thus, “for three years, for instance, every third Leningrad journalist changed his working place” while moving mainly not from bottom up (from the district newspaper up to regional), but on the same level (from one district newspaper to another district paper or from one regional newspaper to another). Of 200 journalists of 7 republican newspapers only 69 came from factory newspapers. The researchers concluded that the journalists’ migration process develops spontaneously and in the media there are not enough prospects for professional growth. These studies noted that the party organs and editors-in-chief should pay more attention to the selection, placing and training of journalists and provided recommendations for the party committees how better to form editorial staff and how better to use press workers (Kuzin 1971, 157–158).

In particular, they noticed a necessity for a balance of experienced old and young journalists with a comment that the young generation comes into the profession too late, aged 28–30 and more, when one should not begin, but to be in full professional prime. The studies recommended having the right ratio between males and females; both confirmed that journalism remains mainly a male profession: in the Leningrad media females accounted for 36%, in the republican newspapers 17% of personnel.

The researchers recommended increasing journalist’ specialisation to cover the agenda better and to attract more audience; they recommended improving the psychological climate in the media (half of the respondents were not satisfied with the relationships at the work) and improving the theoretical and professional level of workers. For this the regional party committee organised vocational training on university principles: common courses of lectures in the city and separate seminars in the editorial offices in the region (Kuzin 1971, 157–184).

Since the Soviet time the faculty of journalism at Moscow State University has conducted sociological research on Russian journalists including topics of social profiles, working conditions and incomes, specialisation of labour, their work practices and values, attitudes to the political authority and the audience. The social-demographic profile of a journalist of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s appear in the studies by Svitich and Shiryayeva 1979, 1989, 1994; Svitich, Tishin, Tarasov and Akulov 1989; Svitich 1985; 1986, 1987, 2000.



In particular, Svitich (2000, 182; 1995:1, 31) argues for such tendencies in the transformation of the occupation, as: *feminisation* (from 7% women in the 1920s to 35% in the 1970s and to 37% women in the 1990s); *younger age* (two thirds under 30 in the 1920s, one quarter among local (*rayonnykh*) journalists under 30 in the 1960s, the 70s, the 80s and an average age of 40.7 in the 1990s); *intellectualisation* (13% highly educated in the 1920s, 35% in the 1960s, 56% in the 1990s).

In the Soviet time outside staff correspondents (*vneshtatnye korrespondenty*) were considered a basic support in the professional activities of journalists and editorial offices. The Party cared about the development of mass character of media and the development of the worker-peasant (*rabselkor*) movement (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky 1971, 51–63). Thus, the Party decrees of 30.08.1958 “On improving the guidance of the mass movement of workers’ and peasants’ correspondents of the Soviet press” and of 28.06.1960 “On the further development of mass bases in the Soviet press and broadcasting” were directly addressed to the media proposing a concrete programme on how to organise work with voluntary activists of the press. (Gurevich et al. 1970, 96).

The economic reforms of the last decade required completely new categories of specialists to emerge in the journalist’s labour market: managers, marketing advisors, PR men, advertising managers. The old approach to the analysis of the journalist’s profile was no longer appropriate. The current reality dictates the necessity for working up adequate qualification characteristics for the new specialities, today the estimation of their labour and its commodity-money is done without precise criteria (Korkonosenko 1995, 6).

## 4.2 Working conditions

The studies on the working conditions and incomes of journalists originated in the 1920s when the central bureau of the section of press workers with the Centre of Statistics (*Tsentralnoe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie*) gathered the data on the time budgets and incomes of journalists. According to Dembo (1927) the sample included 341 journalists from Moscow, Leningrad, Voronezh, Saratov, Kazan, Baku, Tbilisi (Tiflis), Rostov-na-Donu, Sverdlovsk, Kzyl-Orda, Siberia and Ukraine (Svitich 1998, 198). A working day lasted on the average 9–10 hours, the provincial journalists had longer working days than their colleagues in the capital, all of them had too little time for rest: heads of editorial offices 3.5 hours, literary workers 4.5 hours. According to the data of the medical test conducted in

Odessa newspapers only 3 out of 37 workers were healthy, one of the reasons for poor health was a 10-hour working day (Ibid.).

The studies of the 1980s had fixed the length of working time of the local journalists at 8 hours in the editorial office and 1–2 hours at home (work with text). Regarding payment, journalists of the 1960s–1980s belonged to a significantly well paid group of specialists although differing depending on type of media (Svitich 2000, 188). The journalists of the 1990s combined work in several media. Mainly because of low payment in staff positions, the length of their working day was at their own discretion.

In the 1990s a difference in income between the journalists of Moscow and the regions, the journalists of state and private media, press and television were hardly comparable (Svitich 2000, 188). The researchers could not compose even an approximate picture of journalists' incomes because of constant inflation and consequently the change of payments, also because of the heterogeneity and instability of the sources financing the media. In particular, they pointed out that there were journalists paid the same as bank workers and journalists paid less than the living wage (*MROT*). Nevertheless, they defined a gradation of journalists over payment depending on type of media: the journalists of the Russian dailies and information agencies were highest paid, then in descending order – the journalists of magazines, regional radio and television stations, weeklies, local newspapers. Interestingly, the studies revealed that “television workers were paid 1.5 times less than journalists of dailies and information services, whereas the local journalists were paid 2.5 times less than journalists of dailies and informational agencies” (Svitich et al. 1995:1, 34).

The process of elitisation of the minority and lumpenisation of the majority looked especially stark in comparison to the income of journalists in Moscow with journalists in the regions, the gap between their incomes reached 50 times (Avraamov 1999, 60, 64; Glasnost Defence Foundation 1997). The studies conducted later also note the differentiation of journalists over income, the gap between the quality of a journalist's work and income (Dzyloshinsky and Dzyloshinskaya 2005, 80). For many journalists a second job became an indispensable means of supplementing family budgets because of the low basic wage in the media. A growing differentiation in journalism was a part of a common process asymmetrically dividing contemporary Russia, enriching the minority and impoverishing the majority (Human Development Report 2005).

According to Gus (1930) the specialisation of journalistic labour first became an object of research in 1929, when 5,000 journalists from 376 editorial offices (70% of all the Soviet newspapers) completed a questionnaire. For analysis of

the data the researchers used functional typology and defined the following specialities: literary, editorial, mass (worker-peasant correspondents and bureaus of investigation), printing (Svitich 1998, 198–199).

The studies on the Leningrad journalists of the 1960s–1970s revealed the factors influencing the division of labour: type of editorial office (regional, district, factory), education, age, sex, post (Kuzin 1968; 1971, 167). They counted in 1970 that every Leningrad journalist had on the average 2.5 topics, a journalist of the regional press had 1.3 topics; a local (*rayonnyi*) journalist 2.1; a factory paper's journalist 2.8 (Kuzin 1971, 168).

They also noted the thematic division of press by type of media: the local (rayonnaya) press mainly covered agricultural issues (second place among ten topics analysed), the regional and factory press had the topic of morality as second most important. They found that graduates of faculties of journalism of universities specialised in all topics quite well, whereas graduates of the philological faculties preferred topics of morality and culture and graduates of the Highest Party School (Central Party Institute in Moscow preparing party staff workers) chose industrial, party or propaganda rooms (Kuzin 1971, 169).

The specialisation was not only thematic, but also addressed applied working methods, genres and a territorial factor. Thus, journalists of information agencies and international rooms, special and newspapers' own correspondents often specialised on a definite region. Genre specialisation of the journalists was explored regarding their preferences for genre (Svitich and Shiryaeva 1994a, b), also, the study explored the influence of psychological features of journalists on the choice of genre (Dzyaloshinsky 1996a).

### 4.3 Professional skill

The professional skill (*masterstvo*) of a journalist was the most widespread topic in Soviet applied studies on journalism. The stress on quality of production was logical in the national tradition of literary criticism, and the primary technology of journalistic labour was exclusively individual from an idea for the project to text done. The students were taught craftsmanship mainly through genres in such a way that they gradually 'rised' their ability to write from a simple note to more complex work such as, correspondence, *feuilleton*, review, article. The Soviet school of journalism laid down the maxim conviction that how should write is more important than for whom and about what to write (Korkonosenko 1998, 32–33).

Such a tendency in education had the consequence that the journalists were little interested in knowing their audiences. Thus, the study on local (*rayonnykh*) journalists conducted in 14 local (*rayonnykh*) newspapers of the Ryazan region in 1969–1971 revealed indifferent attitudes among journalists toward their readers (Svitich and Shiryayeva 1979). The studies of the 1990s, in contrast, show that journalists wanted to know their audiences although it is impossible to argue that they came to respect the audience more than before (Svitich 2000, 187).

Although all the journalistic genres were subdivided into informational and publicist, nevertheless the border between them was very conditional, because “every material brought a publicistic component” irrespective of type of media. The power of the component depended on the opportunities of the genre itself (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky 1971, 259–260). The Soviet journalists’ handbook defines the term *publitsistika* as “the literature on the public-political questions. The publicist materials state not only facts owing to which a reader draws conclusions himself, but they also include different reasoning, summarising, proposing these or those conclusions” (*ibid.*, 677–678).

The professionalism of Soviet journalists was measured by the level of development of his/her publicist skill. Theoretical works on journalism and books by the famous media practitioners about their creative laboratories pursued rationality – to teach beginners the essence of a journalist’s labour – the writing of publicist text (Agranovsky A. 1960; Prokhorov 1960, 1968; Uchenova 1971, 1988; Cherepakhov 1973; Kolosov 1977; Varustin 1987; Gorokhov 1989).

In the general theory of *publitsistika* the statement was made that *publitsistika* is a special, third type of reflection, cognition of reality equally with two others: artistic (*khudozhestvennoe*) and thought (*myslitelnoe*) (Bukhartsev 1976, 37). The view of *publitsistika* as a special type of reflection, cognition of reality emanating from distinctions in the subject area of social-historical knowledge and art (Prokhorov 1973, 192–210). In the present time *publitsistika* is highly valued and considered “one of the highest stages of journalistic creativity co-related with bright literary talent and a citizen’s position” (Vinogradova 2000, 45). Kirichyok (1998) argues that in the 1990s the sociology of *publitsistika* becomes a new area of sociological knowledge.

The craftsmanship of a journalist also implied possessing the working methods of the occupation, therefore the researchers wrote how one should work and the famous media practitioners propagated their experience (Sinitin 1983; Sagal 1978; Barykin 1979; Gorokhov 1982). Meanwhile sociology was committed to rich journalistic labour with sociological methods in order to enhance the creative process of a worker and to make the text more effective in its influence on the audience (Prokhorov 1966; Alekseev 1967; Kropotov 1976).

Recently a proposal emerged to differentiate the notion of journalistic craftsmanship in separate areas of analysis: “methods of labour” (popular and scientifically verified means of activity) and “poetics of journalism” (forms and language of texts) (Korkonosenko 1998, 33). Shortly after a new textbook edited by Korkonosenko (2000) for journalism schools was published with a clear differentiation of the methods of a journalist’s work (Lazutina 2000), journalistic text (Misonzhnikov 2000) and journalistic genres (Kroichik 2000).

#### **4.4 Psychology of journalism**

The psychology of journalism explores universal, pragmatically valuable aspects of creativity and communication through the mass media (Korkonosenko 1998, 33). As an autonomous area it had taken shape by the end of the 1970s. Psychological features of professional creativity were distinctly represented in the studies on *publitsistika* as a special kind of journalism (Svitich 1986; Mel’nik 1996, 50; Tseitlin 1962). The personality of a journalist was seen “in the aggregate of his/her experience and personal characteristics, as a mechanism of perception and treatment of life material being able to impress public interest, to result in publicist production” (Bukhartsev 1976, 13).

Vladilen Kuzin (1998, 17) interprets journalism psychology as an interdisciplinary science in shaping the psychology of a journalist as a personality and a professional. The science explores the psychology of the journalist’s labour and creativity, the peculiarities of interpersonal and inter-group interaction in the job process, forms and methods by means of which journalists and media influence the consciousness and behaviour of the audience. The key research objects are the journalist and the audience.

The professional consciousness of media workers was explored through their attitudes to the occupation, the audience and authority. The scholars were also interested in the attitudes held by the audience and the authorities regarding the journalists. Among the studies undertaken there were the following: on district journalists of the regions of Siberia (Parfenov 1969), on readers’ orientations and the journalists’ orientations of the Tartu newspaper *Edasi* (Tooms 1971), on journalists in the press, radio and television of the Rostov region (Shiryayeva 1969). In 1973 in Sverdlovsk the researchers Dvoryaninov and Syunkov, in 1977–1978 and 1983 in Ljvov the researcher Lubkov conducted studies on the district press (Lubkovich 1986, 1989). In 1976 journalists of the central newspaper

*Pravda* were questioned about the specifics of the job, the relationship with the audience, prestige of journalistic activity (Korobeinikov 1993).

Svitich and Shiryaeva (1979) conducted a study on journalists in fourteen district newspapers of Ryazanskya region based on surveys of press audience, the local officials and the journalists. The data significantly provided a complete picture of the journalist's work on small papers ('juice-squeezer'), the relationship between the journalists and the local authorities (unanimity and submission to authority), the journalists' knowledge of the audience (little competence) and their attitudes to the audience (little interest).

To reveal factors contributing to the successful activity of a journalist some researchers explored the nature of a journalist's feeling and thinking: logic, intuition, emotions, process of generating a thought and ways of its embodiment in the text (Bukhartsev 1976; Solonin 1986, 1991; Smirnov 1986; Vinogradova 2000). The recent socio-psychological study of journalists scrutinised the interdependence of their personal and professional characteristics. The results caused a scholar to argue that the individuals with moderate level of development of personal characteristics work and feel more successful in the occupation than those deviating above or below (Dzyaloshinsky 1996, 254).

Luiza Svitch (2000, 183–189) investigates journalists' attitudes to the occupation since the 1960s. A comparative analysis of the data obtained over three decades assisted in identifying a shift of journalists' perceptions of the occupation from romantic literary labour in the Soviet time to pragmatic and adventurism earning money in the post-Soviet era. The researcher states that such a radical turn in the perceptions of journalism was caused by the transformation of the occupation itself, changing from literary creativity to an information job. She also identified the shift of priority in personal characteristics perceived by the journalists from competence, adherence to principles, objectivity, literature talent and communicability in the past to honesty, morality and responsibility to society in the present. The contemporary practitioners experience lack of the latter in their work and consider that the very lack of personal morality and responsibility among journalists to some extent contributes to the dissemination of ordered materials and hidden advertising.

According to Svitch (Ibid.) the perceptions of professional roles transformed from propagandist and educator (*vospitatel*) in the 1970s toward informer and conversationalist at the beginning of the 1990s. A study conducted later, 1993–1995, identified a change in the perception of the roles from mouthpiece of public opinion, commentator and generator of ideas toward critic, informer, agitator with a tendency toward being an organiser, propagandist and entertainer (Dzyaloshinsky 1996a, 237).



There are studies (Pronina 1997; Pronin and Pronina 1997), revealing causality between a change in the social character of a contemporary journalist and the reforming social-economic structure of society. According to its classification, the journalists of *perestroika* are “knights of glasnost”, the journalists of the period of shock therapy are “spitboys” (*pljuiboi*) who equated information with misinformation, the journalists of the second half of the 1990s are ordered journalists (*zakaznoi*) serving the ruling elite and financial oligarchs (Kuzin 1998, 76–77). Kuzin (Ibid) predicts an increasing number of journalists with market character, those who identify themselves as a seller and a commodity simultaneously.

In the 1990s, the scholars began to be interested in the political preferences and social feeling of media workers. An extensive study on the professional self-image of a provincial journalist covering eight regions of Russia showed that many journalists had lost the criteria and abilities for professional self-identification, they do not know what professional norms are, where the boundaries between freedom and responsibility go, what a journalist’s role is in society (Glasnost Defence Foundation 1995, 111).

According to the data of the study (Ibid.) a non-party journalist of the 1990s (who is in the majority) supports democratic values. However, this does not hinder him/her from collaborating with the current authorities or from preferring newsgathering from bureaucrats and officials or from participating in political campaigns on the side of those who are far from democracy (Korkonosenko 1997, 83). The researchers diagnose “the new politicisation of Russian journalism” (Korkonosenko 1997, 1993) as far as journalists serve power structures instead of serving society (Yadov 2000, 450), they characterise contemporary journalism as corporative in the interests of political and economic groups, clans and the elite (Svitich 2000, 109; Y. Zassoursky 2001, 178).

The St. Petersburg researchers Olessia Koltsova (2006) and Anna Sosnovskaya (2005) studied the city’s journalists and ways in which their professional identity was formed, compared them with Swedish journalists (Sosnovskaya 2002) and investigated a question on power practices in news production (Koltsova 2001).

A study was recently conducted on social-political orientations of journalists using the method of expert interviewing of 40 famous journalists from eight Moscow newspapers of different political orientation and 10 editors of the district press. The basic task was to receive experts’ appraisals of journalists’ work on value-orientating the people in the social-political life. In particular, posing a question on what social group’s values prevail in the media content the researchers found that the values of the financial and commercial structures dominate in



the press. This testifies to the venality and engagement (*angazhirovannost*) of contemporary journalism when the media substitute objective value orientating of the people for the propaganda of the media owner's values (Ustimova 2000: 4, 25). The majority of experts were of the opinion that contemporary journalism does not participate in the discussion of the views from different strata of the population with the aim of agreement of various interests in the society, and not even journalism recognises a requirement for such a discussion (Ibid., 27).

The other study of 1997–1998 on the national press in Russia revealed that in the country there are practically no national newspapers which implement the necessary integration mission, that is, contribute to the development of a dialogue between different social and political forces with the aim of public agreement on the interests (Resnyanskaya and Fomicheva 1999, 227).

Media psychology and its influence on practical journalism and the future is the area of research for those who focus on psychological problems of contemporary journalism, violence and psychological traumas produced by and via mass media, psycho-semantics in communicative aspects and other respective interests (Pronina 2002).

## 4.5 Legal rules

The legal and ethical regulation of journalism emerged in the post-Soviet time when the mass media became free from the direct dictate of the state owing to the law on the mass media adopted on the 27th of December 1991. The Judicial Chamber on Informational Disputes under the Russian Federation President was established by presidential decree on the 31st of December 1993. It served as an arbiter for resolving legal and ethical conflicts between media on the one hand and political, social and administrative structures on the other hand, between media and audience and also contributed to regulating editorial disagreements (Vengerov 1997, 4). In June 2000 the new Russian President dissolved the Chamber. In the words of Andrei Richter, director of the Moscow Media Law and Policy Institute it is “a very sad fact, because the body has amassed great expertise and a set of decisions and recommendations in media law” (Richter 2001, 154).

Established in 1991, the Glasnost Defence Foundation constantly realises monitoring of media practice in Russia and the CIS, makes an examination of the laws regarding mass media area and organises research. Its study on provincial journalists revealed that one of the most acute problems in journalism was violation of journalists' rights. Among the reasons the experts noted both lack of juridical knowledge of journalists, shortage of lawyers and legal nihilism of the

regional authorities (Glasnost Defence Foundation 1995, 109). To ensure self-protection of journalists Boris Lozovsky (2001) devised practical advice termed the security techniques of a journalist for his professional work.

In his review of media regulation in post-Soviet Russia Richter points that “in addition to federal laws and decrees, there is an array of local legislation that governs the press in Russia”. The text of the clauses of the Constitution of 1993 as well as the other legislative documents is not perfect and “provides a certain leeway for different opinions on regulation possibilities for the regional and federal legislatures”. The division of authority over the media is fixed between the federal and regional governments on the one hand. On the other hand there is competition for influence over the media between the executive and legislative branches of the government on the federal level and a similar trend persists in the provinces between regional governors and local legislatures (Richter 2001, 146).

The legal nihilism of the regional authorities was testified to in the results of the research done by *Public Expertise* in 1999–2000 on regional legislation regarding the media. Only 20 regional media statutes did not contradict relevant federal statutes, the legislation in the other subjects of the Russian Federation had deviations from the federal laws. However, “the change has come with the introduction by President Vladimir Putin of the policy to put the regional legislation in line with the Constitution and the federal legislation” (Ibid., 148).

The research of *Public Expertise* mentioned above was organised by the Union of Journalists of Russia, the Glasnost Defence Foundation, the National Institute of Social-Psychological Studies, the Centre for Media Law and Policy and the autonomous non-commercial organisation “Internews”. Its basic aim was to measure the freedom of speech in the country taken under examination in 1999 and 2000. The first stage of research sought to test the legal conditions in which journalists work: all 89 regional legislations regulating media activity were analysed as well as the accreditation rules of journalists by testing the authorities on informational inquiries. From the results the experts deducted the level of freedom inherent in every region. The finding was that in Russia there are no regions with normal conditions for journalists’ activity at all. The Russian media space appeared fragmentary and maimed by different local systems restricting access, production and dissemination of information in the country (*Public Expertise* 2000, 4–9).

The second stage of *Public Expertise* had the task of defining reasons for providing different levels of freedom in the regions. The fieldwork was done in every regional media market with exploration of media saturation, level of media conflicts and the structure of regional media budgets. On the basis of

the aggregate data on the conditions in which journalists work and the level of development of the media sector the experts classified seven different media models in the Russian Federation which significantly influenced the level of freedom. Thus, the regions with the market model had the highest index of freedom for media at 44.2 whereas the regions with authoritarian media model had the lowest index at 23.5 (Ibid., 110).

The growth of conflicts with the participation of media and journalists in the middle of the 1990s identified by the Glasnost Defence Foundation and court practice forced the experts to see how this phenomenon threatens the freedom of speech in society. The analysis of the data gathered in 1995, 1996 and 1997 revealed two types of conflicts; when media rights were violated and when suits were brought against the media. In the list the violations of the rights of media was the most widespread: criminal offences involving journalists, restrictions on access to information, violation of professional autonomy, interference in editorial policy and putting obstacles to producing and spreading media production. The media and journalists were accused mainly of defamation of honour, dignity and business reputation (Ratinov and Efremova 1998).

When the researchers had thoroughly examined the actions brought against the journalists on protection of honour, dignity and business reputation, they discovered that a significant part of them was groundless and the majority of actions were made by the officials often owing to the critical articles of the journalists. Every year the number of recorded actions against journalists increased: 15 in 1995, 35 in 1996, 45 in 1997 (Simonov 1998, 126). And although statistics on the conflicts with the participation of media showed an increase, nevertheless it did not reflect the real picture owing to an extremely high level of latent violations of journalists' rights. The journalists themselves remained too tolerant regarding unlawful actions against them. Thus, in the data for 1997 only 1.4% of the respondents brought actions for violation of their professional rights. In their conclusion the experts diagnosed an increasing threat to freedom of information in society (Ratinov and Efremova 1998, 196).

The passivity of journalists in the protection of their professional rights was attested by the study that explored journalists' access to information. The sample included 1,370 journalists working in the federal, regional and local media in different parts of Russia. As the results showed, the journalists were significantly competent in legal questions concerning their professional activity, but they did not strive at all to defend their lawful rights and interests or to use legal mechanisms for their protection. Three grounds were decisive in not going to court. The media and journalists did not believe that judicial organs were able

to defend them (one of the reasons was the present weak media legislation). They valued their working time highly and did not wish to spend it on 'visits' to court. Sometimes they themselves used questionable methods at work and would not like to reveal them in the process of legal proceedings (Tyutina 1996, 171–172).

The other study scrutinised the problem of access to information in a wider context including not only the journalists, but also other professional and social groups in the population. The researchers discovered that mass media is the main informational source for the majority of the population. However, the possibilities for journalists to obtain information remain very limited. The research confirmed the finding of a previous study of 1996 that facts, documents and statistical data are the most closed information for journalists. The authors concluded that mass media do not provide the citizens with all the necessary information whereas the people's use of the other informational sources is also inhibited (Dzyaloshinsky 1997, 107–112).

A recent analytical review of the legal bases for freedom of the press suggests comparative analysis of conditions for media activity in the rule of Yeltsin and nowadays. In particular Richter (2002, 164) notes that "now the government plays a rather bigger role in the governing processes in the media sphere":

licensing became a key word applied in the legal conflicts of the Kremlin with no loyal mass media. From the establishing and applying of juridical mechanisms directed at the oppression of broadcasters under threat of recalling the licence the government moved to attempts to apply this effective weapon to Internet and print editions. (Richter 2002, 167)

## **4.6 Ethical norms**

In the media field legal mechanisms have been operated together with ethical norms prescribed both by ethical codes of national and regional levels and by internal rules introduced by editorial offices. Leading a new claim for self-regulation of the professional community were 27 journalists who in February 1994 signed the Moscow Charter of Journalists. They strove to create ethical journalism in Moscow with voluntary obedience to the accepted rules and control of conduct among its signatories. In April 1994 the Congress of Journalists adopted the Code of Ethics of a Russian Journalist taking as a basis the Moscow Charter and made observance of the Code obligatory for every member of the Union of Journalists of Russia. Following similar documents of democratic countries the Code did not cater for domestic circumstances and in

this way made the demands hard to implement for the journalists. For instance, a ban on leadership in the political parties eliminated many talented publicists from membership in the union (Avraamov 1999, 14). Moreover, adopted without a wide discussion of the practitioners (only 60 delegates were in the Congress) the Code turned rather into an idle declaration than a driving tool for everyday usage.

Experts estimate the ethical 'health' of the post-Soviet journalism very critically. A report of the Union of Journalists of Russia characterises journalism as political, ordered, corrupt, self-sufficient and the appearance of ethical norms as a rarity, "a relapse of romanticism" (Glasnost Defence Foundation 1997). Svitich (2000, 188) points out that the present editorial practice cultivates in journalists such propensities as time-serving, unprincipled approach, cynicism. Avraamov quotes from *Mass Media of Russia* (1997, 227):

journalism is becoming increasingly egoistic and self-sufficient, it does not strive to know and to express public opinion, it does not attempt to form public opinion through comprehensive and objective information. Instead the media publish personal or editorial opinion presenting it as public and 'requisite' information is presented as objective. (Avraamov 1999, 62)

The analysis of interviews with journalists in 40 cities and the analysis of their publications in the local newspapers revealed the following characteristics of the practitioners. Journalists are not interested in the realisation of the citizens' rights to information. For them it is more important to earn money than to get information to a reader, to expose a sensation than to suppress it. Journalists do not wish to deviate from an official picture of events, they use the information from the officials and do not verify it. They do not have a desire to write on the real lives of people, to interview the people so as to show different strata of society. They rely upon financing from influential persons and the local state organs instead of attempting to become independent. Journalists are not interested in the trust of the audience. In their publications they do not indicate where they received information, but present themselves as the source of information. They mix fact and their own opinions; they often use pseudonyms and other names instead of their own names. They participate widely in the preparation of advertisements for commercial or political advertisers, not distinguishing between professional and commercial work. At the same time journalists actively publish hidden advertisements violating the law on mass media but they justify themselves by the necessity to survive (Olson 1998, 20–21).

As the basic reasons why media practitioners do not have the requirement for self-regulation experts point out two, cultural (the absence of independent

journalism traditions) and economic (lack of development of market and economic dependence of the majority of media) (Avraamov 1999, 13; Eryomin 1998, 36). In particular, Avraamov (1999, 10) states that Soviet journalism was a form of party work, the moral aspects of journalism were indivisible from party responsibility, the journalists were submitted to external institutional regulators such as the directives of a publisher, party discipline, functional instructions in the editorial office. The internal regulator of the journalist's conduct was elementary fear of inevitable sanctions for deviations from demands sent down from above.

The Soviet studies on the journalists' ethics were conducted in the frame of the party ideology, notably by Bukhartsev (1971, 1985) and Teplyuk (1980, 1984). According to Svitich (2000, 132) the main paradigm established the harmonious existence of society without antagonistic contradictions. In the total positive public mood journalism was aimed at revealing contradictions between those who implemented their duties well and those who implemented them badly, between those who observed the norms of socialistic morality and those who violated them. The professional magazine *Zhurnalist* initiated the discussion on the moral questions in the occupation.

At the end of the 1980s and at the start of market reforms with the abolition of the institution of censorship and party control the old concepts of the State 'right' journalism clashed with the intake of new liberal market ideas coming from the West. At just that time, as Shaikhidinova considers (2001, 632), the journalist community began to accumulate primary ethical capital through the search for new beliefs, free mood, shoptalk about common principles and the ethos of the professional environment. However, regional journalism had to operate on elementary 'rules' of common sense "in order to preserve itself in the conditions of the State monopolisation of the local capital". These elementary 'rules' were very far from that "what is right" (Ibid.).

The researcher stresses that "the trouble is that the journalists do not perceive self-regulation as a social matter":

Professional questions have been regarded on the line of the relationship between journalism and authority although professionalism is no political category and journalism is no personal problem of those who work there. The journalists' need for ethical norms may appear when their practice is discussed not only 'in camera', that is in professional circles, but with the wide participation of society. For this one should organise public discussions on the professional work of journalists through mass media in order to raise a requirement of the audience for such information. (Shaikhidinova 2001, 632)



Conducted on the basis of the Moscow and Tyumen regions humanitarian expertise is in the researchers' opinion the first step in monitoring the journalists' ethics. The data were provided by 'internal expertise' (analytical reflections of editors-in-chief, famous journalists) and 'distance expertise' (chiefs of professional associations and the authors of professional codes) with the participation of media experts. The research was based on dialogical communication between researchers and experts, discussing and consulting the basic models of professional ethos presented by everyday consciousness of journalists (Bakshtanovsky et al. 1995).

First the publication of the first volume of documents and reference materials on professional ethics of journalists introduces a Russian reader to the ethical legislation developed by international and national associations and organisations of journalists. The main aim is to provide knowledge of what is professionally right conduct of a journalist (Glasnost Defence Foundation 1999). The other work is based on an analysis of journalists' everyday practice in the centre and regions and also presents discussion of media experts on the present situation in mass media and society, gives the experts' prognosis's for media in nearest future (Kazakov 2001); one of the prognoses is the following:

It is conceivable that with the end of the Yeltsin epoch and the obvious tendency for the transformation of Russia into an authoritarian state sharp changes will develop regarding mass media and it means that the situation of a moral choice for a journalist will change. Now a fifth part of the Russian media belongs to the state. Moreover, in the conditions of the state monopoly over printing trades, delivery of the newspapers and magazines, relay lines, television towers and transmitters the media cannot feel free, because the basic levers of state influence on the relationship of media and consumers are preserved. The striving to establish the former clearly institutional methods of the regulation of the journalists' conduct become everywhere the leading trend of the representatives of the state in the relation to the press. The danger of the restoration of quasi-Soviet information regime invokes the deep feeling of anxiety. (Avraamov 2001, 612–613)

In their recent review of the fifteen-year history of post-Soviet journalism, Luiza Svitich and Alla Shiryaeva (2006, 7, 12) conclude that a return to the old tendencies was and has been observed side by side with forward movement ahead in contemporary Russia. To a considerable extent acute problems in media practice have been explained by objective conditions of the transitional stage of the development of the country. The recent works on the regional and local media (Baskakova 2004; Badmaeva 2004; Pulya 2004) testify to keeping the economic and political dependence of the media on the authorities. At the same



time the journalists do not expect too much from their work and do not show an interest in establishing such a new approach in the professional practice as media critique (Prozorov 2005, 223–226; Korochensky 2003). Richter (2007, 15) argues that the level of the development of media system appearing in historically shaped models of journalism corresponds to a concrete form of the regulation of post-Soviet journalism.

## 5 In the West

The interest in the West in research on Soviet media workers developed rather later and to a lesser degree than the interest in research on the content of the Soviet media. Obviously western sovietologists did not consider journalists a worthwhile object of study. However “assumptions about media-actor linkages in western analysis of Soviet affairs are integral to the assumptions about the nature of Soviet politics”, the analysts held an opinion on journalists more or less as propagandists deprived of autonomy (Dzirkals, Gustafson and Johnson 1982, 91).

In addition, there was difficulty in gaining to do research on journalists. In the years of the Cold War the Soviet state rigidly limited all contacts between Soviet people and foreigners, and it was impossible for a westerner to conduct an uncensored study in the editorial office or anywhere in the territory of the country. Vihalemm (2001, 80), for instance, describing annual conferences on mass communication theory organised by the Sociological Laboratory of Tartu University at Kääriku near Tartu from 1966 to 1969, Shlapentokh stated that “any participation by researchers from outside the Iron Curtain was impossible” (Shlapentokh 1987, 13).

The few studies on Soviet journalists were based on the accessible sources from official documents: journalists’ texts in the newspapers and professional magazines, the official party and the Union of Journalists’ documents, the Soviet studies published in the universities’ and scholars’ editions, the surveys of the International Press Institute.

The Kremlinological school (Brzezinski and Huntington 1964; Lodge and Merrill 1969; Angell, Dunham and Singer, 1964; Paul 1971) had been confined to the analysis of the Soviet top leadership in search of hidden conflicts among its members. The analysts had focused on the role in the Soviet political processes of large organisations and elite groups. Among those were large bureaucratic organisations, and the professional and occupational groups such as the secret

police, party functionaries (*apparatchiki*), heavy industry and light industry managers, military offices and others but not journalists. These groups had been seen as “policy groups” which speak out through their own media organs promoting their viewpoints on the political scene (Dzirkals et al. 1982, 96–97). Meanwhile, the Union of Journalists established in 1957 soon became “the largest professional union in the country”, thus, in 1966 membership had reached 43, 000 (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky 1971, 189; Hollander 1972; Turpin 1995, 14).

A change in the approach to research on Soviet media workers came with the new “interest grouping” school that began to investigate the role of the political groupings belonging to a specific lower level elite. Its researchers paid attention to chief editors, deputies, specialist commentators. According to Skilling and Griffiths (1971) policy-relevant media differentiation cannot be assumed to emanate entirely “from below” ...the diversity of view is the result not merely of initiative from below by individuals, but also of decisions by persons in authority, who approve or perhaps sometimes sponsor certain lines of arguments. Editors, publishers, Agitprop officials, even censors, and in some cases, political leaders, are thus involved in this interplay of group attitudes and interests (Dzirkals et al. 1982, 99).

Undertaken by the Rand Corporation in 1978–1981, the comparative study of the Soviet and the Polish media was aimed at avoiding stereotyping of sovietological research. It adopted an assumption on media not only as part of the propaganda organs, but as having other functions. The study was focused on the relationship between media and political actors whose behaviour or attitudes are inferred from the media content. It also tested the usual Kremlinological assumption that the media of the USSR and the other Communist countries have been utilised as an instrument in the power struggle and policy debate by contending leaders or groups (Ibid., iii). The researchers emphasised the novelty of their approach by the fact that new information derives from immediate media workers:

...it has not been possible to have an inside look at the ways in which media material is initiated, processed, approved, and controlled. We could not look inside a Soviet editorial office to see what goes on there. Knowing only the output of the media, Western analysts inferred what they could about its meanings, but with only a vague idea about how it was produced. (Dzirkals et al. 1982, 4)

Extended interviews with former Soviet journalists, experts and editors who emigrated to the West and agreed to tell about their personal experiences in various media fields became primarily the basis of the study (43 out of 56 of them

were Jewish). The results confirmed that “journalists and writers are, on balance, a reliable part of the system. Whereas in some specialised technical fields the Soviet professional has achieved a degree of latitude in affecting policy, that is not the case in the Soviet media” (Ibid., vi).

## 5.1 A Soviet journalist

One of the first sketches of a Soviet journalist emerges in the *Four Theories of the Press* in an imaginary dialogue of the Soviet and the American journalist represented by Wilbur Schramm as shoptalk of ‘deaf’ colleagues (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm 1956, 105). Discussing the same notions of freedom of press, nature and functions of news both heroes operate with absolutely different senses and therefore do not understand each other. From this classic work to the present day the stress on the incompatible system of professional co-ordinates has remained as the core for subsequent studies on the Soviet and the post-Soviet media workers.

Accordingly, Anthony Buzek (1964, 243) describes working journalists as leading propagandists “who possess high political and class consciousness, understand the political line of the Party, accept it as their own, are able to put into practice and are capable of answering for it, defending it and fighting for it, and able to align themselves correctly in any situation”. Buzek (Ibid, 244–247) argues that the journalistic profession in the USSR is a political function, a party assignment and this is reflected in the approach to the training of journalists. In particular, the training is shaped to the party “propagandist and agitational needs and filled the curriculum with the necessary ideology and party decisions, tossing practical aspects of journalism aside as unnecessary ‘bourgeois technicality’”. It results in a very low standard of professional preparation of the students who are equipped mainly with a general education and do not possess the ‘narrow’ specialisation.

Buzek argues too that the Union of Journalists and the professional journals perform an important function in the continuous ideological education of journalists. The articles discuss all aspects of journalistic work from the ideological standpoint. The Union is subordinated to the propaganda department of the Central Committee, which directs its work. The researcher states that in spite of the coming of ‘new freedoms’ owing to Khrushchev’s ruling among “Soviet journalists, there is as yet no sign of changed attitudes. Soviet journalists are not rebels yet, only faithful servants of the party” (Buzek 1964, 251, 254).

Alex Inkeles (1968) exposes the incompatible system of professional coordinates of western and Soviet journalism when he explores Soviet mass communication:

Bolshevik theory rejects the notion of freedom of the press as it is understood in the West. Objectivity as a goal of journalistic effort is similarly rejected. The resultant concept of what is news is remarkably different from that held by Western journalists. The private affairs of prominent persons in political and artistic life, and many other elements which are important as news in the United States, play no role in the Soviet newspaper. The main ingredients of Soviet news are those events which have come to characterize the effort of the Communist Party to cement its control of Soviet society and to press the people on against all obstacles toward rapid industrialization of the country. (Inkeles 1968, 276–277)

Thomas Remington (1985, 490) examines the professionalism of the Soviet journalists over four aspects: “the nature of journalism training in school, the lessons that early exposure to journalistic practice teaches, the role of the Journalists’ Union, and the social standing of journalism in Soviet society”. He points to a gap between education and practice:

the curriculum offers a smattering of knowledge in a wide range of subjects but leaves the students without a firm claim to a single body of expertise that would define them as professionals. Even the practical and technical skills they develop often have only limited application to the job they take after graduation. (Ibid., 491)

The researcher writes that the journalists are under constant economic and ideological pressure because their incomes are tied to an obligatory working plan (line quotas) and professional career depends on political commitment:

A beginning journalist earns about 120 to 140 rubles per month, a modest wage. A senior correspondent earns 200 rubles per month. The chief editor of a major central or republic newspaper earns a salary well over 500 rubles a month. Moreover, the editor-in-chief is a figure of political weight in the jurisdiction to which his organization is attached. He enters the *nomenklatura* of the corresponding or higher party organization, and in most cases he is a member of the bureau of the party committee on his level. For beginning journalists the prospect of improving their material well-being and raising their sociopolitical status by advancing to editorial ranks must serve as a strong incentive for political compliance. (Remington 1985, 494)

Remington (Ibid., 499–503) estimates the professional union of the journalists as having “little influence over the party and government in either professional or personal welfare areas”, underscores the journalists’ “dependence on party

favour for their social status”, characterises the journalists as “an extension of party bureaucracy” and predicts overriding politicizing forces in the process of professionalizing journalists “until major changes occur at the highest level of the political regime”.

## 5.2 A Post-Soviet journalist

With the policy of perestroika and the start of the democratic process western analysis rushed to search for changes which might come about from the impact of the reforms on media and professionalism. The studies from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s found noticeable changes in journalistic education, work and conduct oriented towards the western model of professionalism.

Based on a 1988 survey of the Soviet media He Zhou (1988, 193) indicates five noticeable changes in the media. Among those are more timely releases of news; a tremendously expanded scope of coverage that has included many formerly forbidden topics; a trend toward more factual though still sketchy, information; more entertainment stories and human interest; and more moderately negative items. According to Zhou “the changes in the Soviet concept of news have been caused, primarily by the modernization process and the accompanying socioeconomic changes” (Ibid.).

Thomas Remington (1988, 179) found the restoration of “the prestige of a profession which had sunk far in both social standing and self-esteem”. He refers to a recent report according to which “applications to journalism faculties have tripled”.

Another researcher, Philip Gaunt (1987, 531–532) notes the transforming of journalists’ attitudes to the audience as a part of the journalists’ striving to understand better the audience’s needs. He considers that “changes taking place within the Soviet media are less the result of ideological exigencies than ‘bottom-up’ pressure from the audience and structural changes within the media themselves”.

Doug Haddix (1990) tested the effect of *glasnost* on two areas, journalism training and job experience, in an attempt to find out whether there is fundamental alteration in the nature of Soviet journalism and whether the Soviet journalists are moving closer to a professional model. In his opinion most indications point to a growing sense of professionalism in the Soviet media. This is a result of remarkable innovations both in the education (more practical training than before in curricula of universities) and daily practices of journalism

(more openness and critical assessment of Soviet society including reports on formerly forbidden subjects such as prostitution, AIDS, drug abuse, corruption). Journalists have freedom to select what to report and how to report it and their perception of the journalist's role began to change from public relations workers for the Communist Party to professionals. The practitioners "have called for a code of professional standards and ethics – something to help them understand the new rules of the game". In 1988, the Journalists' Union created the All-Union Council on Ethics and Law to foster "strict observance of the norms of professional morality" (Haddix 1990, 168).

At the same time Haddix estimates the current juncture sufficiently carefully but with an optimistic look at the future:

Some changes have been made in journalism education, but many educators apparently have been hesitant to institute sweeping reforms for fear of a sudden shift in the political wind. Working journalists have made tremendous strides in the quality of their work and the types of topics they tackle, but the Soviet media still have a long way to go (Haddix 1990, 156).

Regardless of the political changes in the Soviet Union, short of a highly unlikely return to Stalinism, journalists in the USSR will continue to move closer to the ideal of professionalism. (Ibid., 170)

Vera Tolz (1992, 112) places journalists in the group of Soviet intellectuals who "had already formed a theoretical base for supporting drastic changes in the Soviet political system and therefore was ready to respond to the new challenges posed by Gorbachev's policies and to take advantage of the new opportunities they offered". Writers and journalists played a unique socio-political role, turning literature and journalism into the main battlefield of various social and political ideas. They broadened "the range of topics that could be discussed in the press" and "gradually ceased to take into account the point of view of the top leadership and started to run the media the way they thought appropriate" (Ibid., 104–105). Tolz notes that "many media people, already known for publications critical of the existing system, received further opportunities to influence the situation in the country", when they were elected USSR people's deputies in the 1989 elections (92 media workers) and RSFSR people's deputies in the 1990 elections (55 media workers) (Ibid., 107–108).

At the same time the researcher concludes that:

Of course, Soviet journalists have not been able in such a short space of time to attain the standards of the best Western journalism. Many provincial and especially recently-created independent newspapers are not professional as regards either content or appearance. Some press articles are marked by

intolerance – a general problem of Soviet society; some material is unbalanced, and many journalists fail to distinguish between fact and opinion (a failing of many news programmes on RSFSR television and radio). (Tolz 1992, 108)

In the opinion of Owen Johnson (1992, 221) the current situation does not provide clarity as to how the journalist's occupation will develop. "With so many journalistic jobs in jeopardy because of financial uncertainty there has been little consideration of these issues; with so many old journalists discredited and so many new, untrained reporters flooding into the profession, the defining characteristics of the journalist are in flux".

Nevertheless some scholars cherish the hope that "journalism is one of the few occupations that have moved toward professionalization since the reforms started", although there is significant apprehension "that it is unclear in Russia and other East European countries what professionalism will mean and what the role of the journalist will be" (Wu, Weaver and Johnson 1996, 535).

Joy Morrison (1997) looks at the Russian journalists' way toward professionalisation through western partners' training and various kinds of foreign aid. It was essential that since 1991 journalists and educators from Western European countries and the United States enthusiastically trained Russian journalists, offering them courses according to their domestic models of journalism education and media system. Material aid was important:

There has been an enormous amount of funding available in the United States for "developing" Russian journalism with a stated view of promoting democracy. There has also been funding from European governments for media training in Russia, and the result is a proxy war for the hearts and minds of Russian journalists and journalism students. (Ibid., 26)

The researcher considers that "Russian journalists and educators are much more partial to the European assistance they are receiving. Their preference is for the European media system, which has many similar cultural and historical roots" (Ibid., 32). At the same time Laurie Wilson (1994, 2) criticises U.S. expectations of Russian development, comparing it to the "thoroughly ethnocentric modernization paradigm", which includes an expectation that the media in Russia will work toward becoming clones of western media, "in spite of significant differences in historical development, cultural norms, current events and societal structures, and available resources" (Morrison 1997, 33).

Jukka Pietiläinen (2002) using the modernisation paradigm in his research on the regional press in the post-Soviet Russia does not find any adequate model for Russia comparing its post-*perestroika* development with the media models in the Scandinavia, the UK, Italy and the US. He writes (Ibid. 458), that "The most



likely option for Russia will be a mixture of elements” linking his expectations of the future Russia with the economic rise including investments from the West and the development of the civil society there.

In the opinion of Morrison (Ibid., 33–34) “the European model could be a better transitional one in Russia. The Russian system is much like that in European countries in that it is a mixture of privately owned (newspapers and radio), sponsored by businesses (newspapers), jointly owned (newspapers, radio and television) and state controlled (newspapers, radio and television) media”. Whereas “the commercially based media system being pushed by United States bilateral aid programs does not seem to be in much demand although the financial incentives – from United States advertising agencies and funding sources such as The Freedom Forum – to adopt this system are extremely attractive and difficult to turn down”. However, “as Russia is not a democracy and does not appear to be immediately headed in that direction, it is fruitless to expect freedom of media, or to teach journalism students to operate in such an environment”.

Brian McNair (2000) analyses the Russian media of the 1990s under such key words as “power, profit, corruption, and lies”. He notes such a specific of the Russian press as “politics-media interface”. According to him “freedom in Russia chiefly meant that proprietors were free to dictate what the editorial line of a title would be. Given that this is a normal feature of media markets, it would not have been especially worrying in the Russian context”. However, the proprietors of many Russian newspapers “exert a degree influence on the political apparatus which is rarely seen in mature capitalist systems” (McNair 2000, 85). The scholar states that “journalistic objectivity has not yet emerged as the dominant professional ethic in Russia”:

There is still relatively little accumulated experience of objective or independent journalism in Russia. The audience is used to, and still expects, journalists to be politically committed propagandists. The media in Russia continue to be associated with the manipulation of public opinion, rather than its formation, and with private interests, rather than public service. (McNair 2000, 91)

The scholar considers that these problems are rather problems of political culture than censorship, “of underdeveloped professionalism rather than dictatorial law” (McNair 2000, 91–92).

Elena Androunas<sup>9</sup> in her analysis of the Soviet media of the second half of the 1980s critically estimates the role of media in society. The researcher notes their conformity, loyalty and obedience to the government although they could “play

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9 Elena Androunas, former researcher of the MSU moved to work to the USA in the 1990s.

a crucial role again as they did at the start of perestroika". In this case "they must be a counterbalance to government, a separate power". But the researcher doubts that the present media, with few exceptions, can do it efficiently enough because they were designed for a system other than it was in the West and "the new ideas are not natural to them" (Androunas 1993, 154). Moreover, as the researcher emphasises:

What is worse, the media reflect the traditional way of thinking in Russian society, whether under monarchy or under communists, instead of trying to break this stereotype. Russia is used to an authoritarian way of rule. Politics has been always been personified in one leader, whether he was tsar, secretary general, or president.

... inclination to rely on a strong leader has remained one of the principal characteristics of the Russian people. (Androunas 1993, 155)

The European Institute for the Media based in Düsseldorf examined the level of journalists' freedom in Russia at the end of the 1990s. For this purpose the experts monitored developments relating to the violation of journalists' rights in 1996, 1997 and 1998. According to the data obtained "as before, in the majority of conflicts involving journalists, the second protagonist was the state". Among the most serious conflicts were "state persecution of media and individuals who had, in the opinion of the authorities, published material which constituted a state secret (e.g. Vil Mirzayanov); the murder of journalists who had published articles critical of state organs or prominent officials or policy (e.g. Dmitri Kholodov)" (Media in the CIS 1999, 213).

The experts pointed to an apparent deterioration of the situation compared to the beginning of the 1990s. Thus, the number of incidents reported involving journalists increased from 370 in 1996 to over 1,000 in 1998. The number of regions as the worst areas of media/state conflict increased from two to five (Moscow, Sverdlovsk, Rostov, Nizhegorod, Voronezh, Krasnoyarsk and St. Petersburg). Almost half of all cases in Russia are brought against journalists or are at least cases where journalists are accused. In 1996, there were 168 such cases, in 1997 there were 350 cases (Ibid., 213–215). As the experts assume:

This number of cases cannot simply be put down to a lack of professionalism on the part of journalists (although wild and often unsubstantiated allegations can all too frequently be found in print) but must also be seen as relating to the desire of powerful individuals to punish critical journalists (the courts are almost certain to find in their favour – the Constitution does not allow of any circumstances where a citizen's honour and dignity may be called into question). (Media in the CIS 1999, 215)

The newspaper *Izvestiya* was at least twice an object of research for foreign scholars in their attempts to investigate the professionalism of the Russian journalists of the 1990s. Katrin Voltmer (2000) aimed at revealing what new journalistic practices emerged in the last decade and whether there are new conceptions of the role of journalists in society. The study was based on quantitative data with content analysis of the political coverage of *Izvestiya* with implementation of comparative analysis of front-page news of 1988 and 1996 in search for structural and thematic changes of news presentation. The results showed the coexistence of old and new journalistic norms when news became more factual, more timely and broader in the selection of topics and the same time there are traces of a high degree of journalistic subjective evaluations (Voltmer 2000, 469).

The comparative study on Nicaragua, South Africa, Jordan, and Russia implemented by Adam Jones at the University of British Columbia, Mexico in 1999 includes the Russian part as an overview of the recent media history with a case study done on the newspaper *Izvestiya*. The researcher investigated the 'coup' against chief editor Golembiovsky in 1997. The empirical material for the study was taken from two dozen interviews with journalists and journalism experts in Moscow. The researcher notes that despite the widespread western ideas on impartiality and dispassionate "objectivity" Russian journalists act according to existing circumstances adapting new ideas in their own way. As a result Russian journalism continues to be partisan and self-censored with very little degree of solidarity among journalists (Jones 1999, 27–28).

### **5.3 Joint studies**

The comparative study on the professional roles of Russian and U.S. journalists in 1992 was the first attempt at a joint sociological project implemented by Russian and American scholars. The study was based on interviews with 1,156 journalists in the United States and 1,000 journalists in Russia (Wu, Weaver and Johnson 1996; Kolesnik, Svitich and Shiryayeva 1995). Two research teams, each in its own country, scrutinised the journalists' perceptions regarding the importance of various professional roles and identified predictors of three key roles – disseminator, interpreter and adversary.

The researchers identified both similarities and notable differences between the Russian and the American journalists. As the Russian team notes:

...the journalists of both countries are very much alike... there are definite characteristics pertaining to the profession and journalist's personality as a social-psychological type not depending on the social structure in the country, its national traditions, the way of life. But unconditionally there are notable differences in the characteristics and orientations of the Russian and the American journalists. Some of them are connected with the traditions of mass media and national character, others are connected with the situation in Russia: instability, complexity and discrepancy of the processes ongoing in the society and mass media. (Kolesnik, Svitich and Shiryaeva 1995, 27)

The American colleagues stressed, "we need more comparative studies because they are system sensitive. They help us gain a better understanding and a less biased view of journalists from different systems, as well as the social systems within which they work" (Wu, Weaver and Johnson 1996, 545). In their analysis the researchers revealed "the traits of the role of agitator in Russian journalists" and concluded that "there are no fixed models of professional journalism" (Ibid., 544).

The other joint project was realised by British and Russian researchers in 1996 in Tatarstan. The study examined the contemporary practices of journalists with a focus on continuities and changing forms of social control in Russian journalism. It attempted to ascertain what norms the journalists adopt and also their self-image and identity (Davis, Hammond and Nizamova 1998). The study confirmed that "while there have been some real but incomplete changes – in the legal framework of media regulation, in the development of private sector media, and in the relationship between journalists and political authorities – there are also significant continuities with past practices" (Ibid. 83). Interviews with 28 journalists revealed that the understanding of 'professionalism' was unstable and ambivalent. The findings suggested "that none of the available models of the role of journalism (Leninist, liberal democratic, market based, etc.) provides an adequate framework to describe present practices" (Ibid.).

In summary, both the Russian and the western research of the post-Soviet journalists had its basic interest in the nature of the change of journalism as a professional occupation in the given historical conditions. The analysis reflected a struggle of the traditional against the new, coming from the West. Thus, in *perestroika* and at the start of liberalisation, Russian journalism was described as becoming free, open, pluralistic, defending democratic values and promising well for its further professionalisation.

A decade later, scholars began to express doubts about the future of professionalism in Russia. The findings of the last studies testified that journalism

had hardly parted from its past, the traces of political servitude increasingly emerged in it. Although it could largely be explained by economic dependence of the media on the governments and finance industry groups, and poorly developed media competition, the cultural factor was also decisive. Apart from other considerations, it included formerly the habitual perception of the media as a tool of those in power and the audience as a recipient of manipulation. Additionally, the mass moods swung from hunger for change, the middle of the 1980s, to satiety with it, and by the end of the 1990s, with a profound disappointment with the results and acute nostalgia for Soviet stability (Levada 2005).

## 6 Current situation in Russian journalism

The current development in the media and around it has been perceived differently. Thus, many researchers and experts find it gradually worsening with regard to the quality of freedoms and demands for them from the population. It validates anxieties identified by earlier research on the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. Whereas the population in mass opinion polls increasingly takes the situation as normal, as do some studies and officials.

Recently *Reporters Without Borders* (2006) regularly set a low index of freedom of journalists and media in Russia: the 121<sup>st</sup> place (out of 139 countries) in 2002, the 148<sup>th</sup> place (166) in 2003, the 140<sup>th</sup> place (167) in 2004, the 138<sup>th</sup> place (167) in 2005, the 147<sup>th</sup> place (168) in 2006. The experts of RSF point to increasing state control over media, limitation of information about the situation in Chechnya and an absence of different points of view on television (The Institution of Media and Law, 2005) as well as “steadily dismantling the free media, with industrial groups close to President Vladimir Putin buying up nearly all independent media outlets and the passing of a law discouraging NGO activity” (Ibid). During the last years it includes the RF President in its annual “list of enemies of free press” (*Lenta.ru/news/2006/05/04*).

*Human Rights Watch* (2005), points out the continuing pressure of Putin’s regime on the political freedoms: “By his re-election in 2004, both the political opposition and independent television had been obliterated.... Only a small number of newspapers and Internet publications provide some plurality of opinion but their readership is marginal”. The study later by the Levada Centre (05.10. 2006) finds that during the last six years the number of mobile phone

users in the population increased from 4 % in 2001 to 58% in 2006 in Russia; in Moscow this growth was from 17% up to 70%, whereas the number of users of the Internet increased but not significantly. In 2001, 92% of the population never used the Internet; in Moscow 85%; in 2006 84% of Russians never used the Internet; in Moscow 67%.

The non-government organisation *Freedom House* (2006) lowered the democratic rating of Russia to 5.75. For two years running Russia has been in the group of not free countries; in the classification all countries have been divided into free countries, partly free countries and not free countries. In 2006 Russia is grouped with Burma, Zimbabwe and China. The experts of Freedom House note that:

in 2005 President Vladimir Putin continued to centralize control over political life, enhancing his own power and countering previous democratic developments in Russia, thus leading to falling ratings in electoral process, civil society, national democratic governance, and corruption. Furthermore, with its onslaught against media freedoms, harassment of oppositionists, amendment of electoral laws making it more difficult for independent observers to monitor elections, and near obliteration of non-government organizations, the state demonstrated an isolationist attitude from the West, despite its pending chairmanship of the G8. (Ibid.)

The new report (Freedom House 2007, 1) finds that in 2006 and “those of the past seven years since President Putin came to office reflect a strategy of “democratic preemption” – a curtailment of free expression, free association and free elections”:

Measures taken so far by the Putin government in 2007 have deepened the marginalization of independent institutions and activists that had already been subjected to ruthless campaigns of intimidation and exclusion, and choked the world in terms of the extent to which the Putin regime is willing to go to eliminate all dissent within – and outside – of the ruling party and its allies. (Ibid.)

First held in Moscow, June 2006, the 59<sup>th</sup> World Newspaper Congress (WAN) began its work from the question why Russia needs press freedom. From the point of view of the West, it is very simple: “all available evidence demonstrates that a strong, free and independent press is a fundamental precondition for truly sustainable economic, social and political prosperity”. However, the Russian state is still not “taking seriously enough the mission of creating an environment in which a strong, free and independent press can grow and prosper” (O’Reilly, 2006).

Moreover, media and journalists “are far from being exempt from any criticism” when there is still a widespread, corrupt culture of ‘selling’ news space and influence to politicians and businessmen”; “the majority of Russian newspaper companies still suffer a deficit of professionalism, skills and best practice knowledge, both in management and journalistically”; “only 10% of newspapers are profitable and that many of those are not actually news and information publications, but rather advertising publications”; “that the public’s trust and confidence in the press in Russia is at an appallingly low point” (Ibid.).

The Russian researchers attached to liberal values together with the western colleagues criticise the trend of change in the political, economic, social, and media developments taken by the present regime. They point out that Putin’s Russia is developing as “a situational state” with managed democracy, “a system of imitations” admitting: the elections, the result of which is predetermined by means of administrative resources; political opposition deprived of the political influence and an opportunity to seek for power; freedom of speech and information, but within limits which do not threaten the bureaucratic vertical of the power and remain without control from the society (Klyamkin 2005, 16–17; Oates and Roselle 2000; Lipman and Faul 2001; Rukavishnikov 2003).

The recent publications of *Nezavisimaya* (06.10.2005) ‘Television is made ill by the State’; *Novye Izvestiya* (23.01.2006) ‘The value of independent media in their chaotic diversity’; (15.9.2005) ‘Non market reasons. The Russian media depend again on the pre-election’s orders’; *Financial Times* (27.06.2006) ‘Back from freedom to obedient propaganda’; *Lenta.ru* (30.12.2005) ‘A year not to see freedom’ continue to arouse experts’ anxieties about increasing pressure of the State on the media.

The results of recent monitoring of the mainstream media conducted by the Union of Journalists of Russia, the Centre for Journalism in Extreme Situations and MEMO 98 testify to their ongoing transformation into tools of state propaganda. The journalists increasingly experience cases of political censorship and self-censorship (*Kommersant* 28.04.2006); the federal channels practically ousted from news air oppositional politicians and parties, taken together they had 1%, as much time as the Federal Security Service (FSB), whereas the president, government and the party in power had 93% (*Kommersant* 07.07.2006).

According to the data of the Centre for Journalism in Extreme Situations (4.07. 2006) during the last six years in Russia more than 300 legal actions were brought against journalists, on average 45–50 cases per year, mostly on such articles as defamation, libel and libel of a representative of power. The international organisations support Russian journalists in their demand for the



government to withdraw these articles from the Criminal Code or not to use them at all, because it is impossible to identify journalists as criminals only for words and also to put them in prison. Such a democratic procedure as the Civil Code could be used in those cases when a journalist misrepresents facts.

The *Committee to Protect Journalists* (CPJ) published the list of most dangerous countries for reporters, where in the last fifteen years most journalists were killed. Russia occupied the third place (42 journalists killed) after Iraq (78) and Algeria (60) (Reuters 20.09.2006; *Kommersant*, 20.09.2006). Alexei Simonov, head of the Glasnost Defence Foundation (GDF) in his interview to *Novaya gazeta* (23.06.2006) apropos the jubilee (15 years of the GDF) ironically notes decreasing interest of Russian media in press conferences of the GDF, as distinct from western analysts, although problems in journalism do not disappear. Thus, their monitoring of infringements of the professional rights of journalists does not register decreasing numbers of conflicts in the media sphere: 1.5 thousand per year. The number of journalists killed exceeded 200 over the last fifteen years. The central financing of the GDF was stopped, out of ten its regional sections only one, the Centre of Defence of the Rights of the Press continued in Voronezh. Simonov warns that society has been deprived of information; society watches TV not showing Russia at all, becomes indifferent to its own life, concentrates upon survival (Ibid.).

His anxiety is in keeping with the findings of media researchers. Thus, Lev Gudkov (2001, 284) notes, instead of articulating questions of civil society, the media report on the various intrigues of influential groups. Natalia Zorkaya (2005, 10) finds that if in the period of *glasnost* and *perestroika* journalists perceived the audience as a part of a dialogue, nowadays they again perceive it as a passive mass audience. Andrei Richter (2005, 3) concludes that the disappointment in such an important institution of democracy as the media means negative consequences for democracy itself, such as social apathy and absenteeism, rejection of participation in elections, lack of faith in one's powers. Boris Dubin (2006b) notes the general adaptation in the society as the tactics of weak people.

Russian media is not free politically, economically and professionally. The Russian Federation government report establishes the fact that federal structures and private investors subsidise up to 90 per cent of Russia's newspapers. Sponsors generally see their publications as a political resource and do not expect the projects to recoup. Nearly every serious national daily today has either a financial or an industrial group behind it or the State, while regional authorities support most of the leading newspapers in the regions (The Russian Periodical Press Market 2005, 11).

The Russian government aims at business projects. In 2006 its report notes such features of the press market as, on the one hand, its dynamic growth of advertising, retail and subscriptions, and on the other hand a lack of development of media measurement, a low trustworthiness of statistics on the media market, the economic and political dependence of some editions, especially regional and local newspapers on the power bodies of different levels – their founders. Moreover, a significant number of newspapers and magazines suffer from superficial content, the widely spreading practice of ordered materials and superficial journalism leaning for support on Internet resources and not taking responsibility for facts, credibility and the purity of the Russian language. One of reasons is the lack of qualified specialists for the work in market conditions both in journalism and management in the centre and the regions (The Russian Periodical Press Market 2006, 8–9).

Andrei Schleifer and Daniel Treisman (2004, 19) consider that the present situation is normal. In their analysis of post-communist Russia they conclude that in a decade Russia turned into a typical capitalistic democracy according to the average level of income of the population. Their arguments are that the political system has changed, the party dictatorship has given up its place to elected democracy, and the press is no longer reminiscent of the propagandist machine of the middle of the 1980s. Today Russia arouses surprise and the admiration because it in much has broken off with its past, ceased to be “an empire of evil” threatening its people and all humanity (Ibid., 20).

Mikhail Seslavinsky, head of the Federal Agency on the Press and Mass Communication gives four points (good) to the situation on freedom of speech in the Russian media applying the Russian school evaluation system from 1 to 5 points (*RIA Novosti* 19.05.2006). Another representative of the political power, Sergei Mironov, speaker of the Council of the Federation, the Upper Chamber of the Russian Parliament, and head of a new political party “Justified Russia: Homeland. Pensioners. Life” is anxious that there is no real state television channel in Russia. In his interview on Radio “Echo of Moscow” he declared that in the television anti-state work is often ongoing although without calls for the overthrow of the state power (*Grani.Ru* 02.11.2006).

Some surveys find that the population perceives the situation in the media and around it calmly or indifferently. Thus, the VSIOM opinion poll of 46 regions, June 10–11, 2006 finds that “the majority of respondents are sure that in the country are independent media and free elections” although the political culture of Russia differs markedly from the political cultures of other developed countries. The people consider that Russian policy develops rather in the tradition

of authoritarianism and anti-democratic origins than democratic principles, the majority do not see any prospects for such elements of the political culture as equality into law (*Gazeta* 26.06. 2006).

The VSIOM opinion poll conducted on the eve of the World Summit of the G8 held in St. Petersburg in July 2006, finds that “one third of Russians consider Russia a full member of the G8” (it includes the US, the UK, Germany, France, Japan, Italy and Canada) based on such criteria as rich natural resources, territories and population numbers, army and nuclear weapons, membership of the UN Security Council (*Vedomosti*, 10. 07.2006).

The ROMIR monitoring the trust of the population in the media finds that Russians mostly trust national television. Analogical surveys of 2003, 2004 and 2005 show that it increases correspondingly 39%, 40%, 44%, whereas trust in the national press decreases: 8%, 5%, 3%. The national television remains the main source of information for the majority, 79% the national press for 14% and Internet for 7% (*Lenta.Ru* 20.09.2005).

The BBC, Reuters and the Media Center (2006) report the results of a ten-country opinion poll on trust in the media. In particular, they note that the trust level of the people in the government and the media is directly dependent on the level of economic development. Thus, more people trust the media than their governments, especially in developing countries. It was highest in Nigeria (88% v 34% gov't.), Indonesia (86% v 71%), India (82% v 66%), Egypt (74%, gov't. not elicited) and Russia (58% v 54%). In Russia trust in the media has increased over the last four years from 48% to 58%; the highest level of trust in national television (84% with a lot or some trust) and friends and family as news sources (81%). “However, Russians are also sceptical of press freedom in their country, with only 25% thinking that journalists are able to report news freely”; nevertheless they seem to get what they want from their media (63%).

The results of the opinion poll from the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM, 29.06.2006) on the question of how the media cover the political life in the country show that the majority estimate the fullness and objectivity of the informational picture of the political life more negatively than positively. At the same time, the dynamics of the coverage of political life has been estimated positively rather than negatively; the news became more interesting, because there was more. About half of the respondents considered that the opposition has an opportunity to express its point of view on television. Meanwhile the presentation of different points of view on television has not been considered a basic criterion of objectivity. The sociologists conclude that as a whole the respondents were satisfied with the direction of changes in the coverage of political issues in the electronic media in Russia.

In his research on *perestroika* twenty years later, Jury Levada (2005) notes a low appreciation of freedoms given: “freedoms had been perceived by people as a gift from above and this way depreciated in the public opinion”. *Glasnost* became habitual and it has a significantly high price now. But practically nobody is ready “to come out onto the streets” to protest and fight, but even to mention disagreement with the harassment of independent media and onslaughts to free elections.

The World Values Survey finds a low level of public support for democracy in Russia (62%) against the median (92%) of public support for democracy in another seventy countries including ten Islamic countries (Inglehart 2003, 53).

The study on the social-political situation of January 2006 (Levada 2006, January) established signs of the stabilisation of the public mood and the growth of positive appraisals of power and its leaders, namely of Putin (71%) and regional leaders (59%); a maximum level of anxieties about daily bread, about rising prices (71%), and minimum anxiety about civil rights and freedoms, namely on their restriction (2%).

The VSIOM opinion poll finds critical attitudes in the population to the majority of the institutions of the power. But the highest approval of the President up to 72–77% and the media up to 53–55% during the period 2005–2006. Moreover, the level of trust in the media correlates strongly with support for Putin and his political regime as a whole. Thus, among the supporters of Putin the level of trust in the media is 62%, whereas among the opponents of Putin it is only 28% (*ROSBALT* 23.05.2006).

The other study by the Levada Centre (Golov 2006) examined change in the last two years concerning the state of freedom and fear. It concluded that “in the present situation, a feeling of fear disposes an absolute majority of Russians not to change, but to the defence and reinforcing of the present order in Russia. If the tendencies of the last two years remain valid, freedom will increasingly be opposed to order and fear will grow in the face of disorder and confusion”.

British researchers note that Russians perceive the political values in a double context comparing the Soviet and the post-Soviet regimes. The majority claim that now they feel significantly freer in such questions as freedom of speech, religion, participation in civil and political organisations (Rose, Munro and Mishler 2005, 10). The great masses do not share the alarm of the liberal intelligentsia apropos infringements of civil freedoms (Ibid.: 16; Gudkov 2004). The approval of the existing regime is due to opinions on its economic effectiveness, whereas a low level of expectations of changes testifies to the absence of public demand for change in the regime (Ibid.: 11).

The Russian writer Viktor Erofeev (*Novye Izvestia*, 2.12.2005) is not sure about what rule is mostly suitable for a people stuck in alcoholism, who have lost their best genetic reserves and turned into some historical mutant, becoming unmanageable. The bureaucracy in Russia is reminiscent of a medical straitjacket in which it is simply impossible to breathe. But maybe without this corset the country will collapse, the writer asks, maybe a weak country needs such a straitjacket? In his opinion, the experience of liberal reforms had a European character, but it was addressed to abstract, not real people in Russia.

The character of the changes of the 2000s has been described in many studies with a key word 'the state' that crucially differs from the 1990s spent under the key word 'the market.' Alexander Oslon draws attention to the following:

one of the many distinctive features of Putin's era is the radical change in mass perception of the state: its image has transformed from weakness to power, from negative to positive, in all directions. This phenomenon is generally explained as being caused by positive changes in the country since 2001, which seem especially impressive against the backdrop of the hectic 1990s. Other merits ascribed to Putin's rule include political stability, economic growth, timely paid pensions and wages in the government sector, an energetic and authoritative president constantly demonstrating that the state for him is the top, if not sacred value. (Oslon 2006, 5)

The doctrine of information security of 2000 legitimised an initial transition from the policy of information openness towards to the policy of information security. Alexander Verhovsky (2006), the director of the Russian human rights NGO 'Sova' points out that today in Russia the security topic has become central in the sphere of interests of the state and society. A new law about the counteraction to extremist activity of 2002 responds to the prevailing mood. Many civil organisations supported the idea of a new repressive legislation although some human rights defenders decisively were against it. Their arguments are that the law is factually based on the idea of the risk of neglecting the rights of individuals and the NGOs in favour of considerations of control over security. Moreover, an unclear definition of extremist activity leaves room for judicial abuses.

Four years later, in 2006, the law about reprisals to extremist activity was amended, which raised a protest by the Union of Journalists of Russia with a request to the President to veto the amended law. Its new broadened interpretation of the term extremism is like Stalin's definition of 'enemies of the people', and gives up the journalistic work for lost allowing anybody to include everything that seems harmful or inconvenient (*Gazeta* 10.07.2006). The senators were also dissatisfied with the new version of the law which encroaches

on freedom of speech and the right of citizens to participate in elections (*Kommersant* 17.07.2006).

The Antiterrorist Convention adopted by the heads of mainstream media and journalists in 2003 consolidated the basic principles and rules for journalists in cases of terrorist actions and anti terrorist operations in the country. This made it possible to escape the legislative introduction of restrictions from the state on the professional work of journalists in crisis situations (Richter 2005).

Dmitry Trenin (2006), a vice-director of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow in his analysis of the foreign policy of Russia during the last two years notes a turn of the Kremlin from the adaptation policy in new realities towards a policy of active participation with an increasing tendency to more rigid competition with the US. Russia strives to become the Great Power and to squeeze out the US from those positions which it occupied and occupies in the post-Soviet space, including Russia itself. Taking a course to “sovereign democracy” presupposes the exception of the political influence of the West (Europe and the US) on any political issues within Russia. This has been considered inadmissible interference of the West in Russian affairs.

A new book “Sovereignty”, June 2006, has made a claim for ideological discourse in public communication and established a basic slogan of designed state ideology for the near future (Sergeitsev 2006). The excerpts from the President’s messages to the Federal Assembly, the messages of the Kremlin representatives, the vice-premier Dmitry Medvedev and the main Kremlin ideologist Vladislav Surkov, and also Vitaly Tretjakov, Valery Fadeev, and Maksim Sokolov argue that the main task both of foreign and internal policy of Russia is sovereignty. Sovereignty subsumes resistance to external pressures proceeding from the West and firstly the US (Trenin 2006). From the point of view of the Kremlin there are in the world only a half of dozen sovereign states which are independent of the US. It is the task of the Russian government is to achieve such sovereignty for Russia (Ibid.). The book is issued in the series ‘Political Education’ with one thousand of copies mainly for apologists of power, members of the party of power “*Edinaya Rossia*” as an aid for the propaganda of sovereign democracy (Bulin 2006).

As if in the frame of a new course to sovereignty, on the eve of the Parliamentary elections of 2007 and the Presidential elections of 2008, the Russian audience was deprived of an opportunity to receive western radio programmes. Thus, in July 2006 more than sixty Russian radio stations were forbidden to re-translate materials of *Radio Free Europe* and *Voice of America* (*Washington Post*, 07.07.2006). The Russian government’s officials explained this by infringements of



conditions of licensing and change of format, whereas representatives of the radio stations insisted that it was pressure from the Kremlin: “we firstly pay attention to those internal events which are problematic for the Kremlin”. In 2005 *Radio Free Europe* had thirty partner radio stations re-translating its news for Russian regions, in 2006 only four remained. From forty-two radio stations re-translating *Voice of America* now only five stations are operational. In that time the NGO “Open Russia” established by Mikhail Khodorkovsky had to close its Internet site and work on projects because of financial problems after the freezing of all bank accounts in March 2006 (*Lenta.ru*.10.07.2006).

At the same time the Russian government undertook energetic efforts for the promotion of a positive image of contemporary Russia abroad. Since 2002 *RIA Novosti* has published a new magazine ‘Russian Profile’ in English; since 2004 the Valdai Forum has gathered the western investors and political scientists; since 2005 a new state television channel ‘Russia Today’ (RT) in English (with budget of \$30 million) has broadcast for western audiences; since 2006 a new magazine ‘Russia’ has been published in the US (*Financial Times*, 15.06.2006). By the end of 2006, a new channel in Arabic, an analogue of English ‘Russia Today’ (the budget of \$35 million) began broadcasting with the aim of bringing the official view of Moscow to audiences in the Middle East (*Ibid*).

In 2006 the state media holding VGTRK launched two new channels, children’s and informational on the basis of information programme “Vesti”. It also broadened the audience of the channel ‘RTR-Planeta’ broadcasting abroad: Europe, America, Australia, North Africa, Asia (*Lenta.ru*.24.06.2005). Anatoly Lysenko, chair of the International Tele Academy noted that the contemporary VGTRK [The All Russian State Television Radio Company] became “a buttress holding up the state” and took over the functions of the Soviet State television and radio earlier known as *Gosteleradio* (*Lenta.ru* 21.06.2006).

In the budget of 2007 the state financing of the media got 18.2 milliard rubles, most of this being designated for the TV channel ‘Russia Today’: 2.4 milliard rubles, which is equivalent to almost 90 million \$, is more than the sum designated for all Russian TV channels. The priorities for state support include the regional development of federal channels and the image projects addressed to western audiences: TV ‘Russia Today’, *RIA Novosti* and *ITAR TASS* “for providing the population with the information and...forming a positive image of Russia in abroad” (*Lenta.ru* 05.09.2006).

A radical change comes in the present printing houses and industry. According to the government’s decision there will be one company controlling the printing houses of the press. In particular, more than 20, 000 regional printing



houses of St. Petersburg, Vladivostok and Novosibirsk will be merged into one giant turning into a monopoly in the market (worth of \$ 250 million together with newsprint value). In the Soviet time these printing houses composed one printing system “Partizdat” [the party publishing house] (*Nezavisimaya* 15.06.2006).

Although the authors of the concept of this reform evince economic reasons, experts see there rather political reasons. Thus, some top managers in the information and communication business criticise this way of privatisation as less effective and transparent in contrast to the selling of printing houses independently and without privileges for any actor. “The ruling elite now is oriented to the concentration of all resources having electoral meaning”, the publishing houses have been considered a very effective tool in the influence the press, Alena Kutikova, the expert from FINAM. Igor Yakovenko, the General Secretary of the Union of Journalists of Russia considers that a factor of monopolisation has an ideological character, a kind of censorship in printing houses and polygraphy (*Nezavisimaya* 15.06.2006).

In 2005–2006 two quality newspapers *Izvestiya* and *Kommersant* were sold to new owners: in June 2005 *Izvestiya* to ‘Gazprom-Media’ holding, in November 2005 there came a new editor-in chief (*Grani.ru* 08.11.2005); at the end of August 2006 Alisher Usmanov, the general director of the joint-stock company ‘Gazprominvestholding’ bought the *Kommersant* Publishing House. “Market insiders say that the publishing house will be an instrument of influence for Usmanov”. Ruslan Tagiev, director of media research for TNS Gallup Media: “That instrument can be used both for political influence and lobbying for his business interests, including the fight against his competitors” (*Kommersant* 31.08.2006). In the opinion of Igor Yakovenko, the General Secretary of the Union of Journalists of Russia, *Kommersant* expected the fate of *Izvestiya* which turned from being “a normal newspaper into a party leaflet of *Edinaya Rossiya*”. Another perspective for *Kommersant* could be the way of the *Nezavisimaya* newspaper, which after the change of the owner not overtly changed its format, but was obviously on a long lead of the Kremlin (*Polit.Ru* 31.08.2006).

In 2004 the state began a regional television reform. All 86 regional television companies joined the state holding *VGTRK* (The All-Russian State Television and Radio Company). From independent juridical entities they were turned out into branches of the *VGTRK* (as it was in the Soviet time) with the corresponding consequences: finances from the centre, staff reduction and reduction of their own production and time for their production broadcasting. Vsevolod Bogdanov, chairman of the Union of Journalists of Russia, considers that the reform has led to the destruction of the regional television tradition and

school, depriving the population of a chance to receive reliable information on its region. Many regional companies held another than the centre point of view at those or other events, now they were turned into re-translators of the *VGTRK*. Thus, the Kremlin is building vertical information. In addition, since 2006 local governments can establish and finance only one print edition (*Novye Izvestiya* 24.02.2005).

In her review of the newspapers of small towns Maria Eismont (2007) notes that the local press tries to serve readers' interests by establishing close contacts with them and responding to their demands, although the economic and political dependence of the newspapers on the local administrations seriously restricts the professional work of journalists. The situation in the regions and localities (*rayonakh*) is not homogeneous and depends in many respects on the persons at the head of the locality (*rayona*), region and the newspaper, their political views and openness to innovations.

The interest of industrial pro-governmental groups in buying Internet media is increasing before the elections of 2007–2008. Thus, Vladimir Potanin (Interros group) bought control over *Rambler Media Group (RMG)*, (*Lenta.Ru* 31.10.2006), an integrated and diversified Russian language media, entertainment, services and content delivery company which operates various Internet properties including the leading Russian language Internet portal and search engine 'rambler.ru', the on-line newspaper '*Lenta.ru*', the broadband ISP 'Rambler Telecom', the interactive advertising company 'Index20', and the mobile content service provider 'Rambler mobile' ([www.ramblermedia.com](http://www.ramblermedia.com)). A week before Potanin's media holding 'Prof-media' bought the television channel TV3 and Rambler TV (*Polit.Ru* 1.11.2006).

Andrei Richter (2005) sums up recent negative tendencies as follows: media concentration in the hands of owners, the emergence of financial-informational monopolies, the absorbing of middle-sized and small newspapers and television companies by big information 'empires' especially in the regions, unscrupulous competition between media as well as interference of publishers or media owners in the professional work of journalists. He notes that the concentration of 'powerful capital' in the press and mass communication is connected with an opportunity for officials and governments of all levels to exert explicit and implicit influence on the editorial policy of the media, to found 'pocket' media and to use them for political aims.

In summary, the present situation reveals traits of the re-traditionalisation of society and its institutions: the increasing role of the state in economy, its support for the media functions of propaganda and contra propaganda, the increasing

anxiety of the population about its livelihood and indifference to civil freedoms, the marginalisation of the opposition inconsistent with the present political course. In the opinion of Jury Afanasjev (2007) today the country is experiencing a period of transition from reaction to restoration. The academician considers that reaction lasted all these years including the Yeltsin era, the structural reforms of vital necessary bases had always been shelved. The restoration began with the reconstitution of *sovetskosti* – in all forms and its basic characteristics and features: authoritarianism, unitarism and suppression of personality. The supremacy of the state, as a result – the triumph of non-freedom.

## 7 Present case studies

### 7.1 Method and Data

This work uses the *case study* approach rather than a representative sample. Stake (1998, 86) points out that the case study “draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from the single case”. A subject of the case study can be a phenomenon or a population of cases or the individual case. Although the researchers have different purposes for studying cases, Stake (Ibid., 88–89) identifies three basic types of study. *Intrinsic case study* is undertaken for “better understanding of this particular case” because “in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest”. *Instrumental case study* examines a particular case “to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory”. The third type is called *collective case study*. “It is not the study of a collective but instrumental study extended to several cases”.

This work is an example of a *collective case study* on contemporary Russian journalists and conditions of their work in the given historical period. It was conducted phase by phase starting from the first case in St Petersburg, 1998–2002, moving to the Republic of Karelia, 2002–2004, then to the Russian regions, 2003–2005, and finally returning again to St Petersburg, 2005. The research represents the regional Russia in various ways in geography: the ten regions at different ends of the country and different in structure: megapolis, regional centre and locality. The research does not claim to generalise its results throughout the journalistic population. The models of development of regional and local journalism as well as conditions of the professional work of journalists differ from

region to region, whereas Moscow performs differently from all regions of Russia concerning its wealth and job opportunities.

Following Stake's typology, this research has both intrinsic and instrumental interests but nevertheless in its purpose is rather instrumental. Thus, the research began in 1998 being inspired by the recently published new book by David Weaver (1998) and the fact that this seminal book did not include a chapter on Russian journalists. The first intention was to attempt to some extent to remedy an omission.<sup>10</sup> The studies of American journalists by Weaver (1986, 1996, 1998) served as appropriate guidance for planning the first case study. Thus, the coding scheme was built in the same way as in Weaver's studies: the basic characteristics of journalists, the job process, and the issues of professionalism and ethics. In the interviews with the journalists, the study used Weaver's typology of questionable working methods. The study also applied the typology of journalists' roles by Weaver in the analysis of the empirical data. It gave an opportunity to test the relevance of western typologies to the Russian situation, on the one hand, and to compare current trends of development of Russian journalism to the West, on the other<sup>11</sup>.

Accordingly, planning and conducting the first case study strove to apply well-developed methodological tools by selecting partly what comes fruitful within confines of the given research. As Stake (1998, 100) notes, "the methods of instrumental case study draw the researcher toward illustrating how the concerns of researchers and theorists are manifest in the case. Because the critical issues are more likely to be known in advance and following disciplinary expectations, such a design can take greater advantage of already-developed instruments and preconceived coding schemes".

The first study, 1998–2002, also developed a research strategy later applied in the subsequent studies conducted in the Republic of Karelia, 2002–2004, and St Petersburg, 2005. In particular, the pilot study of 1998 showed that it was better to interview journalists in their editorial offices than outside – there was unsuccessful experience when meeting them outside, and in privacy. The editorial

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10 Some studies on Russian journalists had already been done in the 1990s, including the comparative study of the Russian and the American journalists published in Russian (Kolesnik, Svitich and Shiryaeva 1995) and in English (Wu, Weaver and Johnson 1996). For more information see Chapters 4 and 5 of this work.

11 This study also addressed the European studies and joint comparative projects on the journalists in the search what unites and divides journalists of different countries (Donsbach 1993, 1995, 1999; Köcher 1986; Splichal and Sparks 1994; Zhu et al. 1997).

offices made journalists to feel comfortable, safe, they talked freely, openly and with pleasure as experts in the themes chosen for discussion. The first study also showed importance of conducting the expert interviews in addition to the basic interview with journalists; these broadened knowledge about the current situation in journalism and as a whole in the locality. The subsequent studies included expert interviews.

A decisive factor for the organisation of the research was a network of collaboration between the researcher (his/her institute) and the persons in charge in the region where was planned fieldwork. The studies of St Petersburg media (1998–2002, 2005) were conducted with crucial assistance of the Dean of the Faculty of Journalism at St Petersburg State University, Professor Marina Shishkina, who assisted in arranging with the heads of the local media about the researchers' visits for interviewing of their journalists. In the study of the Karelian media the support for visits to the local media came from the Union of Journalists of Karelia and from contacts with the researcher's university classmates and colleagues working in Karelian journalism.

The procedure for selecting the respondents in each media was done with the free agreement of the journalists. The researcher strictly observed a rule of data gathering to interview a respondent privately in order that nobody would influence the answers. All the respondents talked with me of their own free will; they were interested in shoptalk. Almost always there was a problem to find a secluded spot in the editorial office, but every time it succeeded. Thus, the interviews took place privately in the room or under the stairs, or in the cafeteria, or in the corners of the corridors. The interviews lasted 40–90 minutes depending on the respondent's time.

According to Alasuutari (1995, 51–52) in qualitative research there are two methods which are used to check or improve the truthfulness of the information people give. The mechanistic method (Bernard 1988, 150; Dooley 1990, 106) proposes giving limited information to respondents about the aims of the study or not telling why particular questions are asked. Here information is used as indirect evidence of the fact studied. The humanistic method (Berg 1989, 29–30; Bogdan and Taylor 1975, 45–48; Georges and Jones 1980, 63–64) attempts to develop 'rapport', that is, if the informants trust the researcher, they will be honest with the researcher. Here information is used as testimony to the fact studied. The two methods are not mutually exclusive.

The present studies rely on both methods. On the one hand, they tried to develop rapport between the researcher and the respondent, therefore a respondent was told that the purpose is to know what was important and what

not important for him/her in the occupation. On the other hand, nothing was said about the researcher's understanding of the journalistic profession and the role of a journalist in society.

The reasons why shoptalk covering many of sensitive questions seems to have succeeded can be regarded on two levels. On the micro level between the researcher and the respondent there had been achieved a climate of reciprocity owing to the following circumstances: interviewing was conducted anonymously and without witnesses. The place of interviewing was the familiar environment for the respondent, the editorial office. The editor-in-chief or the deputy editor-in-chief had approved the interview for research purposes. The respondent had an interest in the proposed theme. The researcher was prepared to conduct shoptalk, she used the journalistic jargon and knowledge from her former journalist's experience; she was Russian, educated in journalism and had lived in these localities. It could be confirmed by the words by Elliott (1972, 171–172) "there was no problem of socio-cultural distance" between the researcher and the respondent that guaranteed that "the researcher has completely understood the dynamics of the social experience".

On the macro level a premise was the fact that the researcher and the respondent communicated without inhibitions in society and in the editorial office. The respondents were not afraid and at the same time did not hesitate to be outspoken even on the most acute questions as, for instance, corrupt articles or plagiarism. One can say that the revelation testified to the firm hold of freedom of speech in society since glasnost. On the other hand, it revealed a crisis of general moral criteria in the occupation. The question what to consider 'a sin' to be ashamed of was unclear for practitioners. This resulted in the notion that everything is right if it brings personal profit. That is, there was no psychological problem for the respondents to be amoral, they acted under those circumstances which framed their conduct.

The major part of empirical data consists of in-depth interviews (30+30+30) conducted in St Petersburg, 1999, The Republic of Karelia, 2002, and St Petersburg, 2005. In the statement by Johnson (1995, 162) in-depth interview is used as the basic technique in case study method. The interviewers try to get as much information as possible about a respondent's views and experience.

The basic interview of the first (St Petersburg) and the second (the Republic of Karelia) study includes 72 questions (Appendix 2). They comprise factual questions (16) giving information about basic social characteristics of the respondent; closed questions (21) mainly about the job; closed dichotomous questions (8) about the job, gender role and ethical issues; open questions (27)



concerning the job and ethical issues. The classification derives from Maslova (1998, 70–73) and Foddy (1993, 36–37). In the new study of St Petersburg 2005 the basic interview is supplemented with ten new questions on the influence of political and business circles on journalistic work, especially in the period of the participation of their media in the elections. In total, this questionnaire includes 82 open-ended questions (Appendix 7).

The combining of different kinds of questions was aimed at obtaining more complete information from the respondents and stimulating free reflections on the proposed items. The basic interview was semi-structured. Care was taken to obtain the data in relatively identical conditions in order to facilitate their treatment and analysis. That is, the standardisation of the conditions of interviewing and random selecting of respondents were put as the ways to increase the reliability of the research.

The form of an individual anonymous interview also facilitated the efforts to reach more reliability. It was pursued to avoid on the one hand somebody's pressure on the journalist and on the other hand the suspicion of the journalist toward the researcher. To answer positively the question: can we believe the respondents and to treat their responses as factual statements the positivists "base this assertion on a set of claims about how 'rapport' was established with subjects: interviewers were accepted as peer-group members, showed 'genuine interest' in understanding the interviewees' experience and guaranteed confidentiality" (Silverman 1993, 100).

Silverman (1993, 93) notes that positivists' belief in standardised forms of interviewing relies on an exclusive emphasis on the referential functions of language. "However, interview responses 'are delivered at different descriptive levels. The informant does different things with words and stories". If we rely on the classification of approaches to interview data from Silverman (1993, 91) the approach of this study is to a significant extent positivism both on "status of data: facts about behaviour and attitudes", and "methodology: random sample, standard questions, tabulations".

However, as mentioned, this research in-depth interview was semi-structured, one third of the questions were open questions to obtain information which was unknown before and which could appear only owing to open questions. For instance, when the researcher asked the respondents whether they used suspicious sources in their work, the answers showed an interesting result. Half of the respondents considered all people except officials, the journalist's own informants, and Internet to be suspicious sources whereas another half considered criminal and dark sources persons whom a journalist does not trust,



rumours and gossip to be suspicious sources. At the same time all respondents unanimously considered officials to be reliable sources of information not in the sense that all of those provide the truth, but in the sense that information from officials does not need verification because ultimately it should be published.

The aim of the study was to get the revelations of the respondents about their experiences and open questions with journalists' reflections could help the researcher to obtain and to understand those meanings which were inherent in the concrete situation or in accepted routine, the respondents had in mind. In this case the approach was closer to interactionism. The endeavour was to move into depth. The study does not share a positivist assumption of a unchanging social world, in contrast, it approaches the world as processual. In such a case as Silverman (1993, 146) points out, "we cannot assume any stable properties in the social world. However, if we concede the possible existence of such properties, why shouldn't other work replicate these properties?"

Reliability of research "refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same categories by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions" (Silverman 1993, 145). Thus, when we are dealing with a text "issues of reliability now arise only through the categories you use to analyse each text. It is important that these categories should be used in a standardised way, so that any researcher would categorise in the same way. A standard method of doing this is known as 'inter-rater reliability'" (Ibid., 147–148).

The first study approached the phenomenon of professionalism of contemporary journalists with open questions: What is it? How is it formed? What meanings do its components bring out? It was unclear what cemented the base for a contemporary professional. The drastic changes in the social life and the journalist's occupation occurring in the past fifteen years in Russia caused for the practitioners a completely new situation in many respects. This work strove to investigate the journalists in the new circumstances with the purpose of making a discovery that would be grounded in the lived practice of the journalists and interpreted with the help of relevant theories, first of all the sociology of professions and normative theories of media.

Grounded theory was seen as the most appropriate for analysis of empirical data and goals of the research. As Morse (1998, 64) points: "If the question concerns an experience and the phenomenon in question is a process, the method of choice for addressing is grounded theory". The authors of grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin, (1990, 26) say:

Grounded theory can be used successfully by persons of many disciplines. One need not to be a sociologist or subscribe to the Interactionist perspective to use it. What counts are the procedures and they are not discipline bound. It is important to remember that investigators from different disciplines will be interested in different phenomena – or may even view the same phenomenon differently because of disciplinary perspectives and interests.

The analysis of the interviews was based on procedures of grounded theory with an aim to clarify what process of professionalising is in its everyday course. Comparison was the basis for all stages of this study. The procedure of coding facilitated conceptualising and categorising data. Comparisons of the data were made on every question, eliciting extreme cases and categorising them. Every category had certain particular properties or concepts. The procedure of open and axial coding verified categories made and concepts pertaining to them co-relating them to the primary data and organising the data in a new way. The development of the newly worked up categories went through all data of the study focusing on the phenomenon of professionalism as the core of the research.

The interviews of the first study were transcribed verbatim. The text transcribed consists of five hundred pages covering seventy-two questions from thirty respondents. Every question represents one topic and therefore responses of respondents on every topic are brought together into a topical card. The topical cards were analysed and responses classified into typologies. The typologies revealed are brought together into three basic topical protocols corresponding to the organising the study, basic data on respondents, attitudes in job and perceptions on values. The analysis used all instruments worked up with constant reference to primary data as the basic source of information and with the writing memo contributing to the process of analysis.

The journalists as units of analysis were compared in terms of variables of gender, type of media and generation (Soviet and post-Soviet practitioners). This helped to promote an understanding of why the journalists had different attitudes and values in the job. However, the focus of the comparisons was put on the old and new generations of practitioners in journalism. The description and interpretation of data presented the results of the analysis.

Articles I and II report the findings of the first study of St Petersburg media, 1998–2002. Article I focuses on the difference of the professional subcultures of two generations of journalists working in St. Petersburg media. Article II describes ongoing transformation of St Petersburg media and conditions of journalism there with an aim to clarify what new trends emerge in the media market and the professional work of the city's journalists and what keeps there

from the Soviet past. Here the analysis uses the data of journalists' interviews, but mostly is based on data of pilot interviews with eleven local experts conducted in 1998 and a survey of twelve experts in 2001.

The excerpts of interviews serve as documents on the given social reality taken for analysis of new conditions of journalism in St Petersburg during the 1990s. The survey of the local experts includes seven questions to define the characteristics of the journalistic population in the city. The answers of experts are obtained by statistical measure of the average score in distribution. Calculation is done by adding up all of the scores given by the experts and dividing the resulting sum by the number of experts. The documents of the city government and technical literature are also used in analysis of the development of St Petersburg media in the period of the 1990s.

Article III presents only some results of the second case study conducted in the Republic of Karelia in 2002–2004, mostly concerning the conditions of journalism there. The analysis explores how the relationships between the media, on the one hand, and the political authority and rising business, on the other, are developing. The aim is to know in what interests the local media serve and how much their functions have changed after the first decade of the post-Soviet reforms. The Republic of Karelia is represented with three different places: Petrozavodsk, capital of the Republic, Kondopoga, an industrial centre and Priazha, an agricultural locality. In a fact, three case studies done in these three places reveal three different models of development of journalism there. The article uses the data from expert interviews with the local politicians, thematic interviews with the heads of media chosen for the study and includes excerpts from in-depth interviews with journalists concerning conditions of journalistic work in their media.

Article IV discusses a difference in the concepts of the professional journalism in the frames of the media theories developed in the West and the USSR. The analysis of professionalisation of contemporary journalists is based on the findings of the recent case studies (St Petersburg, 1998–2002; the Republic of Karelia, 2002–2004; the regional Russia, 2003–2005). The Russian case shows that the formation of perceptions of professionalism among contemporary practitioners develops under the influence of both the national tradition, mostly proceeding from the Soviet concept of professional journalism, and the current situation, characterised the market priorities and lack of ethical concerns.

Article V continues to explore the regional journalists in Russia paying attention to questions, what separates and what unites different generations of contemporary professionals in their work and perceptions of the profession;

what roles do they have in society. A survey of journalists was carried out in the professional training seminars in 2003 in nine regions of Russia. A questionnaire comprising 35 questions was based on earlier studies by Weaver (1998), Weaver and Wilhoit (1996), Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003), and Ramaprasad (2001), on journalists in the United States, Tanzania and Nepal. Some questions topical for the study of Russian journalists were added, such as second jobs, attitudes to and the practice of producing stories paid for by political or economic interests, and as well as support for censorship. Professional functions were elicited with a battery of 19 questions. Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the proposed statements on a five-point scale. Factor analysis was used to process the questionnaires data. Additionally comparative analysis of the responses was conducted on the basis of age in the profession (the journalist's generation), gender, type of media and region as well as crosstabulation of the variables.

### 7.1.1 St Petersburg, 1998–2002 (I, II)

In the post-Soviet reality there is a huge contrast between centre and periphery in terms of political power and economic development. St Petersburg is attractive as a field of research, however, because at the end of the 1990s, the city was seen as a symbiosis of centre and periphery inasmuch as it combined elements of both poles and to some extent reflected the complicated and contradictory character of ongoing changes in Russian society. With regard to journalism, St Petersburg has acquired a developed media structure representing all kinds of contemporary Russian media institutions, and where the two types of journalism, old and new, have been identified.

The study had three phases: it began in 1998 with pilot interviews of 11 media experts (Appendix 1); in 1999, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 journalists from eight media outlets (Appendices 2 and 3); the study was completed in 2001 with a follow-up enquiry of 12 experts (Appendix 4). The experts had extensive knowledge and solid experience of St Petersburg media and society (between 11 and 45 years). They included the head of the city administration's committee on mass media; the head of the North-western State Committee of the Russian Federation on the Mass Media; the head of the St Petersburg Union of Journalists; the head of Citizens' Control, the city's public human rights organisation; executives from the leading news media as well the scholars from St Petersburg State University and St Petersburg European University.

The sampling of the media included the most important actors in the city's media marketplace — the traditional (former Soviet) and new (established in the 1990s) forms of print and broadcast media, both private and state/private. Among them there were TV Channel 5 (the former federal channel), *Radio Petersburg*, FM Radio station *Baltika*, all three local dailies: *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*, *Smena*, and *Vechernii Peterburg*, the regional edition of the national daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and the tabloid *Peterburg Express*.

All respondents included in the study gave their informed consent. Among the 30 respondents interviewed, there was an equal number of males and females, ages ranged from 20 to 60 years, and time spent working as journalists ranged from 36 to three years. The majority of the respondents specialised in current affairs, others in culture, crime and sports news. The interviews (Appendix 2) were conducted in privacy in the respondents' offices over a one-month period (10 October to 10 November 1999), and transcribed verbatim.

### 7.1.2 The Republic of Karelia, 2002–2004 (III)

Karelia with a population of 0.77 million, located in the North West represents a case of the periphery in contrast to St Petersburg, the megapolis with a population of 5 million, closely attached to the Federal Centre and the western market. The new study was a part of the Academy of Finland project 'The Development of Modern Democracy in Russia' examining social change in Karelia after the decade of reforms. The study was conducted in three places: the republican centre, Petrozavodsk; an industrial town, Kondopoga, and a rural locality, Priazha.

With regard to journalism, Karelia had acquired a developed media structure, but not everywhere. Thus, the Vepsian locality still did not have its own media. The economically developed localities (Kondopoga, Kostomuksha) had a saturated media market including all-local (*rayonnye*) papers with the highest subscription rates, the commercial press, the free advertising press, as well as local radio stations and cable television stations. In contrast to these, the economically weak localities (Priazha) had one local paper, as a rule, but established at the dawn of the Soviet rule in the 1930s.

The study began in May 2002 with eight thematic interviews with the heads of the selected media. Then thirty in-depth interviews with working journalists were conducted in the eleven media selected. In addition in May 2003 five expert interviews were conducted with the head of the Union of the Journalists of Karelia, the head of the press service of the President of the Republic, the Minister

and his deputy at the Ministry of Press, Informatisation and Public Relations, the editor-in-chief of the leading republican daily *Kurier Karelii* (Appendix 5).

Sampling of the media included the leading news media in the marketplace – both traditional media, established in the Soviet time and new media appearing in the 1990s. Among them there were newspapers, radio stations and television channels; private and state/private, friendly to the government and oppositional. The sample included a local paper *Nasha Zhizn'* (Our Life) in Priazha; a local paper *Novaia Kondopoga* (The New Kondopoga) and a factory paper *Avangard* in Kondopoga; the State Television and Radio Company (*GTRK Karelia*); Television station *Nika*; FM Radio station *Melodia*; the local papers: *Kurier Karelii*, *Nabliudatel* and *Gubernia* in Petrozavodsk.

As in the first case study, also here the respondents all gave their consent to the interview. Thirty respondents included 12 males and 18 females, their ages ranged from 22 to 66 years, and time spent in the professions ranged from 40 to two years. The respondents specialised in current affairs, culture, crime and sports news. Again, the interviews were conducted in privacy in the editorial offices over a three-week period (16 May to 5 June 2002), and transcribed verbatim. The basic semi-structured interview used the same questionnaire that was in the first study of St Petersburg media in 1999.

### 7.1.3 Regional Russia, 2003–2005 (V)

The European Union together with other international organisations continues to initiate and invest in programmes for the support of democracy in Russia in different fields, including the media. One of the recent TACIS projects was entitled 'Promoting Independence of Regional Mass Media in Russia' and implemented in 2002–2004 with the participation of the University of Tampere Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, the Internews-Europe Consortium and the Union of Journalists of Russia, with the support of the professional journalistic associations and the schools of journalism of the universities in the selected regions. The project provided three cycles of seminars for journalists on the problems of journalistic ethics in nine regions of the North-West, the Volga, the Urals, Siberia, the Central and Southern parts of Russia. In total about 1,200 media professionals took part in the programme (Glasnost Defence Foundation 2004).

The survey of journalists aimed at gathering information about the social profile of regional journalists, their professional values and attitudes to their work (Appendix 6). The survey was carried out during the third cycle of the



regional seminars held for journalists, editors and other media professionals in October-December 2003 in the cities of Ekaterinburg, Kazan, Nizhnii Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Petrozavodsk, Rostov-on-Don, Samara, Tomsk, and Yaroslavl'. Participants were invited to the seminars by local trainers, among whom were teachers in schools of journalism in universities and members of the Union of Journalists of Russia. The participants, in total approximately 400 persons, represented different types of media of their own and neighbouring regions. A total of 237 questionnaires were returned. The study does not claim any generalizability of its findings to the whole journalistic population. It is possible that the sample is biased toward those who are more aware of ethical questions and interested in developing their skills. However, the sample is varied and represents Russian regional journalists widely and can be used to detect differences.

#### 7.1.4 St Petersburg, 2005

The follow-up study of St Petersburg journalists was conducted six years later after the initial interview of the journalists in 1999. It was carried out in the frame of a new Academy of Finland project 'The Media in a Changing Russia' with the support of the Faculty of Journalism of St Petersburg State University. The research group included eight interviewers headed by Dmitry Gavra and Alexander Minakov. They conducted in-depth interviews with 30 journalists in privacy in their working places in the editorial offices over a two-week period (14 – 28 December 2005), and transcribed verbatim. Expert interviews with the heads of eleven selected media were also conducted in that period.

The sampling of the media consisted of the most influential news and popular media in the city, – the traditional (former Soviet) and new (established in the 1990s) forms of print, broadcast and online media, both private and state/private. The study had to abandon an idea to copy the sampling of the city media of 1999 completely, due to the coming of new influential actors and the moving away of the old ones. Nevertheless, as it turned out, more than half of the media included in the sampling of 1999 had kept their leading positions in the marketplace at the end of 2005. Among these there were TV Channel 5 (on 1 October 2006 it resumed federal broadcasting), *Radio Peterburg*, two local dailies *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* and *Vechernii Peterburg* and the regional edition of the national daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

A group of new media included the All-Russian State Television and Radio Company (VGTRK) *Sankt Peterburg*, Television Channel *STO*, FM Radio station



*Ekho Peterburga*, the weekly *Delo*, the free advertising weekly *Metro* and the Internet daily *Fontanka-ru*. Three media from the sampling of 1999 did not join the new study for the following reasons: the daily *Smena* was hardly different from the daily *Vechernii Peterburg*, the weekly *Peterburg Express* de facto ceased to come out and the FM Radio station *Baltika* lost its profile as an information radio. In total, among 11 media outlets included in the sampling there were five media from the first study and six new media.

Again, all respondents included in the study gave their agreement to meet and to talk with an interviewer. Among the 30 respondents there were 13 males and 17 females, age ranged from 19 to 59 years, and time spent in the journalistic profession ranged from 40 to two years. They specialised in the main topics, such as current affairs, culture, crime and sport. The study used the same questionnaire, as in the first case study of St Petersburg media in 1999 and the second study of Karelian media in 2002. But the basic semi-structured interview of journalists was supplemented with ten new questions on the influence of political and business circles on journalistic work, especially in the period of the participation of their media in the elections. In total, this questionnaire included 82 open-ended questions (Appendix 7).

## 7.2 Findings

### 7.2.1 St Petersburg, 1998–2002 (I, II)

The study analyses the transformation of the Russian media in the context of common trends initiated and set to a great extent by the centre of power in Moscow on the one hand, and specifics pertaining in the region, specifically St Petersburg, on the other. As common trends characterising post-Soviet society and media, the analysis notes their liberalisation, capitalisation, commercialisation, western news values and corruption. The specific character is formed by the political and economic conditions pertaining in St Petersburg at the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s.

On the one hand, the study reveals a crucial change after the decade of reforms, such as the intensive development of informational and advertising services in society, commercialisation of media and journalist's labour; on the other hand, the forces of continuity constituting the past, the media and journalists formerly serve rather the interests of the political and economic groups than the interests of the public.

The character of media conflicts shows that the authorities have little respect for journalists, the most numerous infringements being connected with searching for and receiving information, accreditation, and interference in professional activity, obstructing the journalist's work. The official wages of journalists remains very modest, but the majority have additional sources of income such as a second job and paid commissions (hidden advertisement, commissioned articles). Likewise the approach to the basic job is often to treat it as hackwork (*haltura*). The competition is limited between journalists, and opportunities for earning are ample. Corruption is condoned as a social and professional norm.

A central finding of the St Petersburg study is that contemporary journalism has been formed by two types of professional roles, representing two types of professional subcultures: the older generation (practitioners of the Soviet era) and the new generation (who entered the profession in the 1990s).

The older generation is rather homogeneous and conservative, represented by 'standardised' professionals recruited (mainly after school and army) and trained (mainly in university) according to the state policy for developed socialism. They were carefully selected mainly from those with a working class background, literary talent and with a preference for those of a majority nationality; educated in the Soviet theory and practice of journalism and typically socialised through party membership.

They continue nowadays to hold a cultivated view of journalism in natural collaboration with the authorities, taking responsibility for supporting the social order and rendering practical guidance to people. They perform the role of *social organiser* with the accompanying functions of upbringing, educating and punishing. They participate in the traditional professional association, the Union of Journalists and maintain corporate solidarity, supporting each other in occupation and life and observing the ethics of the Soviet journalist (avoiding plagiarism, illiterate language, sharing a dedication to the profession, etc.).

The new generation of the 1990s is essentially different from the older generation in background, its expectations of journalism and the mobility to combine different professional activities. It represents a heterogeneous subculture consisting of different individuals regarding age (20–45), ethnicity, origin, education, experience and social class (worker–academic). They came into the occupation later than Soviet practitioners (in the study sample the difference is 20 years) and had a self-interest in journalism rather than a romantic image of (state) public service. Among them, there were some who could not enter the occupation before because of social and ethnic background and who were not satisfied with the income, career prospects and creative opportunities in their former jobs.

In total contrast to the Soviet era practitioners, those beginning in the 1990s had no need for a professional association; they preferred to act alone, competing against each other and pursuing profit, creative ambitions and new life prospects. Moreover, the new generation orientates to the role of *entertainers*, aiming at a sensational media agenda. They perceive journalism rather as PR, working for the interests of the influential groups and persons in politics and business.

Despite their polarities, both streams of journalism accept the political function of journalism and performed as *propagandists* of power in elections and other important events. In the job, they are personally autonomous, combining staff and non-staff jobs and making professional decisions in the frame of the editorial line (interests of founders, sponsors and advertisers) and self-censorship (fear of court, criminals and dismissal). Suppressing facts and unverified information became a 'norm' for the majority.

Both older and new generations are far from objectivity, developing rather subjective and personal informing with a wish to influence the perceptions of the readers. Their perceptions of professionalism are reduced to skills in genres and do not include any professionally corporative interests. They include polar types of professionals from idealist (an independent journalist who is impossible in practice) to propagandist (a colleague lobbying for the interests of those who pay more).

It can be concluded that St Petersburg journalism of the 1990s is experiencing a qualitative change developing from the Soviet state model to the new market model. In this stage it reflects the hidden conflict between economic and technological innovations of the media sphere, on the one hand, and the former Soviet stereotypes and behaviour models of the authority and professionals on the other. At the same time, the close alliance of media and government in the 1990s became a solid basis for their collaboration at the beginning of the 2000s. The St Petersburg study predicts the decline of romanticists (the old generation) with their notions of service to society and the coming of pragmatists (the new generation) with an utilitarian approach to the profession.

### 7.2.2 The Republic of Karelia, 2002–2004 (III)

This study examines the conditions for journalism with a key interest in change in the Russian media, particularly its effort to move away from the Soviet model, the State tool for propaganda, toward the western normative model, the medium of communication between the State, Capital and Society. The analysis moves from the macro level, the Republic, to the micro level, Priazha, a rural area; Kondopoga, an industrial centre and Petrozavodsk, the regional capital.

On the macro level the analysis reveals that the State increasingly shows concern about the media while increasing its control over it. The re-privatisation undertaken of the all-local press has introduced a representative of the government into the staff of the founders although the municipality remains an owner in practically every paper. The printing base is still kept in state ownership. The new Ministry of Press, Informatisation and PR<sup>12</sup> appeared to systematise and control the informational field. However, less than two years later in June 2004 it was optimised by transferring its functions to the re-transformed the Ministry of Culture and PR.

As in St Petersburg, here the State (the republican government and the municipalities) owns the news media and controls the private media extensively using administrative resources. The journalists do not see a big difference between the state, semi-state or private media, because here, there and everywhere the agenda has been formed in terms of pleasing the media owner, pursuing his own interests and the journalists know what they should write and what they should not write. The censorship of things forbidden by the law on the media (1991) acts in practice as strong self-censorship.

Moreover, professionals prefer to leave for the PR structures of the state and business or to work in the leading media, which belong totally or partly to the State (the government and the municipalities) because it is rather prestigious and financially advantageous (public service, regular wage and social guarantees). By contrast, young, inexperienced journalists, as a rule without professional education often find a job in the private media, but there they experience delays in payment of wages, a lack of social security and also problems in access to information from officials.

The journalists did not condemn each other for *the black PR* and plagiarism that became a reliable and settled means to help their budgets. They were rather cynical and realistic in their estimations of the media, since the media operated not according to the professional canons – to provide information for society – but in the interests of the government and the economic groups.

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12 The term informatisation comes from the Law of the Russian Federation “About Information, Informatisation and Defense of Information” adopted by the State Duma 25.1.1995: “Informatisation is organised social-economic and scientific-technical process of the creation of optimal conditions for the satisfaction of informational needs and realisation of rights of citizens, the organs of the state power, the organs of municipalities, organisations, NGOs on the basis of the formation and use of informational resources” (The Federal Law of the Russian Federation 1995)

In spite of the similarity of the position of the media in the Republic of Karelia, the localities differed in what influenced the journalist's work. In particular, the rural area, Priazha, represented the unchanged Soviet model of the press: the single local paper operated as the propaganda sector of the municipality, completely economically and politically dependent on it. The industrial town of Kondopoga revealed a pluralistic model of the existence of both the Soviet propagandist model and a new informational one characterised by its economic and relative political independence from the municipality and by a new competing approach to the readers and advertising markets. The Petrozavodsk case represented, on the one hand, confronting the press as a reflection of the struggle between the State and Capital, and on the other hand, completely controlled television in spite of the form of ownership.

Interestingly, the new Russian capitalists emerging in the wave of privatisation from state ownership in the 1990s did not differ in their mentality from the state functionaries. They had the same approach to the media, considering it a political tool in the struggle for power and for the support of the government. Fraternizing with the authorities and playing by their rules was a necessary precondition for the successful development of their basic business, lying as a rule in the economic sphere (enterprises, resources, trade). They did not invest capital in their media, keeping it as a tool for propaganda (the elections) and PR (positive image of businessmen and business).

Media business in the economic sense arose only in the tabloid press indulging the tastes of the masses and also supporting the government. It was a rare or even exceptional case when a capitalist was not aligned with the government and established his opposition media to fight for power in the election. However, it seems that such a time of 'eccentrics' is disappearing together with the decrease in the number of oppositional papers. For instance, in Petrozavodsk, there were three opposition papers, now only one has survived and it constantly experienced different pressures from the authorities and was periodically threatened with closure. The Internet remained a place for the dissemination of independent information and an exchange of opinions.

The analysis of the Karelian media of 2002–2004 confirmed the findings of the study of the St Petersburg media of 1998–2002, in particular that the view of the media as a political tool and of journalists as PR workers of the power remained an unchanged principle. The State owned the news media and influenced others owing to the administrative resources. Capital was interlaced with the State, financing media campaigns in elections in favour of the government. At the same time another type – apolitical, entertaining press

and programmes enjoyed success with the audience. However, both political and apolitical journalism successfully served the government and took little thought of the development of civil society. It revealed that the tradition of the State (Soviet) media as manipulative tools in governing society remained immutable. But in spite of these pressures many journalists tried to serve the public interest in permitted zones of the social and cultural life of their localities.

### 7.2.3 Regional Russia, 2003—2005 (V)

This study continued the generational analysis of Russian journalists with a focus on changes in their professional values. The journalistic generation was categorised on the basis of year of starting in journalism, as was done before in the St Petersburg study. Thus, the first generation, the Soviet one, had started in journalism before 1990, the second generation, the transitional one, had started in journalism in the 1990s and the third, post-2000 generation, had started in 2000 and later.

The number of Soviet journalists was still high in the journalistic population of regional Russia, one third. The gender analysis confirmed the trend of an increasing intake of women in the regional media. Earlier the study of St Petersburg media noted the trend of feminisation of the city journalism (Pasti 2004, 98). In contrast to the 1990s, the number of journalists with journalistic education was increasing in the 2000s. In this way, the profession again, as in the Soviet time, it seems, is becoming closed to those without formal education.

Formerly journalism remained a realm of low wages, for this reason nearly half of the informants had a second job and one third worked in several media. Approximately half of them produced hidden advertising – stories favourable to and paid for\by the source, but presented as news. Soviet journalists most often considered that these materials should not exist while transitional (joining the profession in the 1990s) and post-2000 journalists considered them a private issue even if they did not personally produce any.

This study did not reveal a big gap between generations in their perceptions of professional roles as found by the study of St. Petersburg journalists (I). In particular, the *organiser* role, which included feedback to the audience, found support in all three generations. In the middle of the 1990s this task of work with letters to the editor was practically rejected by the young generation of the 1990s (Pasti 2004). At that time the editorial offices were freed from their duty to respond to the letters to the editor, the units for this were eliminated in the editorial offices and young journalists approached this work as outmoded practice.



Apart from the time factor, the space factor is also important. It seems that a conflict of generations becomes visible in the big city heterogeneous over professional choices and life opportunities; and invisible in the homogeneous periphery limited by number of perspectives there. Interestingly, will might these units be reinstated in the editorial offices of the Russian media? It seems that now the organiser role is increasingly required in the State policy for the mobilisation of the population to new tasks on the reconstruction of Great Russia.

The role of a propagandist remained central in the minds of Russian journalists but the majority of them rejected this role rather than supported it. Yet there was a minority of nearly 20 per cent who supported an open propagandist role. Interestingly, the transitional and post-2000 generations mostly supported political control of the media.

The *informer* role of a journalist who objectively informs and discusses regional development and local politics had the strongest support among all three generations. However, combining functions of neutral (dissemination of information) and participant (interpretation, investigation and criticising) orientations in the journalists' minds testified to a lack of neutrality in conformity with the Russian tradition in journalism. Earlier a lack of neutral orientation was found among St. Petersburg journalists (Pasti 2004, 165–170).

The new generations had little interest in investigative journalism and only a few young journalists supported criticising the government. It confirms the finding revealed in the earlier study of the Karelian media. There in particular the journalists mentioned such reasons for not doing investigations as high risk to personal security and future employment, a lack and even absence of those who would be interested in their investigations and could pay for this work (III).

The results suggest that the opposition role of journalism, which was part of professional understanding in the period of *perestroika* and *glasnost* is decreasing, since a clearly adversarial function (criticising the authorities) did not get much support among the new generations. On the other hand, a paternalistic view of the audience has retained its position. In general, Russian journalists have preserved many Soviet era values, of which the most important is the willingness to exert influence in society, one way or another, and a moral conviction that a journalist should not be indifferent to what s/he writes about. The new generation also supports the political tradition of paternalism, which results in arbitrariness of political authority on the one hand and servility in journalists on the other. Also in contrast to the old generation, it has little professionally corporative interest, for instance in the Union of Journalists.



#### 7.2.4 St Petersburg, 2005

So far, the new study has made preliminary findings from the analysis of some questions of the basic interviews conducted with journalists in 1999 and 2005. It asked: How do the journalists characterise the present journalism and what do they expect for its near future? Comparing answers of journalists received in 1999 and 2005, this study strives to reveal what changes have occurred in journalism during the last six years.

At the end of 2005, the respondents estimated journalism differently. On the one hand, it is a prestigious and interesting profession, fashionable and attractive to young people, as it includes PR services, opportunities for joining the elite circles and is well-paid. On the other hand, it is low-paid and falling in its social status. It is developing in the direction of diverting the attention of people away from serious problems, its share of entertainment is growing and journalists pursue ratings. As a result, journalism is becoming unimportant for people. Journalists suppress information as their media have been economically controlled and serve the political interests of the authorities. Journalism has become increasingly accommodating, freedom of speech is diminishing, ten years ago it was better than it is now.

In contrast to 1999, the journalists connected their hopes for the future rather with political than economic changes. They said that the future of the profession depends on the development of society. Both alternatives are possible depending on who will take power: again *Pravda* and totalitarianism, or, then the western model. Half of the journalists attached their hopes to the future with the technical progress and its influence on journalism, especially the rise of Internet services and online journalism. One third was pessimistic about the future. There is little hope of change with this regime and, as a whole with universal globalisation. The public media are increasingly becoming a part of popular culture, journalism is becoming entertainment. Soon the audience will not need journalism because it has acquired a taste for mass popular genres. Newspapers will die; already today they are useless and unprofitable. Journalism will lose the spirit of humanity, and capability to narrate about people. The *Polit.PR* function will increase and the situation in freedom of speech will deteriorate. Journalism will have to move into a special niche for those who still are able to read.

The analysis of the situations in journalism at the end of 1999 and the end of 2005 reveals emerging distinctions and trends in journalism and among practitioners. With regard to journalism politically pluralistic journalism of the 1990s lost its position giving way to the pro-government one-sided PR journalism

termed *Polit.PR*. From individual and collective corrupt practices spread in the 1990s and paid under the table, journalism moved to the official contract, made between the media and a journalist, the media and the government, the media and the business. As a whole, it relatively stabilized the media agenda and the media budget.

*The Polit.PR* of the 2000s continues the political tradition of the Soviet media, their manipulative function to form the public opinion in the interests of the government. In fact, the post-Soviet *Polit.PR* performs as an extension of the Soviet propaganda but in a new guise of fashionable formats and genres. Glossy journalism implements the relaxation function entertaining and diverting the attention of society from vital problems. Pluralism of opinions and discussions are relegated to the 'backyard': some media in the regions, some programmes on television and radio and also the Internet. But many people do not have access to the Internet and still it is hard to say how the situation will change before the elections, the Internet will either stay free or will be put under the control of the government. Moreover, the audience is losing its taste for analytical journalism, being increasingly fed with popular culture production.

With regard to journalists, the study notes that the journalistic community is experiencing the gradual change of generations in the profession. Thus, the older Soviet generation is decreasing: at the end of the 1990s it constituted half of respondents; at the end of 2005 it was one third. Two thirds were post-Soviet generations, identified as a transitional generation entering journalism in the 1990s while the post-2000 generation entered in the 2000s.

Nevertheless, the professional consciousness changes slowly, 'the Tsar stays in the mind'. As it was in 1999, and six years later, in 2005, the city journalists attached their hopes for change in journalism to a change of the main national leader, the President of the country. Explicitly, they revealed the same way of thinking as the majority of the population in the country; implicitly, heterogeneity of their profession tidily attached to the political power. It may be expected that after the election of 2008 journalists will continue to follow a new Presidential course having the self-image of the ideological supporters of the power.

Paradoxically, the majority of them are very critical of the present quality of journalism, engaged and manipulative, and pessimistic about its 'health' in the near future. However, nobody protests against the present course or undertakes collective action to change the present status quo (the media in support of the government). Indisputably, they know the present price of criticism of the political power: The Anna Politkovskaya case, the cases of the dismissal of city journalists, as well as cases of journalists killed 1992–2006 (Simonov 2007).

They are afraid of working in the oppositional media, which are marginal. This jeopardises their individual careers, not ensuring income, personal security and further employment in the profession.

The young journalists value their present with ample opportunities for earnings in and outside of journalism. The majority show self-interest in the profession preferring to remain atomised and to use the profession mostly as a way of earning income and making a career via journalism in such promising areas as politics and business. Additionally, they are not too poor in order to enter the protest against the present situation, on the contrary, the present alliance of the media and power guarantees for them a regular income.

This study does not find a big difference between new generations and the old generation in their attitudes to the political power. The new generations still appear as heirs of the Soviet traditions and continue to practise journalism in the old way in the interests of the government, not the public. However, the studies in 1999 and 2005 both show that journalists perceive the present political rule as the provisional government; they speak critically about their political power and take it as a temporary evil, and they have hopes for an alternative – moving towards the western model. That is, the study could predict that the journalists would support the alternative course in the future Russia, like their older colleagues, Soviet journalists, who supported Gorbachev's alternative to the *perestroika* and *glasnost* two decades ago.

### 7.2.5 Summary

All the case studies suggest two key problems framing the development of journalism in Russia. First there are unfavourable economic and political *conditions* for freedom and independence. Second, there is a *approach* deeply rooted in the Russian political culture since the Tsarist era and strengthened during the Soviet period. These two factors shape contemporary professionalism so that there is no radical break with the tradition to serve those in power.

The traditional approach to journalism means that values are slowly changing in society, although the fundamental political change, the collapse of communism, has occurred, and the new epoch of post-communism has come. However, its character is forming in the struggle of habitual approaches to emerging challenges. The research takes the problem of *the traditional approach* as a basic obstacle on the way to change in *the conditions of journalism*.

The factor of technical modernisation with the import of the western cultural production is only an external factor, and not enough to change the

cultural code. As this research shows, during the last decade editorial offices have been successfully computerised, many Russian journalists have passed courses in western training at home and abroad, but the media content and conduct continue to favour of the values of the political power. Here two reasons are crucial: the economic connection of the media to the power and their political service to the power with journalists as a part of this. Political servility is the best guarantee for media well-being in the market.

The findings of this empirical research, 1998–2007, suggest that post-Soviet journalism continues the line of Soviet journalism by rather supporting than breaking with the tradition of its dependence on the government (*conditions of journalism*), with a normative idea of journalism operating within and through the mass political organisations under the control of the government (*the approach to journalism*). This tradition of being aligned with the authorities results in the development of the present media clientelism that in fact principally differs little from the servility of the Soviet media. In addition, nepotism is widespread in journalism and media. It portends the stagnation of the profession and its deprofessionalisation, instead of moving forward to professionalisation.

Obviously, a new idea emerged originating in the western democracies about journalism as independent informational expertise and control of the government in the public interest. Nevertheless, in practice this idea meets a rigid rejection from those in power and marginal support in the population and among journalists themselves, not least because of inadequate protection of journalists in the country.<sup>13</sup> The findings of this empirical research, 1998–2007, find confirmation in a recent study based on the national survey of the Russian journalists (Shmerlina 2007).

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13 For more information about the situation on journalists see, for instance, the Centre for Journalism in Extreme Situations ([www.cjes.ru](http://www.cjes.ru)) and the Glasnost Defence Foundation ([www.gdf.ru](http://www.gdf.ru))

## 8 Discussion

### 8.1 Three generations

The present journalistic population consists of three generations of working journalists: firstly, the old Soviet practitioners who started in the Soviet media; secondly, the new practitioners who entered the profession during the 1990s; and thirdly, those who have entered since the 2000s. The term 'generation' in this research is taken not in a narrow demographic sense limited to the dates of birth, but in a broader sense attached to the period of their coming into the profession; in other words, their age in the profession. The differences between the old Soviet and the new post-Soviet practitioners result in a generation gap and divide their professional subcultures in a dramatic period of the political history of the country: after the collapse of the USSR and the rise of westernisation in the 1990s, with the beginning of Putin's presidency and his new course towards re-traditionalisation in the 2000s. The boundaries between the generations of the present professionals are in their different backgrounds, identities and repertoires of the professional roles.

#### 8.1.1 Soviet generation (1920–1990)

The old Soviet generation is still represented in the journalistic population of Russia; approximately every third journalist belongs to it. But it is gradually diminishing, due to age. It is fairly homogeneous and conservative, represented by standardised professionals recruited (mainly after school and military service) and trained (mainly at university) according to the state policy for developed socialism. Journalists were carefully selected mainly from those with a working class background, literary talent and with a preference for those of a majority nationality; educated in the Soviet theory and practice of journalism and typically socialised through party membership.

They continue nowadays to hold a cultivated view of journalism in natural collaboration with the authorities, taking responsibility for supporting the social order and rendering practical guidance to people. They perform the role of *social organiser* with the accompanying functions of upbringing, educating and punishing. They participate in the traditional professional association, the Union of Journalists and maintain corporate solidarity, supporting each other in the occupation and in everyday life and observing the ethics of Soviet journalist (avoiding plagiarism, illiterate language, sharing a dedication to the profession,

etc.). They most often do not approve of corrupt publications and of restoring censorship in the media, giving their support to the new genres arising with *glasnost* and *perestroika*, such as investigative journalism and a critical view of the actions of authorities. Many of them consider the most important tasks to be accurate informing, discussing problems and giving ordinary people a chance to express their views including their custom of dealing with readers' letters. Their idea of journalism, which is not for money but by vocation, mostly for service to society centred on the working man is gradually fading as they leave the profession.

### 8.1.2 Transitional generation (1991–1999)

The new generation of the 1990s turned out to be crucially different from the old Soviet generation, especially in the big cities. It would horrify Lenin, a founder of the Soviet proletarian press with its new idea of journalism as a free marketplace, where a journalist is simultaneously a seller and a commodity. It is quite heterogeneous, consisting of different individuals regarding age of entering the profession (20–45), ethnicity, origin, education, experience and social class (worker–academic). They came into the occupation later than the Soviet practitioners (in the study sample the difference is 20 years) and had rather a self-interest in journalism than a romantic image of (state) public service. Among them, there were some who could not enter the occupation before because of social and ethnic background and who were not satisfied with the income, career prospects and creative opportunities in their former jobs. Many came from collapsed economies when the media were booming.

In total contrast to the Soviet era practitioners, they had no need for a professional association; they preferred to operate alone, competing against each other and pursuing profit, creative ambitions and new life prospects, most often combining basic and second jobs. Moreover, the new generation orientated to the role of *entertainers*, content with a sensational media agenda. Eventually, the entertainment distracting attention from vital problems surpassed all other media genres and became the basic role of new journalists of the 1990s. They perceived journalism rather as PR, working for the interests of the influential groups and persons in politics and business. This was not surprising in the epoch of the commercialisation of journalistic labour and high demand for journalistic services in the market.

### 8.1.3 New Generation (2000–)

The young generation of the 2000s is more homogeneous in comparison to the generation of the 1990s regarding age (19–29), education (increasing number with a journalism diploma), experience (media and PR service) and social background (middle class and elite). It has rather a pragmatic interest in the profession taking journalism as temporal – to gain experience, and influential connections as well as to earn money and via journalism to get well paid positions in the state service and business, mostly starting from the PR service. Journalism as show-business, mostly television and glamour press, is also attractive to young people due to earnings, pleasure and publicity. On the other hand, there are also individuals motivated by vocation, especially in the new area of multimedia, including the Internet.

They demonstrate a high social mobility combining basic and second jobs and have practically no interest in joining the professional association, the Union of Journalists. However, they increasingly attract attention from the state and many of them have been involved in the new organisation the Media Union established under the umbrella of the government in 2001. They are crucially different from the Soviet professionals in their attitude to entertainment, taking it as one of the most important functions of journalism, although they agree with the old generation in their priority for the task of accurate informing. They differ in that they most often support the control of entertainment and the control of political issues and do not want to criticise the authorities. The young generation is also most tolerant of the practice of corrupt materials.

### 8.1.4 Summary

If we look at the transformation of the idea of journalism from the generational perspective of the professionals, it moves from an abstract romantic (mostly, socialistic) ideal of serving the workers for the sake of a glorious future for new generations to a self-interest in the profession under the slogan 'here and now'. The young generation increasingly connects its successful future with landing a job in a state office or a big business company, which opens the road to join the elite (political and economic). This new idea of journalism as an appropriate means of earning money and accumulating social capital for the achievement of elite status reveals them as upwardly mobile transients in the profession, working on contract and aiming to reach more promising positions than in journalism today.



On the one hand, such contractor consciousness of well-connected young journalists emerges as a result of a change of journalistic status in society: from the former state worker of the state media of the Soviet epoch (elite political profession) to a market freelancer, autonomous, self-employed, combining jobs in/outside journalism in an individual search to improve his/her own fortune. On the other hand, the labour values of the Soviet generation (collective above individual, spiritual above material, work before private life) are rejected by the post-Soviet generations aiming at market values, especially profit.

In the big cities, journalism experienced a radical change: media boom, bankruptcy, high demand for journalistic services in politics and economy and stabilisation of the media market under the state, although the situation with regard to the level of media freedom and the professional freedom of journalists differs between regions. In small towns and localities little changed; there the newspapers function as the mouthpiece of the administration, whereas journalists are vulnerable to the arbitrariness of those in power. The deviations from the mainstream media emerge in the press and journalists, who are still marginal in number and audience but have courage to raise vital questions to the agenda for the public and to discuss them in their newspapers. In addition, the Internet remains a niche for dissidents of the present time in Russia as well as those programmes and newspapers limited to the educational and cultural contents.

Regarding journalistic roles, they transformed from Lenin's *propagandist, agitator and organiser* to the present *PR worker, entertainer and organiser*.

Soviet time	<i>Propagandist</i>	<i>Agitator</i>	<i>Organiser</i>
Post-Soviet time	<i>PR worker</i>	<i>Entertainer</i>	<i>Organiser</i>

Two basic roles: *PR worker* and *entertainer* counterbalance each other as poles of serious (hard) genre and light (soft) genre. Moreover, the entertainment function of journalism successfully compensates the Soviet agitation function, glorifying in the light genre of the present order. Consequently, the repertoire of journalistic roles in essence changed little over the last twenty years but adapted to the new demands of the political authority. Instead of dead dogmas of communist propaganda, new ideas of patriotism and the Great Russia dominate the media discourse, often explicitly and implicitly in confrontation with the West.

The little changed repertoire of the professional roles of journalists shows that many post-Soviet media work as clones of the Soviet media, although in the process of the market reforms of the 1990s they were de-communised, privatised, commercialised and capitalised. Many new media appeared, but the majority of

them remain unprofitable and under the government's control, and continue to serve the interests of the political authority. The working journalists show a little changed attitude to the political authority, taking it as an inevitable factor of influence in their professional work; mostly the young generation sees it as its potential employer in the future and does not want to criticise the political authority.

The increasing self-censorship of the present journalists returns them to Soviet escapism, a rejection of the political struggle for independent status of their profession in society. The present journalists have little contact and dialogue with the audience and they believe little in their profession as a potential independent institution of society. That is, the problem of a professional to remain independent from the state is still not an issue for the majority of Russian journalists. On the contrary, the professionalism of young journalists means their abilities to accumulate the social capital (contacts with influential persons) and cultural capital (access to information) working in journalism aiming to achieve an elite position in the media, the state service or a big business.

Moreover, many of them possess the economic capital being the children of the elite families. Such a professionalism which is developing in Russia, is characterised by Blom (2002, 96) as a “professionalism’ of its own kind, i.e. knowledge of networks and contacts” – not *what* you know, but *who* you know! Thus, the professionalism of a new generation of journalists rises from such phenomenon as clientelism and nepotism.

## **8.2 Profession lost and regained?**

The journalistic profession in Russia has developed and continues to develop within the long tradition of Russian society. Originating from the personal initiative of Tsar Peter the Great, the founder and editor of the first newspaper *Vedomosti*, it was a part of the state service for information and education of the population as well as propaganda for the official politics. State censorship and sanctions served as regulatory mechanisms for the control of the press. The regime of autocracy (*samoderzhavie*) laid the foundation of the police state, where numerous enactments and laws of censorship suppressed freedom of speech, whereas the civil law and criminal law together with administrative persecution served as a habitual tool for the punishment of critical voices including journalists.

In the era of early capitalism at the end of the nineteenth century journalism as a professional occupation began the movement towards professionalisation by establishing preconditions for achieving its political independence and self-regulation with demands for good practice and conduct. However, the coming to power of the Bolsheviks and their new political course from capitalism to socialism in 1917 put an end to the rising professional movement of journalists and publishers. From a freelancer occupation journalism came into the state service and journalists became de facto state officials. The Soviet government ensured the forced proletarianisation of the journalistic occupation and allocated it to the political tasks of the Communist Party.

This proletarianisation meant, on the one hand, that journalism turned into a tool of political propaganda and, on the other hand, that journalism became elitised regarding its status and social privileges, as a part of the state political work among the masses. A romantic image of the profession of a Soviet journalist arose from such legendary individuals as the war correspondent Konstantin Simonov and publicists Anatoly Agranovsky, Vasiliy Peskov, Lidia Graphova and many other famous journalists who worked in the leading national media, travelled all over the country and skilfully posed questions on the labour collective and Soviet morality for general discussion in society. Soviet journalism as a profession was attractive due to the ethos of public service for the sake of the bright future of the new generations of the Soviet people and their country.

Seventy years later in the 1980s a short period of liberalisation, followed by an incipient transition from Soviet socialism to western capitalism after the collapse of the USSR in 1991, gave rise to efforts to change the situation in journalism, turning it forwards in a search for political independence and professional autonomy from the state. However, the efforts were uncoordinated and too weak in the turmoil of new shifting situations. Moreover, the professional community turned out to be split into old and new journalists with conflicting values and expectations of the profession.

The present journalism specialises in two main functions in the Russian society: *political function*, generally called 'Polit.PR' – fashionable and well-paid work in the interests of the government, and *entertainment function* – in the tabloid press, glossy magazines, television and radio entertainment again working in the interests of the government to provide relaxation for the masses and to divert them from vital questions. *The analytical function* of discussing the problems as well as *a critical view* of the present conditions is moved to a marginal position.

Journalism remains in crisis, lacking the ethos of public service. It does little for the development of democracy and civil society in the fight for humanism, individual freedoms and human rights. As before, it serves the interests of the elite – the political authority and the business close to it. Journalism is weak in assisting the growth of mechanisms of control of society for power and in assisting society and in standing up straight. Practical journalism works against its own profession. It obscures power and perpetuates it, thereby legitimising the present power and its own non-professionalism.

*McQuail's Mass Communication Theory* (2005, 182) cites James Carey who “in a scathing critique of contemporary journalistic tendencies, raises the troubling question of what becomes of journalism if it ceases to care about its democratic role”. Carey writes: “Without the institutions or spirit of democracy journalists are reduced to propagandists or entertainers” (1999, 17). He goes on to remark that “journalism can be destroyed by forces other than the totalitarian state; it can also be destroyed by the entertainment state”.

The Russian case highlights the truth of these observations showing how journalism can be destroyed by the police state together with the entertainment state. The 2000s have seen a regeneration of the Soviet media system; a return to the familiar road towards the proletarianisation of the profession has taken place. The media has come to operate to a large extent under state control, including the new system of the present state-commercial contracts between the media and the government. The state and business are consolidated and the media serve their power-commercial interests. The professional community is heterogeneous with regard to income and social status, representing upper class and low class. Young journalists are pragmatists aiming at success in life. They welcome such affluent clients – the state and big business – who are able to pay for their services and the main interest of whom de facto is to keep society in Potemkin’s village and to stay in power.

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# Appendices

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## Appendix 1 (1998)

### Experts interviewed in St Petersburg in July 1998

1. Fomicheva Lyudmila – observer of ITAR TASS
2. Gelman Vladimir – professor in political science of St. Petersburg European University.
3. Goncharenko Marina – deputy editor-in-chief of the daily *Smena*.
4. Khabchik Lyudmila – chief of the advertising sector of the daily *Vechernii Peterburg*.
5. Matveev Alexander – editor of the Radio *Peterburg* of the Television Radio Company (TRK) *Peterburg*.
6. Shelin Sergei – deputy of the daily *Vechernii Peterburg*.
7. Shishkina Marina – dean of the Faculty of Journalism of St. Petersburg State University.
8. Sidorov Igor – managing director of the St. Petersburg Union of Journalists.
9. Timoshenkova Viktoriya – deputy of the weekly *Pyat Uglov*.
10. Vdovin Yury – deputy in chief of the St. Petersburg Public Human Rights Organization *Citizens' Control*.
11. Yurkov Alexander Alexandrovich – deputy of the daily *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*.

## Appendix 2

### Questionnaire 1 (November–December 1999)

#### Interviewing St Petersburg journalists

(Total 72 questions)

##### 1. Background (22 questions)

- 1.1 Sex (male, female)
- 1.2 Pseudonym of respondent
- 1.3 Age (year of birth)
- 1.4 Marital status
- 1.5 Education (kind of school, institute, faculty) and training
- 1.6 Time of coming to journalism.

*Turn on tape recorder here*

- 1.7 Motives: Why did you come to journalism? What way?
- 1.8 Place of work (from the beginning of working career). Present type of publication. Ownership. Do you have some shares in your media?
- 1.9 Post and speciality (former and present)
- 1.10 Form of employment (on staff or not, working full time or not, salaried or hourly wage worker)
- 1.11 Membership: Are you a member of the Union of Journalists of Russia? Why? Are you a member of some other professional organizations?
- 1.12 Gender influence in profession
  - a) When did you begin to work in a newsroom, what was your employer's reaction to your gender?
  - b) How do you feel about gender? Does it help or hinder you in your career? Why?
  - c) Do you perceive a connection between gender and size of salary in the newsroom?
  - d) Do you have a division into male and female specializations in the newsroom (topics, business trips...)?
- 1.13 Income (size of your income, is it enough or not?)

## 2. Job (35 questions)

### 2.1 Working Methods (how is the job practised, what is allowed, what is not, why)

What methods in the preparation of material do you usually apply, what methods sometimes, what methods do you consider unacceptable?

Then I invite respondents to think aloud about the following reporting methods:

- 2.1.1 making up facts or stories
- 2.1.2 misrepresentation (distortion) or suppressing facts
- 2.1.3 publishing unverified information
- 2.1.4 using hidden microphones or cameras
- 2.1.5 using dubious sources
- 2.1.6 publishing material for money or other services (ordered text, hidden advertising, *dzhinsa*<sup>1</sup>)
- 2.1.7 using confidential business or government information without authorization
- 2.1.8 using personal documents (letters, photo) without permission
- 2.1.9 payment to a source for information
- 2.1.10 claiming to be somebody else in order to gain inside information
- 2.1.11 publishing the names of criminals
- 2.1.12 disclosing names of rape victims

### 2.2. Aims of Job (Moral content: what for and for whom is the job carried out)

- 2.2.1 What tasks do you consider the most important for a journalist?
- 2.2.2 On what criteria do you select facts or problems for publication? Why?
- 2.2.3 Who gives the topics for publication?
- 2.2.4 Do you prefer to be a neutral or involved participant when creating material?
- 2.2.5 When do you comment or analyze facts on which your position depends?
- 2.2.6 How do you try to create material: mixing facts and comments or not? And why?
- 2.2.7 What is more important in a text: fact or comment? And why?
- 2.2.8 Do you try to give one point of view or various opinions in the comment and why?
- 2.2.9 Do you try to give your own point of view in the comment?
- 2.2.10 When you receive the information do you verify it or not?
- 2.2.11 How do you manage the information coming from official bodies?
- 2.2.12 Who is your audience?

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1 The term *dzhinsa* or Black PR appeared in the 1990s in the journalistic slang characterising those journalistic materials, which were ordered by politicians in their own interests, especially in the periods of informational wars covering elections (see more Ivan Zassoursky 2004, 91–92).

- 2.2.13 Do you think that your materials influence the reader to some extent or not?  
Would you want to influence the reader and for what aim?
- 2.2.14 What role has your editor-in-chief for you?
- 2.2.15 Whose interests does he protect?
- 2.2.16 To what extent is he dependent on journalists, owners of media?
- 2.2.17 Whom do you feel solidarity with? (reader, editor, yourself)

### 2.3 Outcomes of Job

- a) About job satisfaction or dissatisfaction  
What gives you the greatest satisfaction in your job?  
What causes you the greatest dissatisfaction in your job? Why?
- b) About commitment  
Do you want to stay in the profession?

## **3. Profession (15 questions)**

### 3.1. Opinions on system of values in the profession and professionalism

- 3.1.1 What values are the most important for you as a journalist and why?
- 3.1.2 What are the deadly sins in the journalist's profession?
- 3.1.3 Do you feel a necessity to enhance your professional education and skills?
- 3.1.4 Do you agree with people's statements that all journalists lie? Why?
- 3.1.5 What do you see as your professional responsibility?
- 3.1.6 If your friend became an object of your negative material would you write about him in the same way or differently than about an unknown person or an enemy?
- 3.1.7 Tell me the unwritten rules in your journalist's community.
- 3.1.8 Who is a professional in journalism? Why?
- 3.1.9 Do you consider yourself a professional and why?
- 3.1.10 What do you consider the most unprofessional signs in a journalist?
- 3.1.11 What do you think is the difference or similarity between the Soviet professional and the post-Soviet professional? And what is the difference? What is the similarity?
- 3.1.12 It became a commonplace to talk about the corruption of Russian journalists, widespread practice of writing articles for money. How is this phenomenon connected with the notion of professionalism?

### 3.2 Appraisal of the present and future of the profession of a journalist in Russia

- 3.2.1 How do you estimate the profession of a journalist today and what will it be after 10 years?
- 3.2.2 Are you a member of some political party, voluntary organization? Why?
- 3.2.3 What professional role is more suitable for you? (here I show 3 professional roles from Weaver: disseminator, interpreter and adversary). Give me your own definitions of the journalistic roles.

## Appendix 3 (1999)

### Interview respondents

Person	Born	Family	Educat	Begin Journ	Media	Post	Staff	Income	Memb	Shares
S 1 F	1948	married	LGU/J.	1969	StRadio	edit/ch.	on staff	4000	Journ.U	none
S 2 F	1965	married	LGU/J.	1983	St St	editor	on staff	4000	Journ.U	none
S 4 F	1968	divorc.	LGU/J.	1983	StRadio	editor	on staff	4000	Journ.U	none
S 6 M	1962	married	LGU/J.	1978	weekly, daily	corresp corresp.	freelanc freelanc	4000	Journ.U	none
S 7 F	1968	divorc.	LGU/J.	1984	weekly, TV	corresp.	on staff	4000-6000	not	none
S 9 M	1966	single	Marx/LI	1987	daily	corresp.	on staff	3500	not	none
S 10 M	1939	married	Univ/J.	1963	m.daily	corresp.	on staff	4000	Journ.U	yes
S 13 F	1949	married	Theat/I.	1976	m.daily	corresp.	on staff	4000	Journ.U	none
S 14 F	1952	married	LGU/J.	1970	m.daily	corresp.	on staff	>3000	Journ.U	sold
S 16 F	1961	married	LGU/J.	1979	daily	column	on staff	>4000	not	none
S 20 F	1954	divorc.	LGU/J.	1968	daily	column	on staff	>3000	Journ.U	none
S 21 F	1944	married	Univ/P	1966	daily	edit/cor.	on staff	2000	Journ.U	none
S 23 F	1941	single	Tech/J.	1970	daily	cor/man	on staff	1500	Journ.U	none
S 30 F	1945	single	LGU/P	1970	TV	edit/ch.	on staff	4000	Journ.U	none
P 27 F	1952	divorc.	Cult/In.	1996	TV	corresp.	on staff	N.A.	not	none
P 28 F	1976	married	Academ	1997	TV	corresp.	on staff	3000	not	none
P 29 M	1973	married	Teac/In.	1996	TV	corresp.	on staff	>7000	not	none
P 26 M	1967	married	Tech/In.	1993	PrRadio	edit/ch	on staff	N.A.	AIBC	none
P 25 F	1977	married	Univ/I.	1994	PrRadio	corresp.	contract	2500	not	none
P 24 M	1968	single	Tech/In	1992	PrRadio	edit/cor.	contract	N.A.	not	none
P 22 M	1966	single	Theat/I	1990	daily	column.	on staff	2000	Theatr.U	none
P 19 M	1974	single	Chem/U	1994	daily	corresp.	on staff	>5000	not	none
P 18 M	1974	single	Tech/In	1994	weekly	manag.	on staff			
P 17 M	1960	married	LGU/J.	1992	daily	corresp.	on staff	>4000	not	none
P 15 M	1962	single	Tech/In	1994	daily	edit/cor.	on staff	>3000	not	none
P 12 M	1976	single	unc/hig	1995	m.daily	edit/cor.	on staff	>6000	Sport.U	none
P 11 M	1977	divorc.	LGU/J.	1994	m.daily	edit/cor.	on staff	>3000	AIBC	none
P 8 F	1979	single	LGU/J.	1995	weekly	corresp.	on staff	>8000	not	none
P 5 M	1969	married	LGU/J.	1991	StRadio	corresp.	on staff	>3000	not	none
P 3 M	1973	single	LGU/J.	1990	StRadio	editor	on staff	4000	Journ.U	none
							on staff	3500	Journ.U	none

S = Soviet time, old generation professional; P = Post-Soviet time, new generation professional; F = Female; M = Male (in italics)



## Appendix 4 (2001)

### Experts interviewed in St Petersburg in April 2001

1. Ambrosenkova, Valentina Konstantinovna – chief of the primary journalist organisation of the Union of Journalists, senior lecturer in the Faculty of Journalism, St. Petersburg State University.
2. Fokina, Marina Ljvovna – head of the board of directors VGTRK *Sankt-Peterburg*, head of the North- Western section of the Media Union of Russia.
3. Gavra, Dmitry Petrovich – professor, head of theory of communication in the Faculty of Journalism, St. Petersburg State University.
4. Kuzin, Vladilen Ivanovich – senior lecturer in sociology in the Faculty of Journalism, St. Petersburg State University.
5. Mikhailov, Sergei Anatolyevich – senior lecturer in international journalism in the Faculty of Journalism, St. Petersburg State University.
6. Puju, Anatoly Stepanovich – professor, head of international journalism in the Faculty of Journalism, St. Petersburg State University.
7. Sharkova, Elena Sergeevna – vice chief of the St. Petersburg Union of Journalists.
8. Shishkina, Marina Anatolyevna – professor, dean of the Faculty of Journalism, St. Petersburg State University.
9. Sidorov, Igor Alexandrovich – managing director of St. Petersburg Union of Journalists.
10. Tretyakov, Yury Valentinovich – vice chief of the committee for the mass media and the public relations of the City Administration of St. Petersburg.
11. Vasilyev, Vladimir Konstantinovich – vice chief of the committee for the mass media and the public relations of the City Administration of St. Petersburg.
12. Yurkov, Alexander Alexandrovich – deputy of the daily *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*.

## Appendix 5

### Experts interviewed in Karelia during 2002–2003

1. Bogdanova, Tamara – editor of the paper *Nasha zhizn* in Priazha
2. Eremeev, Aleksandr – the head of the national broadcasting of the *GTRK Karelia*
3. Lopatkina, Liudmila – editor of the paper *Novaia Kondopoga*
4. Meshkov, Aleksandr – deputy minister of the Ministry of Press, Informatization and Public Relations of the Republic of Karelia.
5. Meshkova, Natalia – the head of the Union of Journalists of Karelia
6. Poliakova, Tatiana – editor of the paper *Avangard*.
7. Raev, Andrei – the head of the PR section of the Head of the Republic of Karelia
8. Shcherbakov, Aleksandr – the head of the Priazha municipality
9. Zhdanova, Larisa – editor of the paper *Gubernia*.
10. Zotochkin, Iurii – Minister of the Ministry of Press, Informatization and Public Relations of the Republic of Karelia

## **Appendix 6**

### **Questionnaire 2 (2003)**

#### **Survey of the journalists in the regions**

##### **1. Gender**

- 1 male
- 2 female

##### **2. Age (year of birth)**

##### **3. Age**

- 1 18–22
- 2 23–30
- 3 31–45
- 4 46–55
- 5 56–

##### **4. Education and vocational training**

###### **1. What is now your highest education level now?**

- 1 primary, less than 8 grades
- 2 unfinished secondary (fewer than 10–11 years)
- 3 general secondary (high school)
- 4 secondary special (vocational school)
- 5 secondary technical (technicum, college)
- 6 unfinished higher (no less than 3 years of education)
- 7 higher
- 8 higher scientific (graduate)
- 9 scientific degree (candidate of science, doctor of science)

**5. Type of media where you are working**

- 1 Newspaper
- 2 Radio
- 3 Television
- 4 Information Agency
- 5 Magazine
- 6 PR service
- 7 Other

**6. I am working in several media**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**7. Your post** \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Year of coming to journalism** \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Today many people strive to find a second job. Do you have a second job?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**10. Income per month including all sources**

- 1 less than 2000 Rub.
- 2 2000–4000 Rub.
- 3 4000–6000 Rub.
- 4 6000–10,000 Rub.
- 5 more than 10,000 Rub.

**11. To What extent do you agree with the following statements? Use a five-point scale ranging from 5 – ‘totally agree’, 4 – ‘mainly agree’, 3 – ‘partly agree, partly, not’; 2 – ‘mainly disagree’, 1 – ‘totally disagree’**

<b>A Journalist should</b>	totally agree	mainly agree	partly agree, partly not	mainly dis agree	totally dis agree	hard to say
1. Portray a positive image of the region	5	4	3	2	1	9
2. Portray a positive image of the community	5	4	3	2	1	9
3. Portray regional leaders in a positive manner	5	4	3	2	1	9
4. Propagate regional government policy	5	4	3	2	1	9
5. Actively support regional government development programmes	5	4	3	2	1	9
6. Portray a head of regional government positively	5	4	3	2	1	9
7. Keep voters informed about the work of regional government	5	4	3	2	1	9
8. Report objectively on regional development programmes	5	4	3	2	1	9
9. Inform voters about local politicians’ viewpoints	5	4	3	2	1	9
10. Discuss regional policy when it is still being developed	5	4	3	2	1	9
11. Provide analysis and commentary on complex problems	5	4	3	2	1	9
12. Investigate claims and statements made by local government	5	4	3	2	1	9
13. Give ordinary people a chance to express views on public affairs	5	4	3	2	1	9
14. Provide entertainment and relaxation	5	4	3	2	1	9
15. Promote the strength and unity of communities	5	4	3	2	1	9
16. Develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public	5	4	3	2	1	9
17. Provide accurate information in a timely manner	5	4	3	2	1	9
18. Criticise actions of authorities	5	4	3	2	1	9
19. Work with letters to the editor	5	4	3	2	1	9

**12. What you think, is there a need to control the content of political materials in media?**

- 1 yes, censorship is needed
- 2 yes, public control is needed
- 3 no
- 4 hard to say

**13. What you think, is there a need to control the content of entertainment in media?**

- 1 yes, censorship is needed
- 2 yes, public control is needed
- 3 no
- 4 hard to say

**14. Did (do) you produce *zakaznye* (corrupt) materials or hidden advertising for money or services?**

- 1 yes, regularly
- 2 before – yes, now – no
- 3 sometimes
- 4 never

**15. How do you approach *zakaznye* (corrupt) materials?**

- 1 normally
- 2 normally, but feel pangs of conscience, it is not journalism, but PR in private interests
- 3 no approach, it is a private matter of a journalist
- 4 this need not be

**16. Membership of the Union of Journalists**

- 1 yes
- 2 no

**17. Membership of the Media Union**

- 1 yes
- 2 no

**18. Membership of other journalistic organisation**

- 1 yes
- 2 no



## Appendix 7

### Questionnaire 3 (December 2005)

#### Interviewing St Petersburg journalists

(Total 82 questions)

Questionnaire 1 includes 72 questions in Appendix 2 and additionally the following 10 questions on influence on a journalist:

- 3.2.1 Were there cases of putting pressure on you from:
  - Federal organs of government?
  - the city organs of government?
  - influential business structures?
  - criminal structures?
- 3.2.2 If you have a feeling that your material will cause indignation among officials, or representatives of business and policy, what do you do?
- 3.2.3 Were there cases that your editor or any other superior demanded you to soften or to distort the content of your material due to undesirable impacts and consequences for your media?
- 3.2.4 Were there cases of pressure on you from your direct superiors, for example, a threat of dismissal, lowering of status, loss of premiums (fees)?
- 3.2.5 Were there cases of threats to your address from a third party or organisations?
- 3.2.6 If real danger appears in your life because of your professional activity, to whom you will turn for help?
- 3.2.7 Did your media participate in the election campaigns?
- 3.2.8 If yes, could you say that it was neutral and open for every candidate? Why?
- 3.2.9 Did you participate in the election campaign? If yes, in what role?
- 3.2.10 Were there cases when you violated the election law regulating media activities during the elections?

# Articles

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## I

Pasti, S. (2005) **Two generations of contemporary Russian journalists**  
*European Journal of Communication*. Vol. 20 (1) March, 89–115.

## II

Pasti, S. (2005) **The St. Petersburg media in transformation**  
*Nordicom Review*, Vol. 26 (2), November, 69–84.

## III

Pasti, S. (2005) **Return to media serving the State:  
Journalists in Karelia**  
In Harri Melin (ed): *Social Structure, Public Space and Civil Society*.  
Helsinki: Kikimora, pp. 117–144.

## IV

Pasti, S. (2006) **Concepts of professional journalism:  
Russia after the collapse of communism**  
In Frank Marcinkowski, Werner A. Meier and Josef Trappel (eds): *Media  
and Democracy Experience from Europe*. Haupt Verlag: Bern, Stuttgart,  
Wien, pp. 73–89.

## V

Pasti, S., Pietiläinen, J. (forthcoming) **Journalists in Russian regions:  
How different generations view their professional roles**  
In Stephen White (ed): *Media, Culture And Society in Putin's Russia*,  
Palgrave Macmillan.





Pasti, Svetlana (2005)  
**Two generations of contemporary Russian journalists**  
*European Journal of Communication*  
Vol. 20 (1) March, 89–115

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## Two Generations of Contemporary Russian Journalists

■ *Svetlana Pasti*

### ABSTRACT

■ This study explores the professional roles of Russian journalists, from the perspective of 30 practitioners working in St Petersburg at the end of the 1990s. The aim is to describe how journalism has developed, what attitudes and work values professionals hold and what the prospects for the future of journalism are. A central finding is that there are two types of professional roles within contemporary journalism, representing two types of professional subculture: the old generation (practitioners of the Soviet era) and the new generation (who have joined the profession since 1990). Whereas the old generation continues to hold a cultivated view of journalism as an important societal task in natural collaboration with those in authority, the new generation is orientated towards the contemporary role of providing entertainment and perceives journalism rather as a PR role for the benefit of influential groups and people in politics and business. Despite their polarities, both generations of journalism accept the political function of journalism as a propaganda machine for the power elite during elections and other important events. ■

**Key Words** journalism, post-Soviet era generation, professionalism, Russia, Soviet era generation

### Introduction

Two decades ago, Russia entered onto the road of radically liberal reforms and achieved an unprecedented change of fortune. Since then, it has been

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the subject of much analysis, assessment and prognosis. As Kaarle Nordenstreng (2001: 218) remarks, Russia has opened up to the West 'a unique historical laboratory', in spite of increasing criticism apropos recent developments in terms of democracy, civil society and media (Clarke, 1996; Simon, 1999; Becker, 2004). Studies of Russian journalism in transition have scrutinized the change from the old forms of journalistic practice and mentality to the new ones, with their emerging signs of professionalization: depolitization, relative autonomy, new content, a new approach to the audience and increased corporate activity (Gaunt, 1987; Zhou, 1988; Haddix, 1990; Jones, 1991, 1992; Tolz, 1992). The theoreticians revised their own paradigms, testing their applicability (or universality) to the new conditions of democratizing countries (Downing, 1996; Nordenstreng, 1997; Sparks, 2000; Sparks and Reading, 1998).

With regard to Russia, both researchers and practitioners recognize that in perestroika the media were the main propagandists of democratic values, taking a decisive role in the liberalization of society. A decade later, the appraisals of media activity became rather critical, first of all because of media engagement in political conflicts (*Media in the CIS*, 1999; *Public Expertise*, 2000<sup>1</sup>). The present state power regards the media as 'suitable tools for inter-clan fighting' (Putin, 2000: 12; Pulya, 2003).<sup>2</sup>

The fact is that the post-Soviet media have not become economic enterprises deriving profit from consumption and private investment: 'The development of the market economy in the sphere of the mass media is still not very successful. Anti-monopoly laws do not work: there is no fair competition' (Zassoursky, 2001: 178). In order to survive, the media have had to implement the rather PR-like function of promoting the political and economic interests of their sponsors. Such media activity casts doubt on the democratic character of the media: one of the important facets of democracy, it has been argued, is 'the fact that information and ideas cannot acceptably be monopolized by private individuals' (McQuail, 1994: 156). The functioning of the media vis-à-vis private interests gives rise to a contradiction between the natural right of the public to know what is going on in society and the inability of media to ensure this right.

### Aims of the study

This study explores the professional roles of journalists, taking an inside view from the perspective of 30 practitioners working in the St



Petersburg media at the end of the 1990s. An open approach to the professionalism of Russian journalists was adopted in order to acquire more empirical evidence about how professionalism develops and what its features are. During the last decade, both Russian and western research diagnosing the transitional state of journalism discovered the persistence of old (subjective and propagandist) and the emergence of new (more factual and open) practices (Kolesnik et al., 1995; Wu et al., 1996; Davis et al., 1998; Voltmer, 2000).

Within the theoretical discussion of professionalism, a conceptual clash persists between the Russian and western approaches. Russian sociology determines a profession *in the frame of the division of labour and its functional content*; journalism, like medicine and jurisprudence, is placed on the second level of the social differentiation of specialities according to such criteria as education, intellectual complexity and responsibility. The first level belongs to representatives of science, the arts and government, while specialists who do not necessarily have a university education occupy the third level (Filippov, 1998a: 529). This reflects the Soviet system of values and cultural standards, which determined the prestige of professions on a graduation from (party) government work, including science and the arts, towards journalism as (party) literary work in the mass media. In spite of that, the emerging post-Soviet society differs from Soviet society with respect to political and economic freedoms (established by the government from above), and also the system of values (social, moral, cultural, professional, etc.) which has not been controlled from above. We can see, for instance, that the present interpretations of profession and professional journalism do not exceed the limits of the Soviet tradition, which reduced them to a question of the division of labour and high-quality production. In other words, there has been continuity of the socialist ideology, with no detailed system position regarding the problem of professionalization (Kivinen, 2001: 122–3). A profession is ‘institutionalized and exists within the framework of the needs of society and its economy as one form of labour activity’ (Kravchenko, 1999: 220); ‘the borders of a profession, the number and kinds of those entering specialities are variable and volatile’ (Filippov, 1998b: 425). The professionalization of a journalist is the mastering of the professional experience by adapting to the professional community and developing the process of individualization wherein a journalist turns into the creative personality (Dzyaloshinsky, 1996: 30).

Within the framework of the western sociological theory of professionalism, the terms profession, professional, professionalization are defined as ‘[in] a trivial sense . . . referring to the division of labour in

society and to the degree of socialization of different kinds of activity' (Splichal and Sparks, 1994: 34–5). In contrast to the Soviet tradition, western sociology accepts at least three kinds of labour as professions: medicine, law and science. Other kinds of specialized activities including journalism are interpreted as occupations moving towards becoming professions. Professionalization is seen as an extended self-assertive process of constant practice (finding one's own employment), narrow specialization (technical expertise) and standards of conduct (code of ethics). This increases the requirement not so much for specialized skills but for certain kinds of conduct, the social cohesion of the professional community itself and 'its status relative to other groups' (Splichal and Sparks, 1994: 36). Denis McQuail (2003: 273) draws our attention to the core value of media professionalism as 'meeting public needs for information (or right to know)'. He continues: 'Professionalism also supports the idea that responsibility, accountability, and freedom are interrelated, rather than in conflict' (McQuail, 2003: 282). According to Corner (1995), the professionalism of journalists lies in impartial, fair and accurate reporting. The international principles of journalists' organizations define professional journalism as 'supported by the idea of a free and responsible press' and call 'for professional autonomy of journalists as well as a measure of public accountability' (Nordenstreng, 1998: 132).

The analysis of professional roles by David Weaver establishes three basic journalistic roles: disseminator, interpreter and adversary (Weaver, 1986, 1998). More elaborately, they emanate from the American history of journalism based on Milton's assertion of the 'self-righting principle' and a conception of the 'free marketplace of ideas' (Altschull, 1984: 40). This system of beliefs for media roles and journalists incorporates the 'western' understanding of professionalism as objective reporting and journalistic 'detachment'. In other words, the western discourse on professional journalism focuses on the demands of certain occupational standards and conduct with the idea of establishing independent informational expertise. This is accompanied by the promotion of equal access and participation of citizens in public debate. The professional is required to have a sense of responsibility towards the public and at the same time to be an opponent to those in power.

The Russian case, as already stated, has been in a state of transformation. Formerly playing the role of state propagandists and organizers of the socialist construction, journalists have now found themselves faced with relative autonomy. Journalism formed in the bosom of Marxist–Leninist ideas, where professionalism was measured by political maturity, advocacy and publicist speech,<sup>3</sup> would, one assumes,

be relegated to the annals of history since the arrival of political and economic freedoms and journalists' depoliticization.<sup>4</sup> However, it is not enough for systemic and cultural structures to change, 'the social system is far from a software that can be changed overnight' (Nordenstreng, 2001: 221). In particular, the idea that journalism should function as an extension of the government is still alive. Svetlana Vinogradova (2000: 17–18) describes it as a

dilemma of worldwide importance: either a journalist acts to support the status quo and assists in maintaining the stability of the social system, or he acts as a critic, an adversary promoting not only change of the state of affairs but also destroying this system. It is from this that different understandings of professionalism proceed.

The task of this article is to describe the attitudes and values of contemporary Russian journalists with regard to their work and their perceptions of journalistic professionalism. One very pertinent question is whether, as the old school of Soviet journalism has been abolished and a new school established, standards and values have changed completely. There is still uncertainty regarding professional standards in the occupation. What objectives does journalism have in society and what is the role of a journalist?<sup>5</sup> The article examines the status of professional roles within journalism through journalists' attitudes to their work. The content of professional roles and the premises for their performance are examined through journalists' perceptions of professionalism and ethics. Qualitative methodology, using in-depth and expert interviews based on representative sampling of different media in St Petersburg, has been applied. The analysis also applies procedures of grounded theory to ascertain how professionalism develops and what it is based on.

### The sample

In the post-Soviet reality there is a huge contrast between centre and periphery in terms of political power and economic development. St Petersburg is attractive as a field of research, however, because at the end of the 1990s, the city was seen as a symbiosis of centre and periphery inasmuch as it combined elements of both poles and to some extent reflected the complicated and contradictory character of ongoing changes in Russian society.<sup>6</sup> With regard to journalism, St Petersburg has acquired a developed media structure representing all kinds of contemporary Russian media institutions, and where the two types of journalism, old and new, have been identified. The study had three phases: it began in 1998 with pilot interviews with 11 media experts; in 1999, in-depth

interviews were conducted with 30 journalists from eight media outlets; the study was completed in 2001 with a follow-up enquiry with the 11 experts. The experts had a broad knowledge and solid experience of St Petersburg media and society (between 11 and 45 years). They included the head of the city administration's committee on mass media; head of the Northwestern State Committee of the Russian Federation on the Mass Media; head of the St Petersburg Union of Journalists; head of Citizens' Control, the city's public human rights organization; executives from the leading news media as well as scholars from St Petersburg State University and St Petersburg European University. Sampling of the media represented the most important actors in the city's media marketplace – the traditional (former Soviet) and the new (established in the 1990s) forms of print and broadcast media, both private and state/private. Among these there were TV Channel 5 (the former federal channel), Radio Peterburg, FM radio station Baltika, all three local dailies: *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*, *Smena* and *Vechernii Peterburg*, the regional edition of the national daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and the tabloid *Peterburg Express*. All respondents included in the study had given their informed consent. Among the 30 respondents interviewed, there was an equal number of males and females, ages ranged from 20 to 60 years, and time spent working as journalists ranged from 36 to three years. The majority of the respondents specialized in current affairs, others in culture, crime and sports news. The interviews were conducted in privacy in the respondents' offices over a one-month period (10 October to 10 November 1999), and transcribed verbatim. The basic semi-structured interview included 72 open-ended questions about the social characteristics of the respondent, gender role, job and ethics. By asking a variety of questions, the study aimed at gaining as complete and open reflections as possible on the issues being analysed.

### Journalistic practices

To get down to the nitty-gritty of professional journalistic practice, respondents were asked to describe *how* he/she practised the job, *what* methods were normally used and *what* methods were not, and *why*. The respondents gave varying descriptions of their work. The data analysis used the procedure of open coding of grounded theory to conceptualize and categorize data. All responses were compared with each other and the analysis identified five key themes in journalists' attitudes to their work: namely, personal decision-making, ethics, creativity, hack-work (*khaltura*) and intellectual. Each attitude can be used as a theoretical category and

the specific characteristics outlined as a kind of dimensional scale. The results of the analysis of the open interviews appear in Table 1.

The personal decision-making attitude was identified in the majority of the respondents and includes the selection of news for publishing alongside the dimensions of importance, interest, sensation, drama and exclusiveness. The journalist also selects news by taking into account the political line or style of the medium, decides what interviewees and topics should be chosen, manages the topic and the interviewee according to the journalist's own personal interests and likes. As one interviewee said:

My first method is sincerity. For a long time I professed such a principle – to work only with people who are interesting and sympathetic, because if a person is not sympathetic I can hurt him/her by my material. I may refuse to create material if I do not like the person. (R.24)

The journalist actively chooses a strategy for obtaining information, this may perhaps be by means of feminine charms or aggression in order to muddle the interviewee. The journalist decides how much pressure to apply to a situation, via his or her reporting, in order to influence the outcome, for instance to help a reader with a legitimate complaint. Also, within the category of personal decision-making the journalist tries to make the text interesting in order to attract readers/viewers.

The ethics attitude to the job was evident in about half of the respondents and included disapproval of illegal methods and violence, observing moral principles and responsibility to an interviewee. The attitudes creativity and hack-work are evident in almost one-third of the respondents: some try to practise journalism exclusively as a form of creativity, others combine creativity and hack-work. Creativity is based on a love of journalism, the journalist's talent, their interest in the topic and their skill in obtaining exclusive stories. Hack-work has two meanings: the first refers to poor quality work caused by the daily grind of the newsroom, the urgency to get material ready, poor pay and being obliged to cover certain topics to fulfil the media agenda. Journalists often have no interest in these tasks but they have to submit to the demands of the editor. Subsequently, they may be less conscientious and resort to plagiarism to get the job done faster. Hack-work has a second meaning: taking on extra work where articles are written to order, to supplement their salary: pay is very low in journalism. In this case, journalists often have very little interest in the topic, are cynical about it and use any methods at hand. The attitude intellectual is evident in some of the respondents and refers to a constant acquisition of knowledge, such

**Table 1** Journalists' professional attitudes to job

<i>Professional attitudes</i>	<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Dimensional scale</i>
<b>Personal decision-making</b> 'I myself'	1. selecting news	importance, interest, exclusivity, sensation, drama, concept of media
	2. selecting sources of information and topics	the journalist's interest, taste
	3. selecting strategies to obtain news	feminine charms, masculine aggressiveness
	4. selecting purposes of influencing	to help, to entertain
<b>Ethics</b>	1. refusal to accept violence in the job	observance of presumption of innocence, observing a victim's will
	2. refusal to accept illegal methods	hidden advertising, ordered article
	3. concern for an interviewee	respect for man and privacy, not to harm an interviewee
	4. common moral principles	refusal to lie
<b>Creativity</b>	1. feelings	love of journalism, vocation, the journalist's interest
	2. resourcefulness	talent, skill for exclusive work
<b>Hack-work</b> ( <i>kbaltura</i> )	1. editorial routine	poor quality, urgency, 'obligatory' news, plagiarism, unpaid salary
	2. extra work (second job)	interests of a client, self-interest, any methods are acceptable
<b>Intellectual</b>	1. acquiring knowledge	self-education, experience, competence, the journalist's archives

as reading literature on the topic, following the media agenda, keeping journalist archives, being up to date with current affairs.

In identifying these five basic journalistic attitudes, personal decision-making emerged as the most powerful attitude to the job and it can accordingly be hypothesized that professionalism for journalists means making independent decisions in their professional activities, which can be equated with job autonomy. To test this hypothesis, I explored the working practices of journalists to discover more precisely what constitutes autonomy for these workers. The aim was to verify the attitudes revealed in the survey and the apparent overriding importance of personal decision-making. The respondents were presented with a list of 13 methods employed in practice in journalism: (1) making facts or stories up; (2) suppressing facts; (3) publishing unverified information; (4) using hidden microphones or cameras; (5) using dubious sources; (6) producing material to order; (7) hidden advertisements; (8) using confidential business or government information without reference; (9) using personal documents without permission; (10) paying a source for information; (11) using a false identity; (12) disclosing names of rape victims before the court had made a judgement; and (13) disclosing criminals' names before the court had made a judgement. Although it is obvious that all methods are ethically questionable, the idea was to discover which of these methods were deemed acceptable, which were not and by whom and why (Juskevits, 2002: 98).

In analysing the data, it became apparent that the respondents use all these methods. However, they did have different perceptions about these methods. For instance, who are 'dubious sources'? One-half of the respondents consider everybody except officials to be dubious sources, the other half only considers criminals, untrustworthy people and gossip-mongers as dubious sources, but practically everyone is unanimous in their trust of officials. From this we can see that the notion 'dubious source' varies in its meaning for journalists, while the notion 'reliable source' is generally agreed to refer to officials. A journalist's decision to accept or reject various methods is based on individual morality and context. Thus, whereas one group of respondents approves of unethical methods, e.g. suppressing facts in order not to harm an interviewee, another group rejects such methods not only because of ethical considerations, but also because of the difficulty of using them (e.g. hidden advertising) or because they are not required in a job (e.g. using hidden microphones or cameras). By rating which of the questionable methods are acceptable to the majority allows us to establish professional norms. Six of the 13 methods were considered overall as acceptable:



namely suppressing facts – this by practically all the respondents – publishing unverified information, writing copy to order, using confidential business and government information without reference, disclosing the names of rape victims and disclosing criminals' names. The analysis shows that these methods are required mainly because journalists and media collaborate closely with political, commercial and administrative sectors. The relationship is two-way: journalists attend to the interests of the political, commercial and administrative elite in their news coverage *and* rely on them as sources of information. Two methods in particular, suppressing facts and using unverified information, are the result of journalists' fear for their own security (fear of prosecution, of criminal retaliation, or being sacked) and of the practical difficulties encountered in verifying information quickly enough.

The next phase in the analysis attempted to verify the five attitude types identified. To do this, I returned to the primary data. The analysis confirmed that both generations, old and new, produce journalism employing, to a greater or less degree, the five basic attitudes. To some extent, this predicts that the character of contemporary journalism is strongly personalized, ethical to a point, literary, routine and a little intellectual.

The personal decision-making attitude is inherent in the majority of journalists and is the basis for most working methods. Journalists select news, sources of information and topics; they choose strategies for how to work with their sources of information, how to obtain news and how to present it; they select their working methods, genres, means of influencing their audience and ways of earning. This indicates that journalists have a significant degree of autonomy in the job and within the labour market. However, among the most dominant criteria underlying personal decision-making are the editorial line (representing the interests of owners, sponsors and advertisers) and self-censorship (fear of court, criminals and dismissal). So, personal decision-making is a compromise between a journalist as a producer of material and the editorial policy of the media and the circumstances in society that do not guarantee a journalist protection under present legislation, i.e. against criminals and pressure from employers. Thus, the autonomy of journalists at the personal level turns into restricted autonomy on the level of media organization. However, journalists do act autonomously beyond their full-time job by earning money in their own time for other media and commercial organizations as well as writing pre-ordered copy and incorporating hidden advertising for their private clients. In their full-time job most journalists still perceive themselves as state workers,

relying on official sources for information. Journalists still prefer to keep relationships 'friendly' with officials to gain access to political circles, and are happy with a media agenda formed to a great extent in favour of the existing power elites.

On the other hand, when journalists produce work outside their full-time job, they act as free reporters, producing products to order and earning extra money. This is the labour they refer to as hack-work, which they do not consider to be real journalism. Such autonomy from the main employer on the part of contemporary journalists can be seen as a transitional stage in the development of their professional identity from state towards market mentality. In practice, it serves as a self-protective strategy: combining staff work with hack-work allows them to hold onto the old role while gradually slipping into the new.

### Old roles and new roles

The journalists' perceptions of roles were explored in their working methods, their perceptions of work tasks and their attitudes to their audience. Among the old roles are included the propagandist role (both generations) and the organizer role (those who had practised in the Soviet era). The need for these roles stems from the close alliance of the media with local government and economic groups striving for political power. The journalists observe the editorial line and interests of their private clients by exerting self-censorship. They thus create propaganda through their own political leanings, or simply for financial benefit.

However, post-Soviet journalism exists in conditions different to those of Soviet journalism: it earns its living in a growing competitive market, and therefore is increasingly directed towards the interests and preferences of consumers and advertisers. The higher the audience ratings the easier it is to sell media products and to earn advertising revenue, and so make a profit. Journalism is adopting a new function: entertaining its audience to promote goods and services in a consumer-driven marketplace. The media sector has turned into a battlefield for audiences and advertisers and is proposing a new role for its workers – as organizers of leisure for the masses. Young journalists willingly take on the role of entertainer and in search of unusual and sensational news, adopt new practices such as use of hidden microphones and cameras, assuming a false identity, making payment to sources and using personal documents without permission.

Obviously, the emergence of such roles reveals the complete irrelevance of the framework derived from western journalism: that of

disseminator, interpreter and adversary (Weaver, 1986: 112–15). Moreover, Russian journalists' perception of the disseminator role means getting *any* information out to the public (be it misinformation, incomplete or unverified). As to their attitudes towards the roles of interpreter, who investigates claims made by officials, or adversary, who takes a critical stance towards those in power, Russian journalists take no view at all. Thus, the roles of propagandist, organizer and entertainer reveal both continuities (the old state roles) and discontinuities (the new market role), indicating there is some change in the functioning of Russian journalism from total politicization towards partial depoliticization. However, the weight of journalists' roles in society depends on the balance of forces between state and market. At the end of the 1990s, the state held power over political and economic processes and used the leading media for propagandist coverage of elections and privatization campaigns. Journalism, which was shaped for the needs of the state, remained in the old frames biased in favour of the government.

### Realization of roles

The main task adopted by Soviet era practitioners has not changed: the education of the people and the provision of a service to the public. Post-Soviet practitioners, on the other hand, pursue the goal of rapid dissemination of information. Nevertheless, the activities of both generations are based on engagement: the degree to which they are involved or retain some degree of neutrality. The perception of neutrality is vague, very varied and somewhat subjective: some described it as a form of self-protection (incomplete or biased reporting to keep out of trouble), and one respondent saw neutrality as divorcing himself from reality to immerse himself in his creative task. Engagement is caused by the need to promote the interests of political and commercial groups, by market clientelism approved in the media environment (a tolerant attitude towards producing copy to order, for instance) and journalists' personal desire to influence their audience.

Both generations work by the same basic news criteria in selecting information, namely the importance and interesting nature of information, a journalist's personal interests, the editorial line and self-censorship. However, they perceive the need for certain facts differently. Soviet practitioners try to suppress exciting facts as unhealthy or sensationalist (social organizers), whereas post-Soviet practitioners actively pursue sensationalism to attract a bigger audience and raise their media ratings (entertainers). The old generation of journalists formerly

tended to look down at their audience as at an immature mass, whereas the young journalists of current times look at the audience as consumers of a media product.

Regarding sources of information, Soviet practitioners prefer other media or experts or picking up stories in the city streets, whereas post-Soviet practitioners rely instead on the official structures with whom their media collaborate, personal informants and the internet. Working styles in news gathering are also different. The old journalists are in the habit of organizing work according to a long-term plan, agreements with the editorship and working meetings. They have a widespread network of voluntary correspondents in various organizations and they are confident in their ability to unearth stories 'on the street'. They aim at supporting the social order, focusing on positive stories about everyday heroes (*geroi budnei*). Post-Soviet practitioners prefer to work individually, pursuing exclusive or sensationalist news and using payment to sources, or even blackmail.

Publishing unverified information is a 'norm' for both generations. Journalists tend to trust officials and their informants, but even if they do not trust the information coming from official structures, they publish it anyway because it must be published. Journalists have no incentive for verification; as we stated earlier, they do not perceive their roles to include that of investigator or adversary. On the contrary, they perceive as natural their role as collaborator with those in power. Moreover, they are not under the threat of any serious sanctions if they do publish unverified information.

Although the majority is disposed towards factual reporting, the old generation would combine fact and comment in their efforts to produce publicist material (see note 3). In contrast, the young generation advocates separating fact and comment, referring to the model of western journalism. But the journalists' perception of how to present material also depends on the type of media concerned. In the traditional media, under the patronage of local government, journalists of both generations strive for a publicist role. In the new private media, sponsored by western investors, journalists learn how to separate fact from comment.

Nevertheless, it is hard to argue for the existence of any real objectivity in their journalism because both generations try to convey their personal opinions on the event in question, thereby personifying and destroying factual informing. This reveals the continuing dominance of the publicist role, where journalism is the writer's own exclusive preserve, not a technical product. The journalistic authorship (*avtorskaya zhurnalistika*) is an integral part of the professional culture of Russian journalism

rooted in the classics of Russian literature and *publitsistika*, inherited from the Soviet school of journalistic genres and turning all genres into *publitsistika* genres without rigid distinctions within them (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky, 1971: 259, 677–8; Voroshilov, 1999: 65, 75). Meanwhile, contemporary publicist reporting does not necessarily represent a plurality of opinions. Although pluralism was the professional value established by Soviet practitioners in their struggle for freedom of speech under glasnost, successfully legitimized in the new laws on the mass media, the Soviet practitioners realize pluralism in the same old ways, subordinating themselves to the editorial line, which casts doubt on the level and nature of pluralism provided by the old generation. In contrast, post-Soviet practitioners associate pluralism rather with exercising their own power as an informational resource, such as giving or not giving citizens access to certain information. They came to journalism when pluralistic writing was entering into current practice and they took the opportunity to present different opinions for granted. Therefore they perceive pluralism rather as a norm, which can be ignored, or not, as can any norm in the Russian tradition of legal nihilism (*pravovoi nihilism*).

So, both generations provide censored and personal rather than free and pluralistic information. The potential for journalists to control information and to regulate to some extent their audience's access to information has come about, ironically, through the democratization of society. In the Soviet era, information management belonged to the party structures. However, democratization has not turned journalists into absolute democrats, who regard the interests of the people as paramount. On the contrary, journalists, as before, want to influence the people: the old generation of Soviet practitioners strive to patronize their audience, perceiving it rather as the passive object of their social initiatives, whereas the new, post-Soviet practitioners strive to inform and to entertain their audience, perceiving it rather as an active subject of consumerism.

But the media, especially the traditional media, are incompetent when it comes to really addressing their audience. How they categorize their audience is based rather on journalists' subjective perceptions proceeding from stereotypes (the print media and radio are for the intelligentsia, the television and popular press are for the masses), personal experience, specialization and age (young journalists are inclined to address a young audience, while the older journalists address themselves to older people and pensioners). The traditional media (established in the Soviet time) still possess insufficient information about their audience although some of them have their own sociological data services and commissioned surveys. Moreover, the survey information

about their audience has not been used to form any real marketing policy. Therefore, the argument about the low professionalism of the traditional media, in the sense that they are still very ignorant about their audience, is justified. In contrast, the new post-Soviet media, invested in by western capital, establishes its strategies on the basis of sociological survey data directed towards the interests and tastes mainly of the successful business class and the masses.

### Professionalism

Journalists do not share one approach to journalism. When they were asked the open-ended question 'who is professional in journalism?' it turned out that their perceptions varied from that of the idealist as a hypothetical image of an independent journalist to the propagandist, the real agent of political corruption in society. Between these extremes, the journalists used three additional categories to describe themselves: specialist (basic quality is competence), humanist (altruism and honesty) and artist (talent, inherent qualities).

These five types of professionalism indicated by the journalists correspond to the five types of attitudes described earlier with which they approach their work: personal decision-making 'I myself' (idealist), hack-work (propagandist), intellectual (specialist), ethics (humanist) and creativity (artist). Interestingly, the majority employ the attitude of personal decision-making in their work. However, their perceptions of professionalism do not include such values as independence, autonomy and self-regulation; in other words, personal decision-making and independence are not correlated in the journalists' consciousness. That is, both generations reveal the traditional concept of journalism as a derivative of power. However, such a perception is a consequence of everyday practices. In their full-time job, a journalist makes a personal decision within the framework of the editorial policy and self-censorship; outside that job the journalist acts more as a PR worker, tied to commercial interests in the promotion of goods, services, clients and the organization itself. Both generations share an aspiration to satisfy the employer. Their perception of professionalism equates with quality workmanship, which has its roots in the Soviet concept of craftsmanship (*masterstvo*) based on specific skills. This demonstrates that Russian journalism has still not been influenced to any great extent by western ideas. Professionalization is happening within a framework of domestic not universal dimensions, and retains traditional concepts of technical skills with no reference to independence or autonomy. Accordingly, the

criteria of professionalism are different to those perceived in western journalism.

In contrast to the western inclination towards neutral, detached, disinterested reporting, the Russian media and their workers have developed a participatory journalism. This originated in the Soviet school of journalism with the accompanying roles of propagandist and organizer that imply the active participation of journalists in political and social processes. It cultivated creative, politically mature, non-standardized reporting known as *publicistika*. Nowadays, *publicistika* remains 'one of the highest levels of the journalist's creativity, and corresponds to the brilliant literary talent of the journalist and his or her social standing' (Vinogradova, 2000: 45). Journalists have been stimulated by the dramatic events in their country: the collapse of the Soviet state, the struggles for political and economic power and the Chechen wars. Consequently, involvement is a central element of professionalism based on attitudes of creativity and personal decision-making. By participating in important political events – primarily, election campaigns – the media try to become the fourth estate in society in their alliance with the first three estates. Journalists are retaining the conception of the professional as an influential player in the political life of society, and are developing a professionalism more in line with the ideas of statism than democracy.

The perception of professional responsibility among Russian journalists, on the one hand, coincides with the perceptions of western journalists, i.e. getting information to the public, but on the other hand, there is a sharp divergence when it comes to understanding the main roles of the media. Whereas western journalists feel a great responsibility towards the public for investigating what a government claims (Weaver, 1998: 407), Russian journalists see their responsibility as being to the media owners and an observance of the rules of the game. As one interviewee commented:

. . . to play by their rules. I have to pile praise on persons who are distasteful to me. But they pay money to the paper and the paper orders me to write this material. (R.18)

The presence of such incompatible ideas rather proves that journalists are guilty of double standards, as their main responsibility is to the employer (the interests of the media owners, the sponsors and advertisers) and only a residual obligation is felt towards the people.

Membership of a union is not a sign of professionalism. Both generations perceive professionalism as an individual rather than a



collective business. Such a perception is ingrained. When questioned on their perceptions of 'professional', they did not refer to anything to do with a journalistic community or group norms. This indicates that there is too little consensus or mutual understanding in their professional activities. Primarily, the Soviet practitioners try to maintain a corporate solidarity and continue to believe that in spite of all the recent changes for the worse in journalism, corporate solidarity exists. The professional union reflects such beliefs. Post-Soviet practitioners, by contrast, perceive journalism as 'dog-eat-dog' and do not look for solidarity with colleagues. Only a very small minority abide by unwritten rules based on general loyalties and ethical norms for all parties in the communication: the sources of information, the audience and the journalists themselves. This means that if self-regulation exists it is spontaneous, narrow and localized. It occasionally appears when journalists share the same loyalties and ethical norms; but it is more prevalent when journalists are required to comply with the media's internal rules. The low level of self-regulation overall makes journalists vulnerable to external and internal pressures, keeps them in the position of employed workers and weakens the status of the profession as a whole in society.

### **Ethics**

Having different expectations of journalism, the two generations identify different values in the occupation. Soviet practitioners value journalism for the advantages which it has over other occupations: an opportunity to achieve a higher standing in society, to possess information, to communicate with persons of any rank, to render assistance to people, to shape and mould public opinion and to be autonomous in working hours. Perceiving these values as advantages, these journalists display an orientation to public service, an aspiration to having power over clients and to autonomy. Such pragmatic orientations make them similar to members of other professions. However, what is also evident is that the Soviet conception of journalism as an instrument of power, which strives to affect the public consciousness and current practice, persists among the older generation.

The majority of post-Soviet practitioners value objectivity and honesty towards their audience, their colleagues and themselves, and high quality work. However, in practice journalists have to act according to media policy conducted not in the interests of the public but in the interests of power holders and other influential groups. That is, current practice imposes a further duty to serve the elite, which is taken on by

journalists without resistance. The new generation is responsible to the employer to produce material which yields the expected results. These younger journalists identified professional responsibility as observing the rules of the game; others consider that journalism has no values at all and that the notion of morality is difficult to apply to it.

The perceptions of what is a 'sin' in journalism also vary. Soviet practitioners are more worried about journalistic methods that lead to violation of human rights: invasion of privacy, defamation, no respect for a person's honour or dignity, doing harm to the health, life or property of a citizen. Post-Soviet practitioners, on the other hand, are more worried about the quality of the information, in particular the misinformation that underlies the reporting. Hence, post-Soviet practitioners place more value on providing people with true information, whereas Soviet practitioners value ethical conduct. Nevertheless, both generations display a reliance on lies. Lies are a product of circumstances and relatively constant in journalistic work; journalists justify lies in election campaigns and any other context where a lie is required. Lying is a tool of the trade, justified by the creative nature of journalism.

Friendship is something journalists consider sacred; they would never write negative material about friends. On the contrary, they use friends as sources of information and publish material in their interest. The contemporary media and journalists have developed a form of 'cronyism' for their political and economic 'friends' and those from their private life. This has become a widespread practice since the beginning of the 1990s, when the media were granted freedom from state censorship and could define their agenda independently. Later, in the period of shock reforms, in order to survive without state support, the media had to seek political and economic sponsors. In the 1990s, cronyism became a part of the informal networks of Russian journalists; on the one hand, it represents a pragmatic survival strategy by the media and journalists. On the other hand, it reflects the spiritual life of a people whose culture remains traditionally based on close multilateral kinships of family, relatives, friends and colleagues.

Almost unanimously, the journalists justify corruption in professional practice and society. The majority consider venality and professionalism to be of the same order. They argue that as everything around them is corrupt and dependent, there is no other way to escape poverty. Journalism and journalists are a commodity. Nobody buys an unprofessional journalist. Old (pro-state) values have been displaced by new (pro-market) values. As the saying goes in Russia, journalism remains the second oldest profession, next to prostitution. Both genera-

tions identify professionalism as technical skill, not including ethical norms; the venality of a journalist means an appraisal of his or her professionalism on the labour market.

Both generations have different hopes for the future. The Soviet practitioners view the immediate future of Russian journalism pessimistically because they do not believe that political and economic conditions will improve in the next decade. Post-Soviet practitioners have a rather optimistic view of the future, however, because they believe in a new order in the country and they aspire to establishing the western model of journalism.

### **Main finding**

The main finding of the study is that contemporary journalism has been formed by two types of professional subculture: that of the old generation (Soviet practitioners who entered the profession in the Soviet era) and that of the new generation (post-Soviet practitioners who have entered the profession since 1990). The old generation is strikingly homogeneous and conservative, represented by 'standardized' professionals recruited (mainly after school and the army) and trained (mainly in university) according to the state policy towards developed socialism. Practitioners would have been carefully selected, mainly from those with a working-class background, literary talent and from the majority ethnic group. They would have been educated in Soviet theory and journalistic practice and typically socialized through party membership. The Soviet era practitioners continue nowadays to hold a view of journalism as a natural collaboration with power. As before, they take responsibility for supporting the social order and rendering practical guidance to citizens. Soviet practitioners perform the role of social organizer with the accompanying functions of cultivation, education and punishment. They continue to work in the leading informational media organs established in the Soviet era and to participate in the traditional professional association, the Union of Journalists. They uphold corporate solidarity, supporting each other in the occupation and life and observing the ethics of Soviet journalism (avoiding plagiarism, illiterate language, sharing a dedication to the profession, etc.).

The new generation of the 1990s is crucially different from the older generation in background, its expectations of journalism and the ability to combine different professional activities. It represents a heterogeneous subculture consisting of different individuals in terms of age (20–45), ethnicity, origin, education, experience and social class (from worker to

academic). Post-Soviet practitioners obviously came into the profession later than Soviet practitioners (in the study sample the difference is 20 years) and had more a self-interest in journalism than a romantic image of (state) public service. The rapid development of the media market (in St Petersburg from 118 media in 1991 to 4000 media in 2001) required new workers, and journalism became accessible to amateurs. Among them, there were some who would not have been able to enter the profession before due to social and ethnic background. There were also those who had not been satisfied with the income, career prospects or creative opportunities in their former jobs. In total contrast to the Soviet era practitioners, those of the 1990s have no need for a professional association; they prefer to act alone, competing against each other, pursuing profit, creative ambitions and prospects of new life. Moreover, the new generation is orientated to the role of entertainer, aiming at a sensationalist media agenda. They perceive journalism as a type of PR, working for the interests of influential groups and persons in politics and business. They work both in the traditional media and the new media which have emerged over the last decade. They are more likely than their older colleagues to combine full-time and freelance jobs, performing services not only in journalism but also in the commercial sector of the economy. In other words, the old generation represents more the Soviet concept of journalism as a state institution patronizing the people, while the new generation represents the market conception of journalism as a service agency for the elite and the masses. Regardless of this difference in perspective, both generations perceive journalism as closely linked to capital – state and private – and therefore both promote propaganda during elections and other important events.

### Concluding remarks

The findings of this study suggest that Russian journalists act according to the logic of survival by adapting norms which prevail in the occupation and society. Their conduct is determined within the frame of contemporary media roles and opportunities of the contemporary marketplace. Corruption, *blat* (pulling strings), lies, self-interest, loyalty to the employer and to private clients all contribute to the economic and professional success of media practitioners preferring to act alone in society without rules. Journalists keep close to the government and business, being the main sponsors of their existence, but maintain a

distance from their audience, who are not seen as important or influential.

Nataliya Rimashevskaya (2001: 2) has commented how one can now speak of 'two Russias', which are moving increasingly away from one another and understand each other less and less; they have different lifestyles, different shops, different schools, different priorities. Like ordinary people, journalists must manage through common sense and effort to find a niche in the new, prosperous Russia. Therefore, they serve the interests of those who possess political and economic capital, i.e. the state and business elite. Consequently, they tend not to reflect a citizen's position by promoting a democratic society or stressing what are the priorities for the public. State and capital perform in such indivisible tandem that no space is allowed for a true civil society. The professional roles of journalists – propagandist, organizer and entertainer – are the roles they are required to play by the government and economic elite.

The crucial difference between the new generation and the old is the idea of journalism as a marketplace, competition, race and battlefield where there are no ethical norms and corporate loyalties. Journalism is no longer a mission of humanism en route to a radiant future, but a means to earn money and forge a career. There are no values: only the interests of the political and economic groups striving for power. The contemporary concept of journalism as PR in the interests of these groups leads to new approaches to the selection of news (sensationalism), to new methods of working (invasion of private life, defamation), new attitudes to the audience (as consumers of news, entertainment and advertisements). The media aggressively implants hedonistic morals, paying huge attention to the entertainment genre and avoiding vital issues of humanity and society. Young journalists willingly accept the role of entertainer.

Nevertheless, both generations share certain commonalities caused by the features of the job, the present state of the media and the cultural conventions of the profession. Their common ground is the political function of journalism, when both act as propagandists of power in elections. Their perceptions of their role do not include any notion of an opposition to or critique of power. In their job, they are personally autonomous, combining full-time and outside work and making professional decisions framed by the editorial line (the interests of the founders, sponsors and advertisers) and self-censorship (fear of the courts, criminals and dismissal). Their main responsibility is to their employers and private clients. Suppressing facts or using unverified information is a 'norm' for the majority. Neither group exercises any objectivity, because

they have developed a rather subjective, personalized style in order to influence people's perceptions. Their own ideas about professionalism are reduced to skills in specific genres and do not include any interest in journalism as a professional body. They recognize polarized types of professionals, ranging from the idealist (the independent journalist, an impossibility in practice) to the propagandist (the colleague who lobbies for the interests of those who pay the most).

The close alliance between the media and government during the 1990s became a solid basis for the professional collaboration of journalism and power at the beginning of the 2000s. Andrei Richter (2002: 165–6) indicates that the essential differences between the present time and the Yeltsin era include less political dependence by Russia on the West owing to the growth in oil prices; less dependence by the Kremlin on oligarchs; a greater role for government in governing processes in the media sphere; and the return of the Kremlin to a doctrine where national (state) interests should be at the heart of informational policy. Yassen Zassoursky (2002: 195) writes about Russian media in the 21st century as moving 'up the stairs leading down'.

Indeed, the forces of continuity seem to dominate over the drive for change. This has become more and more obvious during the last few years, and in this respect the optimistic perspectives of the younger generation journalists in this study may have been somewhat premature. The new era of freedom is not necessarily leading to a higher level of professionalism and democracy. In the transitional time of the 1990s, Russian media and society were, metaphorically speaking, injected with the vaccine of democracy, which led to a period of inoculation. After that, the vaccine destroyed the naivete about capitalism. At this stage, enter Putin's government, mobilizing society and the media to recover, drawing on forces from Russia's cultural past, the present political predictability and the economic juncture (high oil prices).

The study predicts the exit of the romanticists and their ideals of social service and the advent of the pragmatists, taking a utilitarian approach to the profession. However, it is not the case that all that is past has been cancelled out, but rather the former political agitators have been 'modernized' into contemporary PR workers. 'Professionalism' stays within the old matrix of propaganda dressed up as the fashionable genre of PR, borrowed from the West, but executed in its own way. If state and capital can be amalgamated in the present Russia, then cannot journalism and PR be blended together: journalism aspiring to the goals of PR and PR drawing on journalistic skills?

## Notes

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The article is based on the study presented as a licentiate thesis in 2002 to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Tampere (Juskevits, 2002). In 2003, the author adopted her mother's surname, Pasti, and this article is published under the author's new surname.

1. This report refers to a project carried out under the direction of the Union of Journalists of Russia, and developed by a number of public organizations, including the Glasnost Defence Fund, the Media Law and Policy Centre of the School of Journalism of the Moscow State University, and Internews Europe in Russia.
2. All translations from Russian studies are the author's own.
3. Publicist (*publitsistika*) refers to 'literature on public-political issues. Publicist materials operate not only on facts from which a reader him/herself draws the conclusion, but they also include various judgements, comments and generalizations, and suggest conclusions' (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky, 1971: 677–8). The post-Soviet *publitsistika* is rather informal in thought and style and highly personalized; news is not presented in a straightforward way but is packed into the text like a kind of commodity. The text takes on a rather literary format, and the syntax and style is more expressive, emotional, ironic and witty (Kroichik, 2000: 126–9).
4. Journalism is a 'specific mass informational activity concerned with the search for and transmission of real social information in regular form for a mass anonymous audience' (Svitich, 2000: 4). The Russian law on the mass media defines a journalist as someone who 'edits, creates, collects or prepares messages and materials for the editor's office of a mass medium and is connected with it by their labour and other contractual relations or engaged in such activity, being authorized by it' (Law of the Russian Federation on the Mass Media, 2002: 219).
5. Yury Kazakov (1999: 3) writes, 'Russian journalism still hardly knows itself and its nearest and farthest professional kinsfolk. Strictly speaking it still does not know precisely the address of its own house in the informational world'. Wu et al. (1996: 535) noted that 'it is unclear in Russia and other East European countries what professionalism will mean and what the role of the journalist will be'; although recent changes had given these authors hope to think that 'journalism is one of the few occupations that have moved toward professionalization since the reforms started'.



6. This uniqueness has mainly been determined historically. St Petersburg was the capital of Russia twice: from 1712 to 1728 and from 1728 to 1918 ([www.hkkk.fi/ecomon](http://www.hkkk.fi/ecomon)). The city was the cradle of Russian journalism, the first printed newspaper was produced there (*Sanki-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* 1728), the first evening paper (*Vechernyaya gazeta* 1866) and the first free paper (*Kopeika* 1907) (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky, 1971: 66; Voroshilov, 1999: 50). In the Soviet era, the city courted fame as the cultural capital; in post-Soviet times it has gained fame, or infamy, as the criminal capital. At the start of the 1990s, the city was a stronghold of new thinking in Russia. After the defeat of Anatoly Sobchak in the elections of 1996 and the coming to power of Vladimir Yakovlev, St Petersburg 'started to lose its grip on the overall development in Russia and became one of the largest but provincial centres' (*St Petersburg in the 1990s*, 2000: 7). Since 2000, when Vladimir Putin, a native of Leningrad, became president of Russia, the nature of the city has gradually changed again, as some government departments are being relocated to St Petersburg.

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# The St. Petersburg Media in Transformation

SVETLANA PASTI

## Abstract

The article describes the transformation of contemporary Russian media in the dual framework of common trends initiated and set to a great extent from the centre of power in Moscow, on the one hand, and specifics pertaining in the regions, on the other. As common trends characterising the post-Soviet society and media we note capitalization, westernization, commercialization and corruption. Their specific character was formed by the political and economic conditions pertaining in St. Petersburg from the end of the 1990s to the beginning the 2000s. The article is based on an empirical study of St. Petersburg media conducted 1998-2001. The data consist of pilot interviews with eleven experts in 1998, in-depth interviews with thirty journalists in the editorial offices of the eight basic media in 1999, and a survey of eleven experts in 2001. Asking in what ways the common trends dovetail into the local context, the article describes the conditions for journalism and its emerging characteristics. On the one hand, the study reveals crucial changes after the decade of reforms, such as the intensive development of informational and advertising services in society and commercialization of media and journalist's labour. On the other hand, the study notes the forces of continuity deriving from the fact that the media and journalists formerly served the interests of the political and economic groups rather than the interests of the public.

**Key Words:** media boom, bankruptcy, corruption, transforming russia

## Introduction

St. Petersburg was the capital of Russia twice: from 1712 to 1728 and from 1728 to 1918. The city was the cradle of Russian journalism, where there emerged the first printed newspaper and daily (*Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* 1728), the first evening paper (*Vechernyaya gazeta* 1866) and the first free paper (*Kopeika* 1907) (Bogdanov and Vyazemsky 1971: 66; Voroshilov 1999: 50). In the Soviet era, the city courted fame as the cultural capital; in the post-Soviet era, it gained fame as the criminal capital. At the start of the 1990s, the city became the stronghold of new thinking in Russia. After the defeat of Anatoly Sobchak in the elections of 1996 and the rise to power of Vladimir Yakovlev, the city "started to lose its grip on the overall development in Russia and became one of the largest, but provincial, centers" (*St. Petersburg in the 1990s. Decem-*

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ber 2000: 7). Beginning in 2000, when Vladimir Putin, a native of Leningrad, became President of Russia, the state of the city again gradually changed. It is set at the center of the North-west Federal District; the political power of the present Russian authority is partly being moved to St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg stands as a good indicator of post-Soviet development in a national scale – better than Moscow, which is unique in its own scale. Being one of 89 subjects of the Russian Federation and at the same time the second Russian megalopolis, St. Petersburg fully experienced all transformational processes occurring in society and media. Crucial developments in the media structure and media system began to take place at the turn of the decade from the 1980s to the 1990s, along with the collapse of the Soviet Union, followed by a wave of changes along with the 1990s (Vartanova 2001; I. Zassoursky 2002, 2004). This study looks at the final wave of the changes in the 1990s. Since 2001, the overall picture has remained more or less the same, but naturally there have been many developments regarding individual media and media professionals. The article is based on my empirical study on working journalists. The study was conducted in 1998-2001 in St. Petersburg and presented as a Licentiate's thesis in spring 2002 at the University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication<sup>1</sup>. The data consist of pilot interviews conducted in 1998 with eleven experts, in-depth interviews conducted in 1999 with thirty journalists in the editorial offices of the eight basic city media and an inquiry directed at eleven experts in 2001.

## Media Market

In St. Petersburg the media structure developed dynamically (Zassoursky 2001: 12; *Sredstva Massovoi Informatsii Sankt-Peterburga i Leningradskoi oblasti* 1999: 3). In comparison with the Soviet period, the quantity of the city media increased many times over, from 118 in 1991 to more than 4000 in 2001 (Yuri Tretyakov, vice chief of the committee for mass media and public relations of the City Administration of St. Petersburg, interview 2001). This clearly showed that the amount of new media had come to dominate the information market. Approximately every week, ten new print media were registered in the city, fifteen new media over the north-western part of Russia (*ibid.*). Table 1 presents the data on media registered on 1 April 2001 by the North-Western Direction of the State Committee of the Russian Federation on the mass media:

**Table 1.** *Registered Media until 01.04.2001*

Media	North-Western Part of Russia	St. Petersburg
Total mass media	5 883	3 211
Newspapers	2 895	1 380
Magazines	1 519	1 237
Information agencies	301	178
TV programs	608	227
Radio programs	388	120
Other electronic media	124	3

In early 2001, the North-Western Direction of the State Committee of the Russian Federation on the mass media in St. Petersburg issued 815 licenses permitting polygraphic activity, of which 146 were state licenses, 69 municipal and 600 non-state licenses.

According to its data, in the north-western region of Russia 30 enterprises specialized in the production of newspapers. This undermined the old monopoly in terms of output of the press and created premises for the development of competition in poligraphy.

The specialists noted that, remarkably, the peak of registration occurred before the expansion of pre-election campaigns and after that not many media more appeared (ibid.). That is, the media sector swelled for political needs and narrowed for everyday needs. Thus, in 1999 in the city, there were more than 600 registered newspapers, however of these only 150 were operational (Voroshilov 1999: 210). The experts explained that the politicization of the acting media was not only due to their dependence on political and economic sponsors who participated in the fight for power, but also to their extreme poverty in the means of subsistence:

All Russian newspapers await any elections with impatience because then the gold will rain down on the indigent press. Today such newspapers as: *Nevskoe Vremya*, *Chas Pik* one and another *Chas Pik*, *Vechernii Peterburg* do not pay salaries. The journalists work absolutely disinterestedly, earning additionally from hack-works, writing books and making adverts. Everybody hopes that somebody will buy somebody, but any newspaper demands huge investments. *Vechernii Peterburg* and *Smena* have already been burnt by this (Marina Goncharenko, deputy of editor-in-chief of the daily *Smena*, interview 1998).

In turn, the journalists testified that by producing commissioned materials during the election period, it was possible to earn money for a car, a flat and even a well-to-do existence for the year ahead. The majority tried to take advantage of these “hot days”. In the calm or between elections, life entered its normal course and then the media turned to the needs of the audience.

The city information market included periodicals; newspapers, magazines, newsletters; electronic media; tele-radio companies, radio programs, TV programs, video programs; information agencies (*Sredstva Massovoi Informatsii Sankt-Peterburga i Leningradskoi oblasti* 1999). Like the traditional information press, specialized newspapers took a more and more active role. Thus, in 1998, there were 128 different themes, among which advertising (31) and business & financial (12) were the most numerous. Among the city entrepreneurs, there were such authoritative newspapers as *Delovoi Peterburg* and *Delovoe obozrenie*. In the mass audience, tabloid weeklies *Peterburg Ekspres* and *Kaleidoskop* were much in demand. Free advertising newspapers such as *Astok-press*; *Privet, Peterburg*; *Utro Peterburga*; *Metro, Reklama-pluys, Ekstra-Balt* had been distributed near metro stations every day, whereas on Saturdays every family took from its post box the latest issue of the free advertising newspaper *Tsentr-pluys* (Voroshilov 1999: 50-51). The city market for magazines catered to various interests and tastes. Thematically it embraced 35 directions, from editions on anomaly phenomena (*Paranormalnyi Peterburg*) to national-cultural (*Ukraintsy i Peterburg*) and informational technologies (*Ves kompyutorny mir Sankt-Peterburga*).

The experts estimated St. Petersburg to be a city of high media saturation. There were 28 local TV programs, of those 25 non-state, as well as 31 local radio programs, of which only one was state run. Monthly, more than half a million copies of periodicals (577.5 thousand) were subscribed to. This was not a great deal, amounting to only 122 copies of newspapers or magazines per 1000 inhabitants. This figure was considerably below the average subscription index in the country. The experts explained the low level of subscription by the high subscription rate and the developed net of the retail trade. Thus, the average subscription rate was 27 rubles 83 kopecks, which exceeded the average subscription rate in Russia by a factor of 1.48 (*Public expertise* 2000: 677)<sup>2</sup>.

The standard of living determined the purchasing power of the population. In St. Petersburg, the living standard and housing conditions remained very low. In 1998, almost one third (27% of the population) had incomes less than the official living wage (*St. Petersburg in the 1990's*. December 2000: 7). According to the data of the city administration, two million (the city has 4.7 million inhabitants) received social benefits such as pensions, the family allowance, unemployment benefits and other social benefits (*Osnovnye itogi...* 2001: 40). In the experts' opinion, information saturation of the region occurred at the expense of TV and radio broadcasting (*Public expertise* 2000: 677).

One further reason why the city press was not in high demand among readers, as the experts argued in 1998, lay in its engagement and lack of high quality:

For the audience it is a problem to get information because the journalists mix news with comments and although there is Internet from which it is possible to take any information, it is not available for the majority, the majority of the population receives news mainly from the television. I am not a poor man, but for next half year I shall subscribe to not one St. Petersburg newspaper, there is nothing to read. The professional level is low, facts are interpreted freely, there is no division between fact and the appraisal of the journalist (Vladimir Gelman, researcher at the St. Petersburg European University, interview).

Information communication technologies were developing intensively in the city. Thus, regarding the bulk of services connected with Internet, St. Petersburg left behind all regions except Moscow (Zassoursky 2001: 228, 225). Fifty-four organizations provided access to the resources of the global net. The number of inhabitants who used Internet had reached 500 thousand. More than 1.5 million city-dwellers used the computer in everyday life. Of these, more than 30% had a personal computer at home. Specialists noted the rapid growth of cellular radio; at the end of 2000, nearly 350,000 used cellular radio services. Cable television was developing actively. For instance, the number of subscribers to the cable net reached 40 thousand in 2000 (*Osnovnye itogi* 2001: 14-15).

In summary, it can be noted that the St. Petersburg media market was dynamic, politicized, diverse and supersaturated. Its dynamics was caused firstly by the favorable political situation of the 1990s when the state (the center and the local authorities) did not command the forming media market; the development was going more over market laws according to supply and demand. The other matter was that the market was deviant and the political needs often formed demand, the media were permanently required as tools for propaganda by different political and business groups fighting for power. On the other hand, the splash of specialized editions, especially advertising and business press, testified to the healthy economic development of the city as a big industrial and cultural center. The intensive development of new communication technologies also testified in favor of this trend. The fact of the high media saturation predicted that the media sector would receive large investments from business, which in turn was interested in media as a public mass PR-machine for promoting goods and services. This also presupposed promoting pluralistic and varying information to the audience. The fact that a new edition could easily appear in the information market also showed that the market was not yet formed: The market was significantly amorphous and uncertain; the competition did not get development. The large amount of media created an opportunity for the full employment of journalists.

## Capitalization

By 1998, practically the whole city media sector was privatized: “90% of the newspapers of St. Petersburg were joint-stock companies” (Namsaraeva 1998: 12). In the data for 1999-2000, the share of private newspapers and magazines was 90.6%. The aggregate volume of printed copies of private newspapers and magazines was 15,348,732 copies a week, whereas the state newspapers and magazines had an aggregate volume of 1,584,665 copies a week. The aggregate capacity of private TV transmitters was 99.35 kilowatts, the aggregate capacity of the state and municipal TV transmitters was 50 kW. The whole share of private TV transmitters was 66%. In contrast, radio remained more in state than in private ownership. The share of private radio transmitters was only 25% and their aggregate capacity was 87.2 kW, whereas the aggregate capacity of the state and municipal radio transmitters was 260 kW (*Public expertise* 2000: 682, 24). The experts took the fact of the prevailing private media over state media as one of the basic indicators determining the market type of journalism development in the region. Among six other types identified by the experts, the market model was the most progressive pertaining to such major industrial regions as the Urals, Siberia, the center of Russia, Moscow and St. Petersburg, a total of twelve regions of the Russian Federation with 23% of the population (*ibid.*, 117).

Sampling of the news media for the study was done on the advice of the St. Petersburg experts at the end of 1999. The selection of the media was pursued to obtain various types, based on the following criteria: to cover the most influential city media; traditional (established in the Soviet era) and new (established in the post-Soviet era); print (dailies, weeklies) and electronic (radio and television); profit-making and non-profit-making; state and private; local media and Moscow branches.

In this way, the selected media included TRK *Peterburg* (Tele Radio Company) consisting of the 5th TV channel (the former Federal TV channel) and *Radio Peterburg*, the first independent FM Radio station *Baltika*, all three dailies: *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*, *Smena*, *Vechernii Peterburg*; the regional edition of the central daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, and the first city tabloid, weekly *Peterburg Express*. Below, Table 2 presents the media sample with the distribution and circulation of the media, type of media ownership and the media owners. The data on the circulation are provided by the handbook of 1999 (*Sredstva massovoi informatsii Sankt-Peterburga i Leningradskoi oblasti* 1999).

These eight leading news media represented different informational journalism in the city. Moreover, the given sampling of the media reflected the ongoing process of monopolization and concentration of the mass media in the hands of political and financial-industrial groups including foreign capital. Thus, five media (all traditional) out of eight belonged to the local authorities (the city and the regional governments and the city council); three media (new) had foreign investors as founders.

For the leading informational media based in the Soviet era, the transition to market relations became decidedly painful. Having been successful as state media, they showed their inability and insolvency as subjects of the market, although they persisted there with their former names largely owing to their cooperation with the local authority. The quotations from the interviews with the experts outline the picture of the state of these newspapers in 1998:

The traditional newspapers were on the brink of collapse: loss of the state financing, five to seven times drop in circulation, non-payment of salaries (Igor Sidorov, managing director of the St. Petersburg Union of Journalists).

**Table 2.** *Sampling of Media and Their Characteristics toward the End of 1999*

Type of Media	Distribution	Ownership	Shareholder
<b>TRK Peterburg</b> 5th TV Channel	St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region	state-private	51%: – the City (38%) and the regional governments (13%) 49% – private capital: <i>Promstroibank</i> – 17.5% <i>BaltOneksimbank</i> – 17.5% <i>Inkombank</i> – 14%
<b>TRK Peterburg</b> Radio Peterburg	St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region	state-private	the same shareholders
<b>Radio Baltika</b>	St. Petersburg, the Leningrad region and Karelia	private with foreign investment	Scandinavian corporation (headquarters in Sweden) St. Peterburg brewery <i>Baltika</i>
Daily <b>Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti</b> the former Leningradskaya Pravda, organ of the regional CPSU Committee	St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region Circulation over 145 000	state-private	the city government, ZAO <i>Gazeta Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti</i>
Daily <b>Smena</b> the former Smena, organ of the regional Komsomol Committee (Young Communist League)	St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region Circulation: 41 000	state- private	Zakonodatelnoe Sobranie <i>Sankt-Peterburga</i> (the city Parliament) ZAO <i>Smena</i>
Daily <b>Vechernii Peterburg</b> the former Vechernii Leningrad, organ of the city CPSU Committee	St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region Circulation is 20 000	state-private	the city government the banks: <i>Sankt-Peterburg, Oneksim</i>
the St. Petersburg edition of the central leading daily <b>Komsomolskaya Pravda</b>	St. Petersburg and North-western region in Russia Circulation is 40 000 on Fridays is 140 000	private	Oneksimbank Izdatelskii Dom Komsomolskaya Pravda
Weekly <b>Peterburg Express</b>	St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region Circulation is 50 000	private with foreign investment	<i>Izdatelskii Dom Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> the Norwegian concern <i>Apressen</i>

The total circulation of all five dailies is less than the circulation of one any of them before (Yuri Vdovin, deputy in chief of the St. Petersburg Public Human Rights Organization *Citizens' Control*).

Among five dailies none was thriving, of these *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*, the former *Leningradskaya Pravda* had the best position (Sergei Shelin, deputy of the daily *Vechernii Peterburg*).

Although *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* began to publish its color supplement in Helsinki the daily had to stop it a few months later because of the high cost



(Yuri Vdovin, deputy in chief of the St. Petersburg Public Human Rights Organization *Citizens' Control*).

In June 1998, five newspapers did not pay salaries to the journalists: *Smena*, *Nevskoe Vremya*, *Peterburgskii Chas Pik*, *Chas Pik* and *Vechernii Peterburg* (Marina Goncharenko, deputy editor-in-chief of the daily *Smena*).

The media chosen for the sample clearly illustrated the character of media privatization in St. Petersburg. One could discern three stages of the process of privatization. The *first stage* of “primary” privatization happened at the beginning of the 1990s. It was distinguished by getting legitimate “freemen” from the former organs of the CPSU and the Soviet structures: the President’s Decree on 6th November 1991 on the dissolution of the Communist Party, the Laws on the Mass Media (1990, 1991) and the Constitution (1993). The media really became free, and mainly the staff of editorial offices became founders of editions and started reforming their own structure, staff policy, content of outlets and other innovations. At that time, the first money earned from advertisements appeared in the editorial cashbox.

Thus, in the daily *Vechernii Peterburg* in March 1991, the month’s revenue from advertisements exceeded the profit of the whole previous year. The salaries of everyone working in the editorial office began to differ and were held secret from the others (Voroshilov 1999: 224, 272). In some media, for instance the daily *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*, the workforce retained for itself a controlling amount of the shares and divided the other part of the shares between the local authorities (the city administration – 25%) and bankers (the bank Rossia -20%) (Alexander Yurkov, deputy of the daily *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*, interview 1998). With the termination of state subsidies for the media and their own unskilled management, newspapers came to experience a severe lack of funds both for production and payment of salaries.

In the middle of the 1990s, the *second stage* of media privatization can be defined as “bankomania” when the media tried to attract financial capital, basically the banks, as they seemed the most solvent among other alternatives. The city newspapers were sold to the banks and for this received financial support. However, the new owners did not regard media as sources of economic profit, but rather as tools for political pressure in the elections. They did not invest capital in the media and did not develop them as enterprises. The editorial managers were hardly competent in media economy. In 1998, the managing director of the St. Petersburg Union of Journalists, Igor Sidorov, outlined the relations between the newspaper and its owner as follows:

A trivial story is when the bank bought the newspaper (as it was with *Astrobank*, which bought the daily *Smena* or the bank *Sankt-Peterburg*, which bought the daily *Vechernii Peterburg*); it gave the newspaper a lot of credit owing to which the newspaper lived peacefully for 1.5 to 2 years. When the money was gone the bank gave not one kopeck more. However, the newspaper continued to publish gradually getting into debt. When the debts achieved a huge size, the typical procedure was undertaken: the newspaper was declared bankrupt, publishing rights were passed to another juridical person and the newspaper began to publish in the name of the new juridical person. The standard situation when there are heaps of debts to the printing house, the state and others, but nobody can or will pay. The liquidation of a bankrupt firm is conducted with the liquidation of its debts. The last time such a procedure was undertaken was with the newspapers *Smena*, *Peterburgskii Chas Pik*, *Chas Pik*.



The *third stage* of “the new re-division” of media ownership or re-privatization can be noted at the end of the 1990s, when bankrupt media again had to seek new owners who could somehow pay the expenses for production and the salaries of the workers. Mainly, those who were solvent were the local authorities and major financial capital. Journalists were finally put out of media ownership, and they did not even know now who their new owners were. Thus, in July 1999, the daily *Vechernii Peterburg* was declared bankrupt, there were salary arrears for the last two years, the journalists got 500 rubles every month and they received nothing for their shares, which were sold to the new owners. In November 1999, the journalists did not know and were not even interested in who their new owners were. For them, the most important question was getting their unpaid salary and increasing their present salary. The average journalist’s salary was from 2 to 4 thousand rubles (50-100 US dollars). In the daily *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*, journalists were forced to sell their shares to the daily’s administration, and at the end of 1999 there were no journalists holding shares.

At that time, when the traditional media lived from hand to mouth and suffered from the loss of professional staff, the new gutter press arose, secured circulations and gained people’s sympathy. This quotation is from the interview of 1998 with Igor Sidorov, managing director of the St. Petersburg Union of Journalists:

It cannot be liked because it shocks the public. Here are wild headlines, terrible from the point of view of an intelligent man. But they publish, increase circulation, and pay salary to the journalists. In contrast to the traditional press, obsessed rather by messianic moods, these newspapers had an idea about journalism as independent business. They strove to seize a seller’s market, a consumer and an advertiser.

Among the most successful city editions there were the weeklies *Peterburg Express* and *Kaleidoscop*. Both were distributed mainly by retailers. *Peterburg Express* was started in 1994 by the central newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* as the first yellow newspaper in the city. After the concern *Kaleidoscop* emerged and “bloomed” in the form of 7-8 kinds of different tabloids with a joint circulation of over 4 -5 million, copies were delivered over the whole country. Interestingly, the audience of these editions comprised very different readers. Marina Goncharenko, deputy editor-in-chief of the daily *Smena* described it as follows:

The unprecedented blooming of the yellow editions of the concern *Kaleidoscop* emerged in the most intelligent city – Peterburg and went out to the national market. This weekly was a horror. When you enter the metro you see absolutely different people: those who have black fingernails – they did hard physical work; those who have manicured fingernails – they are sellers; you see the tired face of the teacher. And all of them in spite of social status and difference in education are reading *Kaleidoscop*.

As Igor Sidorov notes, “Everybody passing on the street and coming to the newspaper kiosk thinks what should I buy. And the majority buy *Kaleidoscop* and very few people buy *Izvestiya*. *Kaleidoscop* is the yellow newspaper of completely gutter content, 4 million copies in a week on beautiful glossy paper with wonderful photos”.

The choice in favor of entertaining editions obviously testified to the political indifference of the reader and his/her curiosity as an inhabitant – what happened and to whom? Elena Vartanova (2001: 135) considers readers’ and viewers’ priorities in favor of infotainment to be an essential factor in the pressure of the audience on advertisers

and producers who have to take into account new tastes and demands. In the St. Petersburg market, the Moscow editions were in high demand. Once a week they published the Petersburg pages in their outlets and this became the best selling form – combining central and local news. The most popular newspapers were *Argumenty i Fakty*, *Novaya gazeta*, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. The Moscow capital, mainly bank capital using the language of compromises with the local authority and observing certain rules of play, was actively promoted in the media market. The journalists from the new media invested in by Western and Moscow capital confirmed that the local authority was beyond the reach of their criticism.

The expansion of Moscow was going on in the television air. Thus, the Moscow channels *TV6*, *TV Tsentr*, *11th channel* successfully competed with the local programs. As Alexander Yurkov, deputy of the daily *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*, noted in 1998:

Today all the press has been brought to its knees economically, the main media have been bought up, privatized either formally or through allotment of shares. In St. Petersburg I know who feeds every newspaper. I am a member of the commission on the licenses for all media, we note that today Moscow channels increasingly seize television, the local entrepreneurs are not in a position to make transmission for 10-20 hours. Our 5th channel is in a critical state. The situation is such that the media become more dependent ... here censure is sharper, here public interests all disappear.

After 59 years of broadcasting with the status of the third national program of television, *the St. Petersburg- 5th channel* was equated with other regional television studios and its frequency was given to the new channel *Kultura* financed by the state budget according to the President's decree of 1.1.1997 (*Media in CIS* 1999: 228-229). Before the loss of the national status of television, in the city an attempt was made to turn the *5th channel* into true public television for all Russia by establishing the monitoring council, but these efforts turned out to be unsuccessful. Yuri Vdovin, deputy in chief of the St. Petersburg Public Human Rights Organization *Citizens' Control*, remembered this in 1998 as follows:

The idea did not find support anywhere either in the centre – Federal Service of TV and Radio Broadcasting (FSTVRB), the Duma, the Union of Journalists, or at home: the local executive and legislative authorities, the Union of Journalists, the administration of the 5th channel.

In August 1998, St. Petersburg television and radio were privatized and given the new name *TRK Peterburg* (Voroshilov 1999: 56, 218). The owners of the company were now the city and regional (*oblastnoe*) governments (51% shares) and private capital (49%): *Promstroibank*, *BaltOnaksimBank*, *Inkombank*, some of the shares remained for sale. After privatization, the number of employees in the company was reduced by a factor of 6: radically, out of 2500 employees, only 750 were invited to continue their work. On radio, out of 650 only 108 workers were engaged, of them, 40 journalists. None of the journalists participated in buying the shares of the company.

The city administration as a whole owned an insignificant part of the shares in the media sector, approximately only 8-10% of all media. However, it held a controlling amount of the shares of the main city TV channel (*the 5th channel*) and main radio broadcaster *Peterburg* together with the regional government, and it also held 25% of the shares of the main daily *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*. The daily possessed exclu-

sive rights to publish the city government's decrees and other important decisions concerning city affairs. The regional authorities (the regional government and municipal administrations) owned 60% of the shares in 180 newspapers of the Leningrad region. The district administrations of St. Petersburg have 70 of their newspapers (Yuri Tretyakov, vice chief of the committee for the mass media and the public relations of the City Administration of St. Petersburg, interview 2001).

The local experts argued that, by the middle of 1998, practically all the city media had been privatized in such a way that the local authorities mainly had no control except the ability to block allotment of shares. The governor had the option to influence the whole media sector to such an extent that no newspaper, not even the free ones, dared to criticize him. The interviews with respondents confirmed this, as in one excerpt from an experienced journalist working in the city press:

The newspaper cannot exist out of the society just like a man out of power in this country. If the newspaper has foreign owners it does not want to damage its relationship with the city authority. For instance, the newspaper *St. Petersburg Times* or our newspaper never seeks any quarrel with the governor. Where is independence here? One time I came and proposed material about Yakovlev, the governor. I said that I do not like this, I want to write about this. I came to the *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, it is the Moscow franchising type of newspaper that has some independence from the city. This is self-censorship of the editors who want to keep afloat. If they do not do this, the newspaper will not come out.

The sample of the leading informational media in St. Petersburg clearly showed the focus of participation of the local authority in media privatization. The city experts characterized St. Petersburg at the end of the 1990s as a semi-provincial city with limited finance, a narrow market for advertisements, low purchasing power of the population, and the lost national TV channel (*the 5th channel* came to be regional). Summarizing the peculiarities of capitalization in the media sector, one should emphasize that mainly the leading informational media were noted by the authority as valuable objects for privatization. That is, news had been formerly perceived rather in a political than an apolitical context. Vladimir Gelman, researcher at the St. Petersburg European University, argued in 1998 that:

Although it is not obvious that the media influenced the audience, nevertheless different financial-industrial groups struggled to control the media in the hope of political dividends in the next parliamentary, presidential, or governor's elections. The successful experience of the past presidential campaign of 1996 convinced them that the mass media can be effectively used as a tool in the indoctrination of the population. Between the elections and just before them the media were used as instruments of information wars. The fight for power between different political groups with the help of the media provided a plurality of information to the public that did not at all mean it was objective.

### **Journalists in the Labor Market**

The question 'how many journalists work in St. Petersburg' stumped the local experts in Smolnyi in the committee of the mass media of the city administration, in the North-Western Direction of the State Committee of Russian Federation on the mass media, in the St. Petersburg Union of Journalists, in the Faculty of Journalism of the State University. Everyone argued that nobody had ever counted how many journalists work in

the city. In the words of Vladilen Kuzin, lecturer at the St. Petersburg State University (interview 2001), in the Soviet era there was some card-index on the working journalists in the regional party committee, but it was not complete and now it is difficult to say whether it was kept or not.

In the words of Vsevolod Bogdanov, chair of the Russian Union of Journalists, the number of Union members is 100,000 from 80 regions of Russia (Bogdanov 2001: 63). Kuzin mentioned the same number, 100,000, regarding all media workers in the Russian mass media (Kuzin 1998: 69).

The St. Petersburg experts preferred to refer to the number of members of the St. Petersburg Union of Journalists. Thus, Yuri Tretyakov, vice chief of the committee for mass media and public relations of the City Administration of St. Petersburg (interview 2001), said about 2100 members. Elena Sharkova, vice chief of the St. Petersburg Union of Journalists (2001), mentioned about 2300 members, of which 1000 working journalists of pension age and 500 retired journalists not working, but continuing as members of the Union. The number of young journalists under 30 is insignificant. In her words, in the city there are practically no unemployed journalists, there are many editions on the market that are in need of staff.

In order to define the characteristics of the journalist population in the city, I conducted an expert inquiry among the representatives of the organizations mentioned and some heads of the city media. The chosen experts had solid experience of St. Petersburg journalism (11-45 years) and vast networks in the media sphere. Seven questions were formulated in the questionnaire and eleven experts were interviewed in April 2001. The results were obtained by statistical measurement of the average score in distribution. According to the results of the inquiry, there were fewer than five thousand journalists employed on a full-time basis in the city. Among them more than half were females. Among female journalists, more than one third were under 30 years, over one third were from 31 to 45 years, over one fifth were from 46 to 55 years females and one tenth were females over 55 years. Among male journalists more than one third were under 30 years, one fourth were from 31 to 45 years, one fifth were from 46 to 60 years and a few were over 60 years. More than half of the working journalists had a professional education, among the young generation half of journalists had a professional education.

The experts were asked to compare the journalist population in St. Petersburg in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras with respect to gender, age and education. According their judgment, in the Soviet era there were fewer female journalists than male journalists; the number of young journalists was proportionate to old journalists; several times more journalists had professional education than had not. In the past decade, many females have come into journalism and the proportion between females and males turned in favor of females; young journalists under 30 years were almost as numerous as old journalists; the journalists with professional education accounted for more than half.

Admitting the relativity of the results obtained from the expert inquiry (in the city there was no database of the journalists' population), one should note that the inquiry shows the same qualitative changes in the structure of the journalist population in the city that was found in domestic studies on the national population of journalists. Thus, this expert inquiry revealed that in the past decade, St. Petersburg journalism became more feminized, younger and less professionally educated. According to data from sociological studies conducted in the 1990s by Moscow State University, "the profession is gradually feminizing", "is becoming younger" and at the same time suffers from "lowering of the level of professionalism, which depends directly on level, type and quality of education" (Svitich 2000: 182, 190).

The abolition of state regulation of the media sphere set in motion the journalist labor market: It became an open, alternative, self-regulative field. As the managing director of the St. Petersburg Union of Journalists said:

The conditions changed very much. In order to earn one should alternate between three-four newspapers, to write continuously, even then it is possible that you will not be paid or suffer delays.

The experts emphasized the difference in the working conditions between journalists in the center, St. Petersburg and the provinces. Thus, in the words of deputy Sergey Shelin of the daily *Vechernii Peterburg*:

In Moscow a journalist has good conditions, in the provinces he has bad conditions, in St. Petersburg he has bad conditions. However, the level of salaries of the St. Petersburg journalists is higher than an average salary. The salaries are earned differently: the work is done for several editions at once. That is not a sign of professionalism but a sign of unhealthy development of the city's market. As in Moscow to get money in one place it is not possible for subsistence. It is no secret that a significant part of journalists are corrupt on the personal level, they produce commissioned materials advertising commercial undertakings.

The interviews with journalists confirmed that practically everybody produced commissioned materials for the sake of money; every third respondent had a second job in other media or in the PR sections of commercial organizations. The average salary of city journalists was 2000-4000 rubles (50-100 US dollars). This amount was not enough for living in St. Petersburg. In the words of Alexander Yurkov, deputy of the daily *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* (interview 1998): "The main problems became the corruption of the journalist community and the lack of professionals on the editorial staff". Concerning corruption, the study examined the journalists' perceptions of how it is possible to correlate professionalism and corruption in the journalist's profession, which essentially is destined for public interests, not private ones. The journalists practically unanimously justified corruption in professional practice and society. As one respondent argued: "If you live in such conditions where everything from top to bottom is penetrated by corruption then it is, naturally, a question of living in poverty or living normally – a matter of survival".

The journalists resorted to those rules that corresponded to the policy and culture of their concrete media. One of the experts noted that: "Nobody can say that gentleman Minkin [the famous scandal journalist] is a pariah among journalists. For some he is a pariah, for others he is a noteworthy journalist". The Code of Ethics adopted by the Congress of Journalists in 1994 was little known among the city journalists; the editorial offices did not introduce it in their normative documents. Both the experts and the journalists were full of skepticism concerning professional organizing. On the one hand, they criticized the present St. Petersburg Union of Journalists for its inability to help, for instance, there was a sad case involving getting a 'defense card' for the journalists. Many talks were held there, but with no result. They also recalled that the Union did not help in other difficult situations, for instance when the press journalists were on strike and television journalists of the *5th channel* were subjected to a militia search (*obysk*) in their workplace. On the other hand, the professional environment had little interest in the other associations such as the Glasnost Defense Fund. Below is an excerpt from an interview with a journalist from the daily *Vechernii Peterburg*:

The thought that some fund will feed me or defend my rights calls up a smile. We are very far from that in order that the real strength would be ready to consolidate some rules of conduct, some ethics, defense among the journalists. I am a member of the Union of Journalists, a member of the Union of Political Journalists. The Union of Journalists is a place for events, to sit in a restaurant; the other unions are clubs for interests where we communicate, but we are far from defending each other.

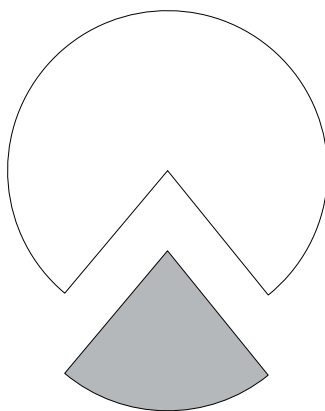
## Conclusion

St. Petersburg journalism of the 1990s experienced a qualitative transformation, passing from the Soviet, state model to the market model of development. The dynamic growth of the markets of media, advertisement and labor resources created premises for its economic independence from the local authority. Here more than 90% of media were non-state, which meant they could not be managed directly by officials. In the common media budget, the ratio of state to advertising money of 22:77 indicated that the development of the media sector was proceeding in the manner of business enterprises. Below, the picture represents the city media budget in 2000 (Public expertise 2000: 677).

In turn, this presupposed the transformation of the journalist's product from one of ideological to one of factological contents, when information like any other goods is destined for the satisfaction of consumer demand. The narrow profile of various editions and programs sought their target audience and in this way covered a wide circle of interests and tastes. The development of information and communication technologies (computer, cable and satellite TV, video, short-wave broadcasting, mobile telephone connection, Internet) broadened the media infrastructure and correspondingly their potential in the delivery of informational and advertising services. Journalists could work as freelancers avoiding "serfdom" dependence on the staff position.

### Structure of City Media Budget

Advertising Money 78,34%



State Subsidies 21,66%

Source: Public Expertise 2000.

On the other hand, the specifics appeared in that, in Russia as a whole and in the region in particular, the political situation was not stable and quite personalized. It depended much on who was in power. In the 1990s, St. Petersburg had three different leaders re-



sponsible for the development of the city: B. Gidasov (1990-1991), A. Sobchak (1991-1996) and V. Yakovlev (1996 -2003). The data for the study gathered in 1998-2001 reflect that concrete temporal situation when the administrative resources completely belonged to the governor. His indisputable influence, often mediated, spread to the majority of media independent of the form of ownership and the owner. Although in 1999 and 2000 the city occupied the second place in Russia after Moscow concerning the level of freedom of mass information (the corresponding indices were 50.5% and 50.2%), the experts put the city into the group of the semi-closed regions, which were in the majority in Russia (44). In these regions, access to information was often closed for journalists (*Public expertise* 2000: 14-17). The character of media conflicts revealed that the authorities had little respect for journalists, the most numerous infringements being connected with searching and receiving information, accreditation, interference in professional activity, obstructing the journalist's work. Nevertheless, the authorities did not forget to participate in the privatization of the basic news media and to make their presence felt with the founders of the other media. That is, viewing the media as a political tool and journalists as propagandists remained the principle.

The official salary of journalists remained very modest, but the majority had additional sources of income such as a second job and paid commissions (hidden advertisement, black PR, commissioned articles). Between the official salary of the staff job and additional income in the second job, there was a huge difference amounting to, for instance, 500 to 4500 rubles (12 to 112 US dollars), in the case of one of the respondents. Likewise the approach to the basic job was often to treat it as hackwork. The competition had not yet appeared between journalists, and opportunities for earning were ample. Corruption was condoned as a social and professional norm. The requirement for uniting and self-regulation did not mature, the professional community was atomized and everybody was busy with his/her own problems of survival. For the journalists, the audience remained little known, perceived rather as an electorate (during political campaigns) and a mass thirsting for spectacles (everyday life). The division of labor among journalists was between: propaganda making (elections of different levels practically annually) in the serious editions and entertaining in mass programs and print. Both functions were self-sufficient and did not strive for objectivity as a basis for the journalist's approach.

It can be said that St. Petersburg journalism reflected the hidden conflict between economic and technological innovations of the media sphere, on the one hand, and the former Soviet stereotypes and behavior models of the authority and professionals, on the other. Moreover, both political (traditional) and apolitical (new) journalism successfully worked with the authorities, who predicted journalists' lack of concern about truly informing citizens and making an effort toward the development of an open society. It revealed that the tradition of Soviet (state) journalism (in the sense that media serves the needs of the authorities, not a public) remained immutable.

However, the transformation of Russian society and media is not over, and it is very interesting to study what is still to come. Attempts to estimate the transformation at the end of the 1980-1990s as well the first term of the presidency of Vladimir Putin continue to be undertaken both in the West and Russia. After the successful re-election of Vladimir Putin for a second presidential term in March 2004, it was no accident there at once emerged a question about who will follow in 2008. The present Constitution (1993) restricts the ruling of the same person to two terms. Putin's reforms over the increasing role of the State led to sterilization of the political field: "the political communication was cut down" (Genisaretsky 2004: 18); the Parliament is a "chimera" for which there is no difference between communists and liberals (Naishul 2004: 13). In the



opinion of sociologist Simon Kordonsky (2004: 7), in Russia there is no society in the traditional political science sense: There is a society that has been created by the State (by different structures of the state apparatus). Those organizations representing the civil society exist as a rule by means of foreign money, but once “a flow of money from abroad stops, an activity of these organization stops at once. They are artificial”.

Some Russian scholars argue that Russia is suited “in Hobbes’s structure where rights are made over to the State and are developed by the State” whereas in the Western democracies there is Locke’s structure of the social contract when the State is enlisted as an agent for the ensuring of those rights about which the people and different groups of the population agreed (Auzan 2004: 21). In the given situation, the economist Vitaly Naishul (2004: 13) proposes to us, researchers, to pay more attention to what will ripen outside the center of power, “beyond what Putin does”.

## Notes

1. The study was presented as a Licentiate thesis in 2002 in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Tampere (Juskevits 2002). In 2003, the author adopted her mother’s surname, Pasti, and this article is published under the author’s new surname.
2. The project Public Expertise: Anatomy of freedom of speech directed by the Union of Journalists of Russia was developed by a number of public organizations including Glasnost Defense Fund, the Media Law and Policy Center of School of Journalism MSU and Internews Europe in Russia.

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**Return to media serving the State: Journalists in Karelia**

In Harri Melin (ed):

*Social Structure, Public Space and Civil Society*

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Svetlana Pasti

## Return to Media Serving the State: Journalists in Karelia

“For me Karelian journalism has been seen as a pioneer vanguard moving with the *rechevka* [the political recitative of the Soviet pioneers] under the drum beat in one direction”

From an interview with the respondent

### Introduction

The universal formula of all modern societies includes, as Johan Galtung states, three pillars: the State, Capital and Civil Society. He argues that the relationship among them can define the nature of the society. According to Galtung (1999, 21): “the essence of democracy is transparent dialogue as a prologue to decisions for social transformation”. The task of media as a vehicle of communication, being somewhere between these three pillars, is to arrange such a transparent dialogue in the society. To fulfill its function, the media must become strong and independent; in this case “they could, according to Galtung, assume the status of a fourth pillar in the social power structure” (Nordenstreng 1997, 18).

This chapter investigates the position of media and journalists in Karelia with an aim to shed light on the relationship between Media and the State. A key interest is in change in the Russian media, particularly its effort to move away from the Soviet model (the State tool of propaganda) toward the Western model (the medium of communication between the State, Capital and Civil Society). The analysis moves from the macro level (the Republic) to the micro level (Priazha, an agricultural area; Kondopoga, an industrial center and Petrozavodsk, the capital). The empirical material gathered in spring 2002 includes thirty in-depth interviews with working journalists and eight thematic interviews with heads of the particular media selected (press, radio and television). In addition, in spring 2003 five expert interviews were conducted with heads of the Union of the Journalists

of Karelia, the press service of the Head of the Republic, and the Ministry of Press, Informatization and Public Relations (henceforth in the text – the Ministry of Press). The term ‘informatization’ comes from the Law of the Russian Federation “About Information, Informatization and Defense of Information” adopted by the State Duma 25.1.1995:

Informatization is organized social-economic and scientific-technical process of the creation of optimal conditions for the satisfaction of informational needs and realization of rights of citizens, the organs of the state power, the organs of municipalities, organizations, NGOs on the basis of the formation and use of informational resources (The Federal Law of R.F. 1995)

## Media

Every locality (the Republic consisted of nineteen localities) had on average over five media, including two to three papers, a local radio station and a cable television station. The exception was the Vepsian volost, which still did not have its own media. The capital Petrozavodsk had three TV channels, comprising one state (*GTRK Karelia*) and two private ones (*Nika* and *Petronet*); three FM radio stations: *Russkoe radio*, *Evropa plyus*, *Melodiia*, and the wired radio *Karelia*, a part of the state tele-radio company *GTRK Karelia*. In the press market there were about 30 newspapers (The Press of the Republic of Karelia 2003) among which *Kurier Karelii*, *Karelia*, *TVR-Panorama* and *Guberniia* had the highest rating (Raev, interview 2003).

Practically all-local (*raionnye*) papers had been transformed into weeklies (a cheaper production) and had the highest subscription rates. Thus, 60% of the local readers subscribed to these newspapers and only 15% of those subscribed to the central press. The total output of the local newspapers amounted to about two million copies annually (Meshkov, interview 2003). The developed localities had additionally the factory press (*Avangard* in Kondopoga), the commercial press (*Kommercheskii Vestnik* in Kostomuksha) and the free advertising press delivered to the postal boxes, for instance *Medved'* (with a circulation of 85 thousand of copies) and *Desiatyi Region*.

The media market remained in a state of flux that was caused both by political reasons (the elections held practically annually) and economic ones (unprofitable media budgets). According to expert information (Raev 2003), approximately three thousand media were registered in Karelia; however, many had already stopped existing by the spring of 2003. Continually ongoing elections on different levels did not manage without the press specially established under those or the other political candidates. Thus, the Federal Ministry of Press, Television and



Mass Communication Media established a fact that in all parts of Russia the media have been founded for deciding concrete political tasks (Pulya 2003). Karelia was no exception. For instance, in Petrozavodsk such papers as *Gorod*, *Stolitsa Karelii*, *Pensionnyi Kurier Karelii* and *Nabliudatel* were founded under concrete candidates and lobbied them explicitly or implicitly during the last election of 2002, then soon after the elections stopped their output. As a rule, such projects having implicitly political ends existed from half a year to two-three years and then vanished.

At the same time, economically untwisted editions representing the gutter press from the centre occupied free niches the moment they became available, which happened, for example, after elections. They tried to attract an audience by combining central and local news. Among newcomers, there were the papers *Moskovskii Komsomolets* and *Zhizn*. Meanwhile, the local entrepreneurs experienced in the paper (political) business tried to remain in the market and opened new editions. Thus, a tradesman financing an oppositional weekly *Guberniia*<sup>1</sup> registered a new paper *Pensionnyi Vestnik Karelii* immediately following the elections (before he published *Pensionnyi Kurier Karelii*). The papers of such a type furthered forming a positive image of the entrepreneur having ambitions to come into power.

Among the papers registered, at least fifty were operational. The total circulation of one output of all papers was 363,000 copies (Katanandov 2003, 10). In the opinion of Public Expertise<sup>2</sup> (2000, 191) the Republic of Karelia had a middle level of media saturation. However, the experts as well as the journalists considered that the media market was supersaturated and it was difficult to launch something new, except for free narrowly targeted editions such as, for instance, a car newspaper for distribution in the petrol stations or an advertising paper for home building and repair shops, which were becoming increasingly popular among the population, or a social paper for the indigent strata. The politicians predicted a long existence for little-politicized papers and tabloids such as *TVR-Panorama*, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Argumenty i Fakty*,

<sup>1</sup> In October 2003 the paper had to change its name to *Karelskaia Guberniia* after as the Republican Arbitration Court made a decision about depriving the paper of its name *Guberniia*, in this way supporting the suit by Niznii Novgorod's information agency *Guberniia* that accused the paper *Guberniia* of borrowing the trade mark. However, in the opinion of the journalists it was one of the attempts to exert power pressure on the independent paper, the oppositional one to the government. In the other regions of Russia (Saratov, Cheliabinsk, Ekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Vladimir, Arkhangelsk) press and electronic media with the same name *Guberniia* have been issued (Tsygankov 2003)

<sup>2</sup> The project Public expertise: *Anatomia svobody slova* directed by the Union of Journalists of Russia was developed by a number of public organizations including Glasnost Defence Fund, the Media Law and Policy Centre of the School of Journalism MSU and Internews Europe in Russia.



and *Speed Info* (Meshkov and Zotochkin, interviews 2003). This chapter pays attention rather to the analysis of the press than television and radio, because the latter clearly operated as the mouthpiece of the government, whereas the press showed an example of opposition.

## Journalists

Nobody has thus far calculated how many journalists have worked in Karelia. Before in the Soviet era there was no need. The Karelian branch of the Union of Journalists of the USSR had its card index of all members, whereas for the ideological and organizational jobs the authorities used professionals, i.e. the members of the Union of Journalists. Today there are about 400 journalists or a little bit more in Karelia; of those 200 people belong to the Union of Journalists of Karelia (Meshkova, interview 2002). The ministry's official referred to about 2500 journalists in the Republic, but that seems exaggerated (Meshkov 2003). In the Soviet period, there were about 300 members (Romanov 2002, 1). During the last decade, the journalistic community has undergone qualitative changes. On the one hand, a loss of experienced and specially educated professionals occurred – many of them went away to business and to PR service. On the other hand, the number of dilettantes coming from outside the journalistic sphere increased. The practitioners shared an opinion that the shift of professionals to public relations work is a positive factor for journalism in the sense that those knowing the journalistic work from within better meet the needs of the present journalists in getting information, access to enterprises, arranging contacts with the heads of firms and so on. In addition, the PR personnel (the former journalists) involve the present journalists in different seminars and training courses organized for the PR workers. Such co-education develops their good personal relations that help in the work.

The minority language media such as the paper *Karjalan Sanomat* and the section of the Finnish broadcasting of the *GTRK Karelia* faced a more difficult situation because of the immigration of tens of experienced journalists to Finland in the 1990s. It resulted in a loss of professional staff and correspondingly in the audience, while the Petrozavodsk University graduates were not able adequately to replace the immigrated journalists since for many of them the Finnish language was not their mother tongue but was mastered during their studies (Eremeev, interview 2002).

The old generation represented rather the standardized professionals with the background of the Soviet school of education and practice and membership in the Union of Journalists. The new generation had been shaped differently: gradu-

ates of the Petrozavodsk State University and the State Pedagogical University, specialists of humanitarian and technical profiles. The media sought workers by means of its announcements about vacancies in the staff and, in principle anybody who passed an interview in the editorial office became a journalist. The strong motivations for coming to journalism were discontent with former jobs, an interest in self-fulfillment, an interest in such a creative public job and opportunities to earn income both within and outside journalism.

For many journalists having a second job became the norm because their basic income was not enough for making a living and in some media delays of payment took place. For instance, in the spring of 2002 in the daily *Kurier Karelii* the delays in paying honoraria were about two years; the tele-company *Nika* also had delays in paying wages. The average journalistic wage varied from 5000 to 9000 rubles a month depending on the media (Meshkov 2003). Thus, in the republican government's paper *Karelia* the average wage was 5000–8000 rubles (about 165–300 euros), whereas in the daily *Kurier Karelii* and in the state *GTRK Karelia* it amounted on average to 4000 rubles (130 euros). In the local press the wage varied from 3000 to 4000 rubles, whereas the Kondopoga paper mill paid the journalists 7000 rubles. At the end of October 2002 the per capita income per month in Karelia was 3 808 rubles (Katanandov 2003, 88).

In Petrozavodsk many journalists had a second job, whereas in smaller towns their colleagues did not gravitate to it, complaining about the everyday workload, the shortage of time, tiredness from the basic job and the need to do housework (the overwhelming majority of those were females). In Petrozavodsk the journalists combined journalism with completely different activities. They were teachers – privately and officially, developed their own business, rented out housing, sold spare parts, wrote brochures on order, wrote advertisements and books for enterprises and organizations, and articles for other media. During elections, the professionals wrote political articles for opposing candidates. They were in high demand for this well-paid job both in Petrozavodsk and in the periphery and even outside of the Republic, whereas the Moscow and the St. Petersburg journalists arrived in Karelia to work in the elections. Usually the journalists took leave from their regular jobs to devote themselves only to the political order or combined routine duties in the editorial office and the political order of their clients. As a rule, working in “Black PR” or doing *dzhinsa* (jeans) as Russian journalists say (articles written to order and often paid under the table) and also juggling the facts, committing defamation and so on, the journalists published their texts under pseudonyms.



## State

At the end of July 2002, immediately after the elections, a new Ministry of Press, Informatization and PR had been established for the realization of the state policy in the information market. In its activities, it operated in close co-operation with the Federal Ministry of Press, Television, and Mass Communications Media. The republican government increasingly showed concern for the media sphere. Together with the Parliament (*Zakonodatelnoe Sobranie*), it had its official organ, the paper *Karelia*. It financed a literary-political journal *Sever* (The North) distributed in the Northwest, whereas the Vologda regional government partly helped in the subscription. Four papers: *Karjalan Sanomat*, *Vienan Karjala*, *Oma Mua*, *Kodima* as well as the children's magazine *Kipinä* published in the national languages (Finnish, Veps and Karelian) due to the state financing of print and editorial needs. The paper *Litsei* was produced at the expense of the Ministries of Culture and Education & Youth Activities.

The government and the Petrozavodsk city administration were the main shareholders of the publishing house *Petropress*, putting out the papers *Petrozavodsk* and *TVR-Panorama*. Whereas *Petrozavodsk* was in a dire economic state, *TVR-Panorama* was profitable, with the biggest circulation in the Republic – 60,000 copies, or approximately one copy per 15 inhabitants of Karelia (Meshkov 2003). The government kept the unprofitable *Petrozavodsk*, paying for its losses at the expense of the profits of *TVR-Panorama*. The printing base remained in the state property, including nineteen enterprises – the legacy of the Soviet system providing every local paper with its printing house. In addition in Petrozavodsk there were three state publishing houses: *Alfa*, *Periodika* and *Karelia* as well as the oldest state printing house *Anokhina* in the Northwest of Russia (from 1805). A few private printing houses emerged in Petrozavodsk, Priazha and Suojärvi for printing the blank production (*ibid.*).

During the last five years, the production of the local press has completely changed. The Federal Centre had equipped everyone with a computer editorial-printing complex. It provided an opportunity to choose where better and cheaper to print a paper – in the private or the state printing houses, in Karelia or in the Leningrad region. In practice however, it was often an alternative-free choice for editors of unprofitable papers having debts for printing in the state enterprise but continuing to put out their papers on credit. As a rule, a governmental official issued a special instruction to the state printing house to continue to publish for a debtor.

According to the 1995 “Law on the economic support to the local (city) papers”, only one paper in the locality could be brought into the federal register to get state financing. As a rule, those papers established in the Soviet time had this support coming from three sources: the Federal Centre, the Republic (region) and

the municipality. A crucial change took place with the new Tax Code in 2002. According to the Code, the republican government could no longer finance the enterprises that were not republican property, that is, those that were federal or municipal property. In order to continue financing the local papers (the majority were municipal enterprises), the republican government began to transfer the subsidies for the press to the municipal budgets whereupon the municipalities turned out to be the main holders of the papers' money and began to influence the editorial policy more. Recently all local papers applied to the republican government with a request to become their founder and a process of re-founding the papers started. In the list of the founders of the local papers the following appeared: the publishing house *Kareliia* (the republican government), the municipalities; in half of the local papers the editorial workforce still remained the co-founder.

The government and the PR section of the Head of the Republic energetically collaborated with the media. Thus, the Ministry of Press organized seminars for the editors with invitations to different specialists and from time to time took on the role of an arbitrator in the conflicts flaring up between the editorial offices and the municipalities. The PR section of the Head of the Republic sent by e-mail to the editorial offices a weekly media plan of events and meetings forthcoming in Karelia, and organized press conferences and briefings every week. There were 76 accredited journalists plus the editors of the local papers, in all about 100 persons. The governmental server <http://www.gov.karelia.ru> was one of the basic informational sources for journalists.

Equally, along with informing journalists, the PR section cared about their education and finances; for instance, the journalists' participation in the training courses. It was essential support for the editorial offices, the majority of which did not have any means for educating their staff. Recently the PR section of the Head of the Republic and then the Ministries introduced a new form of work with the media, inviting the journalists to its trips and paying all expenses whereas a journalist's task was to gather information at the place and to prepare publications.

In fact, the state returned to its patronage of the media when it began solicitously to subsidize and to modernize the media, to supply it with free newsprint (the all-local press), to become its co-founder and defender in the conflicts with local authorities, to pay for working trips and the training of journalists. As before, the familiar system of regular seminars and meetings of the government with the editors has been restored. The friendly relations with the private media the government establishes on a barter basis. In particular, the political loyalty and the support given by private media for the government is in exchange for privileges of rent, access to information, and the opportunity for quiet work without often experiencing 'terrible' inspections, such as by fire, tax or civil defence officials and others who can cause unexpected problems for the media.



## The Priazha Case

The Priazha locality had been established in 1929, its borders had been completely designed in 1930 (Zhukov 2000, 1). A year later in 1931 there appeared a local paper *Nasha zhizn'* (*Our life*) representing a new type of Soviet press (*raionnaia gazeta*): "in 1928 there were 46 such papers, in 1929–309 papers, in 1932–2 304 papers" (Bogdanov and Viazemskii 1971, 67–68).

Till now the relations of the paper and the authorities have changed little. The municipality is its single founder, tenant and censor. It gives the rent for the editorial office in its building, pays the wages of the journalists, and decides the professional issues (content, work trips). Every week the editor is present in the meetings (*planerki*) of the head of the municipality, as are the other heads of the departments. Until 1996, the municipality kept both the paper and radio, but then because of a lack of budget resources it remained the only paper serving as rather important media:

There is no other way to get information; it is only through the paper. Now everything is so expensive, people are in no position to come here to get some document. From where can they learn what is going on in the locality, and about the people and about the authorities (R.3).

The journalistic reportages mainly brought for the positive information about the workforce and officials; the Priazha locality included thirteen settlements with its administrations subordinated to the Priazha municipality. Some journalists said: Well, in general, to become keen on negative reporting does not turn out well for us because it is the local paper. We, so to say, are connected with the population, with the pressure and with those who provide information, there with the heads of the organizations, with the head of the municipality. That is, we have such semi-truth in the work, the acceptable one for all. Here everybody knows the heart of the matter, but you go on the level of the semi-truth (R.2).

The other truth arose from an oppositional press emerging in the pre-election time. Thus, during the last municipal elections of 2002 a new paper *Vybor* (*The Choice*) appeared for agitating its group "Independent electors of the Priazha locality". Soon the new paper got a notification of legal action by the local prosecutor for its publications due to a complaint by the head of the municipality. The head of the municipality had brought nine statements of claim to the paper about the defence of his honour, dignity and business reputation to the local court. After six issues the paper *Vybor* stopped its output. In the journalists' words, the paper published true information although it used incorrect language.

Probably, the oppositional *Vybor* had some effect on the outcome of the election because the head had not been elected for the second term although both the

administrative and the media resources were used in his favour and he had the support of the republic government. In those elections, the Priazha voters had an opportunity to make their decisions based on plural sources of information and it is one of the prominent tokens of the post-Soviet period. On the other hand, the oppositional press in fact differed little from the official press being established for political ends in the interests of a narrow economic group. That is, the Soviet approach to media, as a tool of policy, and to journalists as propagandists, remained inherent in the thinking of present politicians and capitalists.

In the Soviet era the paper *Nasha zhizn'* had a circulation of 5000 copies, in 1996 400 copies, in May of 2002 3200 copies, of which 1700 copies were under subscription (Bogdanova, interview 2002). The growth of circulation was a well-grounded point of pride of the journalists and a result of their successive efforts in advertising the paper, attracting new non-staff authors, and the considered organization of retail in the shops as well the cheaper subscription in the editorial office. A subscriber avoided postal expenses, receiving the paper in the editorial office weekly. In the spring of 2002 the price of the editorial subscription for a half year was 60 rubles (about 2 euros) whereas in the post office it was 84 rubles, in retail outlets the paper cost 3 rubles. Additionally the journalists established their delivery network of the paper in the remote settlements. Roughly speaking, the paper reached one-sixth of the inhabitants. The Priazha locality amounted to 18 900 inhabitants (Priazha 2003); in Priazha there were 4 300 (Shcherbakov, interview 2002). However, the paper had many more readers than only subscribers and buyers, including their families, relatives, neighbours, friends and work-mates. In Priazha one-fourth of the residents subscribed to the paper (Bogdanova 2002).

As before, readers wrote letters to the paper, comprising mostly birthday congratulations for loved ones, stories about a good person, or their poems and essays. Among the headlines of the readers' letters that came to the paper in the spring of 2002 there were, for instance: "The television set had been repaired excellently", "Thanks for the help", "Thanks", "Let us bring joy to the people", "They always are attentive and kind", "Dear person. I tell about my mother", "The mother's thanks" (*Nasha zhizn'* 5.04., 1.05., 22.02., 25.04., 22.03., 5.04. 2002). The journalists considered that pensioners composed a bigger part of the audience although the local intelligentsia, such as teachers, librarians, physicians, cultural workers as well municipal officials read the paper:

A lot of the old subscribers, pensioners; those who are engaged in the kitchen garden, they read "Farmstead" with interest, the women – "*Sudarushka*" [Lady], the youth – criminal news. From many inhabitants it is heard that the people make newspaper files at home. We hold out without money only emotionally because we have been liked, read and have heard many nice opinions. [...] We



have such a mentality that when the people have been done a kindness, then they write or call by phone – they thank. [...] Before we registered letters and now we do not, there are no archives, nothing. We live in an agricultural area; the people are engaged in their kitchen gardens. However, we are surprised: the envelopes rise in price, but the old people write to us, sometimes they telephone. [...] When we come to the villages we always say if something good has happened to you, please call us or write and we will publish it (R.3).

Pondering such a phenomenon as the readers' letters to the paper, even if it is letters of thanks and congratulations, we could interpret this as the readers' attitude to the paper. That is, the readers perceive the paper as their paper, as a part of their life, in other words, their public sphere where they meet, communicate, represent themselves and support each other, ask for help. To typify the papers' content, there clearly appear two streams going parallel with each other and mirroring everyday life. One stream shows the officials' routine represented by means of their performance and the journalists' reporting (the public life picture). The other stream brings out the people's voices narrating about their anniversaries, celebrations, births and deaths, thanking or requests for help (the private life picture). Neighbouring and not crossing each other, they make up such a perfectly familiar Soviet agenda, in fact "Potemkin's village" (*potemkinskaia derevnia*), where the person in power (*barin*) is almost darling and the inhabitants (serfs) are hard-working and grateful subjects. There still is no room for an inconvenient question to the officials or an open discussion organized by the journalists on major problems of the locality:

...sometimes an offence appears that all journalists write including everything but only in our paper is it impossible to write what you want, it is impossible... we have such specifics in the local paper (R.2).

All clever people understand that we are an organ of the municipality, the people are even indignant that we tell about the head and only the head... Whoever orders the music, he pays. It seems to me that completely independent media are not in our time (R.3).

Here it is bad because there are few of us and there are no males, it is hard. When we look for somebody to hire we are told: Who works with this wage? Before it was 1 000 rubles, now it is a little less. Other sources? Where? This is no city where one might earn or have two jobs. And now one should enlarge the staff, get phones, a car that before was in the editorial office. But we have nothing. We have gotten a ride in the municipality's car in order to go to events and if there is a free place in the car or if it is needed, we provide 100 per cent coverage of the event. That is, the editor must be present on this trip (R.3).

We could identify a position of the journalists as 'hostages' of the authorities: employees of the municipality and of the locality: inhabitants attached to agricultural Priazha, their families, habitual style of life. They did not accumulate the



means to leave Priazha and to move to Petrozavodsk or to Moscow where there might be other opportunities for work and self-realization. Moreover, they did not have such a strange wish to go away from there. In the given case all journalists were females born in Karelia and having families. They remembered the past with nostalgia, when the conditions for the work and life were rather better than now. Thus, the editorial office had fifteen staff persons including the editorial board, the literary team of correspondents and heads of newsrooms, as well the technical personnel. The editorial office had its car and several phones, the journalists got stable wages that were good for those times: 160–180 rubles, and honoraria. The paper was printed three times a week with 4 pages per issue. Nowadays the paper has turned into a weekly of 12 pages, but the same workload remained, only now for three to four journalists including the editor. That is, the workload increased, the wages diminished and had delays, the pressure of the authorities on the journalists kept up and they suffered from a degrading state:

And before the wages were not enough. It's painful, we are three, the backbone, everyone has twenty years of the experience in the paper. We have a low wage, nobody has a husband of big means or incomes from outside. And we deserved a bigger wage than we have now, in all 3 000 rubles [about 100 euros]. Before it was 1 000, 1 300, 1 500 rubles. Starting with November of 2001 we have had 3 000 rubles. The wage scale restrains us, here no experience, no education influences. While the prices constantly grow, we do not see increasing wages ... Compared to the past, I do my work more out of a moral motivation. It's painful, we come to the pension age, we are on a pension and work. The pension is 1 500 rubles plus the wages, together are 5 000 rubles. It is not much; we need to constantly count kopecks, to economize on everything everywhere. Nobody gets the honoraria (R.3).

Now we had big debts under 100 000 rubles; although there is the government's support, the debts to the publishing house *Karelia*, to the post, we do not have an opportunity to clear off the debt because a new issue is printed and the debts constantly have been twisted. And the municipality does not give us any big sums: three–five thousand (R.3).

In March of 2002 the municipality's subsidies to the paper were 23 thousand rubles (*Nasha zhizn'* 25.04.2003) that amounted approximately to 0.3 percent of all the budget expenses of the municipality. In comparison with the bulk of the republican media subsidies, it did not differ at all. Thus, in 2002 the republican annual subsidies to the media were 17 065 thousand rubles, which amounted to 0.3 percent of the whole bulk of the expenses (Katanandov 2003, 105). The bulk of the municipal subsidies to the Priazha paper was the same or even a little more than it was for other local papers. Thus, according to data on the implementation of the municipal budgets in Karelia, the common share of subsidies for

media in all municipal budgets of the Republic was 4 384 thousand rubles, which amounted to only 0.1 percent of the whole bulk of the budgets' expenses in 2002 (Katanandov 2003, 107).

As a whole we could identify such an approach to the media and to the journalists as the policy of the short leash of the ruling power and especially it is true with regard to the provincial press having scanty alternatives for any autonomy, because of its political and economic dependence on the ruling power. But, even if some initiatives emerged to earn money by means of advertising and increasing circulation, they ran against the lack of the market development in the locality and the low purchasing power of the population. At the same time, sponsoring from three sources: federal, republican and municipal ones allowed the paper to maneuver in the corridors of power and to appeal for help to the republican government in cases where the municipality ignored it or it conflicted, for instance, with attempts of the head of the municipality to discharge the editor (the journalists and the editor opposed these attempts by turning to a higher instance, the Ministry of Press). The role of arbiter provided the republican government the full devotion of the paper. The present letters of thanks by the editors and the journalists' groups to the address of the republican government in principle imitate the letters of thanks by readers to their papers and reveal a vital system of feudal relations in society based on the *chelobitnaia* (the petition) of a vassal to the lord. Some of those letters are published in the book *Sergey Katanandov. The Head of the Republic of Karelia* (Kolesova 2003).

## The Kondopoga case

A factory paper *Kontupohjan Työläinen – Kondopozhskii bumazhnik* (1930) and a local paper *Novaia Kondopoga* (1932) emerged far earlier than the town of Kondopoga itself (1938), which was transformed from a peasants'-workers' settlement into an industrial centre of the republic. Today Kondopoga has remained one of the leaders of industrial and social developments in Karelia. In the 1990s, the media market increased with the free advertising papers *Medved'* and *Vsia Kondopoga* and cable television. The newspapers have a big circulation and fiercely compete with each other. A similar situation is inherent in the other developed localities, such as Kostomuksha, Segezha and Sortavala, the markets of which amount to over four-five-six media; here indexes of subscriptions both for the local and the central press are higher than they are in the localities subsidized by the government, i.e. those having unprofitable budgets. The experts link the higher indexes of subscriptions with the higher standard of living and bigger incomes of the inhabitants. The post-Soviet transformation of the Kondopoga pa-



pers provides an example of forming two polar types in the dichotomy of papers that are independent/dependent on the local authorities. To compare the paths of transformation, we shortly describe their profiles.

During seventy-odd years, the paper *Novaia Kondopoga* (The New Kondopoga) has remained a basic provider of information for the town and ten settlements, with the population (47,500) engaged mainly in the timber industry, dairy-and poultry farming, potato growing as well as fur-breeding farms rearing minks and polar foxes (Kondopoga 2003). In spring 2002 its circulation was more than 5000 copies, the retail price was 4.50 rubles, the subscription for half a year including the postal expenses amounted to 108 rubles (about 3.50 euros) whereas in the editorial office it was 78 rubles (2.50 euros). In the Soviet period, the paper was published three times a week with 4 pages per issue, but now it turned into a weekly of 16 pages published on Wednesdays. Its traditional black-white design had been varied with red colour, turning it into a smarter and livelier publication. The paper was never private.

After the dissolution of the Communist party in 1990, the paper lost one founder – the local party committee – but kept the other one, the municipality. In the middle of the 1990s, the adoption of a new norm into the Civil Code of the Russian Federation fixed that a juridical person is to be established passing through the state registration. It radically changed the situation for the whole press. As Mikhail Fedotov writes (2002, 132), “in response to the requirement to bring the juridical status of editorial offices into line with the demands of the Civic Code in the country, there began a general forced transformation of the editorial offices of the republican, regional, city and local papers into unitary enterprises, or state or municipal institutions”. To get the status of a juridical person in accordance with the new norm of the law, the paper *Novaia Kondopoga* had to re-register as a state or a municipal enterprise. The editor applied to a head of the municipality, the paper’s founder. However, in response, the head proposed that the paper become privately owned. When the editor declined this proposal the municipality decided to no longer be a founder of the paper:

At that time, we criticized much the head of the municipality, we had such a strong wave of democracy; he [the head] did not get with the paper. ... We brought to him all documents to register us as a municipal enterprise, but he said: I do not want to have such a municipal enterprise in the town. He offered us to become a private paper. We thought a long time about what to do. If we become a private paper, we lose the republican support and then the locality loses... and it is unknown where we shall end up if we are private, what is it needed for? (Lopatkina, 2002).

Such an unpredictable loss of the municipality-founder forced the paper to apply to the Ministry of State Property to know to whom now the paper belongs. The

Ministry confirmed the fact that the local press had not been removed from the state property and the paper had no other alternative but to re-register as a state enterprise. After the re-registration at the beginning, *Novaia Kondopoga* came to belong to the Ministry of Economy, later to the Ministry of State Property. It meant that the editor regularly had to bring the balance sheets of the enterprise to Petrozavodsk and to report on the paper's incomes and expenses on a level with the heads of other state enterprises of the Republic. However, with the loss of the municipal founder, the paper lost the right to get republican subsidies. To keep this kind of financing, the editor undertook an unusual step: she applied to the head of the neighbouring Medvezhegorsk locality with a request to become a co-founder and got support:

My husband's roots are in the Medvezhegorsk locality; the surname sounds familiar, he [the head of Medvezhegorsk] did not know me by sight at all, only by phone, but he knew my husband, but he did not know that we are husband and wife. He simply decided to sympathize with me. I say: Come to help us, we shall not ask for a single kopeck. He agreed. Later he had unpleasant talks with the head of the Kondopoga municipality who refused to be the founder. Afterward we got the support from the Karelian budget. But we were periodically told that it was not quite legal, but we again took the law where nothing was pointed out that what municipality must be a founder in this paper; we found a small loophole (Lopatkina 2002).

In 1992, the paper had yet another founder, the Kondopogan pulp and paper mill, although not for a long time. In the words of the editor, she had to come every time to the director and personally to ask for the newsprint: "At the beginning he gave the newsprint, then I came to him the second time and he says: Why are we not founders? And we signed an agreement. Whereupon he gave money two times and not so much, then they began to calculate and thought somewhat and then the director himself refused to be founder of paper" (Lopatkina 2002).

The editor again offered a new head of the municipality elected in 1998 to become a co-founder of the paper, even if it was necessary to re-register the paper from a state enterprise into a municipal one. In response, the new head claimed his rights not only to the paper, but also additionally to the all-enterprise *Novaia Kondopoga*, and even in this case, the editor agreed. However, the Ministry of State Property did not wish to give up the paper that was annually bringing a certain profit. Whereupon the editor offered the municipality another form of collaboration, exactly publishing official information for money. The proposal was accepted and an agreement was signed. Thus, for the page "The Municipal News" the paper got 2 000 rubles and at the end of a year it brought the solid sum of 70 thousand rubles. However, shortly after the municipality stopped paying for its publications because of a lack of budget means, but the paper continued to publish the municipal news page.



The paper's budget had been pooled from three sources: the federal – 10%, the republican – 28%, its own income from advertising – 26%, and from subscription and retail sales – 36%. The federal support had been restored with the coming into power of President Vladimir Putin in 2000, approximately amounting to 130–140 thousand rubles annually. Earmarked for special needs, it did not include wages and came directly to the paper's account. During the period of the republican law about the support of the press, the paper also had the republican financing that covered special needs, such as buying newsprint and printing-house services as well the postal expenses and the editorial equipment. However, at the start of the 2000s according to the change of the Tax Code, the republican government had to transfer the paper's subsidy via the municipality. For the paper it turned into a loss of republican financing: "From the Karelian budget, the government defined the sum of 28% from our expenses and sent it to the municipal budget for us. But it did not take place. At once in the first session this money went away, it seems, for the school meal program; the municipality has a right to use money how it thinks" (Lopatkina 2002).

The paper's own income consists of subscription, retail and advertisement revenues. Before the subscription brought the basic part of the income, however, now its share decreased to half and even less than half. The editor saw the main reasons for it in the bad condition of the postal boxes in the houses and the dumping policy of the factory paper *Avangard*:

We lose subscription circulation. The people go to the kiosks, because... you saw the condition of the postal boxes? It is needed to guard the paper, the people are not honest, they steal. The people even refused to subscribe to the central papers. Did you see, what competition! *Avangard* already during several years increased from a quite simple four pages. The price is two times less than our price, the volume is almost two times more than our paper, the staff is bigger, they have two photographers. But I am very grateful to them that they do not have advertising. If they begin to have advertising and give a low price, we shall have a very difficult situation (Lopatkina 2002).

In the Soviet period the paper *Novaia Kondopoga* had retail sales only in the kiosks of *Soiuzpechat*, but now the paper established its retail sales in many shops and even in the streets, so it brings more profit than before. The advertising amounts to 26% of income and there are no big opportunities to increase it. In the town the advertising boom happened only at the beginning of the 1990s when it was given a start for privatizing the state property. The journalists remembered the visits of Anatolii Chubais and the other persons of the federal government to Kondopoga and selling the Kondopoga pulp-and-paper mill's shares. At that time the paper earned a lot of money from the advertising. In the last three-five years the advertising market has been calm, the big enterprises do not need local advertising, but

small business is a constant client of the paper. In addition, the economic success of the paper depends on a skilled manager. In the last decade, the paper never once asked for money from the municipality and it was an object of the journalists' pride. Its own income covered the expenses for wages, the monthly bonuses and the vacation money (the staff included ten persons). Moreover, it published annually one free issue for the inhabitants, usually on New Year's or for the town's birthday, in this way making one more reminder to the reader about itself. The journalists' wage, on average 4 000 rubles a month, was paid without delays. The editorial office was equipped with new computers, a digital camera and a car, and was located in a comfortable and inexpensive office in the center.

After the election of 1998, the all-local press began to get free newsprint from the Kondopoga pulp -and paper mill because the new Head of the Republic, Sergei Katanandov, agreed with its director about this support although the amount of the free newsprint did not always cover the needs of the papers. Thus, *Novaia Kondopoga* had to buy up some part of the newsprint itself. In addition, the government began to raise the political status of editors of the local press inviting them on an equal basis with heads of municipalities to participate in the most important political events, in particular the inauguration of the new Head of the Republic and the main economic meetings. The editor approved of these governmental reforms including the re-registration of the local papers and the introduction into the co-founders of a representative of the government. The last decade showed that the government helped the paper to survive and at the same time did not interfere in covering the local events whereas the municipality and the administration of the mill exerted constant pressure upon the professional work of the journalists including blocking information and even threatening journalists. The fact that the paper belonged to the government gave hope to the journalists for a certain defense from the arbitrariness of the local politicians.

Owing to its economic and political autonomy from the local authorities, the paper could fulfill its professional functions and form an agenda in the public interest although it used a tactic of a lot diplomacy in its critical articles covering activities of the municipality and questions relating to the mill. The local factor "we have to live here further" – about that many journalists said they seek more ground for compromise and peace than for conflict and war. The readers valued the free voice of the paper, wrote letters applying for help as if it was the last resort:

The population says that *Novaia Kondopoga* is a rather critical paper. We gave the critical reprinting about the former head of the municipality. Now we critically write about a municipal enterprise and criticize the power. The rate is higher of course, but whoever does not have money, pensioners, of course, they will subscribe to such a cheap paper [*Avangard*], there the TV program



is printed, there everything is wonderful, there everything is OK! But it is...of course, a little ... The journalists of that editorial office do not have a right to be in the opposition, to question, nothing. It is needed in such a way, how the director ordered because they do not have a status as a juridical person. But we, if we see and moreover if a letter came and if there is everything in the place, we shall publish this letter (R. 29).

The first paper *Kontupohjan Työläinen – Kondopozhskii bumazhnik* appeared with the establishing of the paper mill in Kondopoga. At that time when Russians were called to work in the new All-Union building, many 'red' Finns came from abroad and the paper was published in Finnish and Russian. Later, its name had been changed to *Za tempy* (For tempos) with shifting to printing only in Russian. Some time later the paper had got the name *Kirovets* in honour of the Soviet statesman Sergei Mironovich Kirov, and in 1964, it had got the present name *Avangard*.

The storming changes of the middle of the 1980s–1990s in the country did not have any serious impact on *Avangard* continuing to cover the production's issues. It kept the Soviet classical format A3 with 4 pages of black-white print and was in the periphery of the director's attention. Although workers liked the paper, many of them were already dissatisfied with its content as the author of this letter states:

There was a moment when I disappeared from the paper, decided to no longer subscribe to *Avangard* – the publications about the people looked boring and of the same type, like the shoes made for one foot; additionally I did not become accustomed to when a sentence said by me had been misrepresented (A letter to *Avangard* 2000, 2).

The modernization started in the year of the economic crisis in Russia, 1998, when the financial state was very hard, with delays of wages in the mill. For Karelia it was a very political year, including the elections of the all-vertical structure of power from the Head of the Republic to heads of municipalities. In the factory paper the radical reforms were undertaken in the technical renovation and rich content of the paper: new computers, laser and inkjet printers were bought, as was the necessary equipment for the editorial office and the town's printing-house printing the paper. In particular, the high print was replaced by the offset. The deputy editor was sent to Turkey for new experience. The staff was enlarged from five-six persons to eighteen; of those only seven persons were print journalists, the others were technical specialists:

Our director had worked already in the director post six-seven years. He has a huge program of social reforms and a place was found there for the paper. Propagating what he had done in the social plan was already complicated by the old format of the paper. Being a person knowledgeable and visiting abroad,



he saw how papers are published in Europe and he conceived an idea to make a real respectable paper. He began to select the staff for the editorial office: a correspondent, a managing editor, an artist-designer, operators, layout workers and a proofreader were invited to join the old staff (R.31).

The paper changed its periodicity; instead of twice a week it began output only once a week, on Fridays. Its volume grew gradually from an initial two small pages to four, then 12, then to 16, then to 20, and finally reached 24 pages. The paper design became fully coloured and the content became more diverse than it was before. The innovations had influenced the circulation and rating. Thus, from the primary circulation of 1000–1500 copies it reached the level of 6000 copies in 2002. Of those, the subscriptions comprised 2500 copies; the retail sales got 1000 copies; the remaining 2500 copies were distributed for free, including budget organizations, schools, hospitals and those not having the means to subscribe. The geography of the distribution extended to the neighbouring settlements, where the paper had 600 subscribers. In the words of the journalists, the paper project was a favourite child of the director, who oversaw both its content and technical output.

As before, formally the paper had two founders: the pulp and paper mill and a building enterprise *AO Kondopozhstroi*. But in fact, the newspaper operated as one of the mills' sections; correspondingly its financing was on a higher level than the local press. Thus, a journalist's wage on average reached more than 7 000 rubles a month (about 233 euros), which was almost two times higher than it was in the local newspapers, and the journalists also had all the same benefits as the other workers. The mill covered all the expenses of the newspaper's production, including the newsprint, the subscription, postal services, retail and printing. Thus, the subscription for a half a year cost 48 rubles (about 1.60 euro), the retail price was 2 rubles -a copy ( about 0.066 euro), from those 2 rubles of the retail price – 1.50 rubles were paid to the town's printing house for services. Additionally, the mill paid monthly 50 thousand rubles for receiving the full issue of the central children's paper *Pionerskaia Pravda* from Moscow. It was a supplement for every issue of *Avangard*. That is, a reader received two newspapers in one: the local issue of 24 pages and the central one of 16 pages. In fact, it was the thick newspaper for the whole family of 40 pages only for 2 rubles.

The paper strongly adheres to the Soviet tradition of a propagandist and an organizer, although its content has moved from a specialized focus on the paper's production and building to rather general issues emphasizing the key role of the mill in the life of the town. The journalists' essays (*ocherki* and *zarisovki*) written about the most valued persons of the enterprise had replaced the old practice of individual and collective congratulations by workers to the paper. At the same time, there is no place for advertising. The administration holds a principal po-

sition that “no advertising except socially important ones” (R.31). The leading topic was *demography* with propagating social benefits and medical services for young mothers; the journalists told about the increase of the birth rate in the mill. The *cultural topic* included reportages about wonderful concerts organized by the mill’s administration two times a week in its Palace of the Arts. The workers got tickets free of charge or at a symbolic price of 20 and 50 rubles, although among the invited artists and musicians there were often those having international and national fame. The *free time and sport* issues covered activities of the Creative Centre built by the mill for the workers and their families as well activities of the new Ice Palace and the new roller route. The *educational* topic informed about the school activities and the mill’s sponsoring there. The economic and political issues including elections were an important part of the agenda:

A lot of information is going via the municipality, what the municipality does, what problems it decides, and specialists’ prognoses. We pay a lot of attention to the communal housing problems: roads, roofs, entrances, the quality of the drinking water. By the way, now the elections have taken place. A lot is expected of us – the paper must help in order to help our people to become deputies, those who are needed for the enterprise but not those who want to become a deputy on their own. In order for our people to be in the Republic [the election to the Parliament]. The meetings were arranged. Katanandov was supported. That is, attention has been paid to the paper very, very much (R.31).

After its modernization in 1998, the paper *Avangard* exceeded the bounds of a factory paper by aspiring to the role of social organizer (the ‘peaceful time’) and political propagandist (‘the elections’) in the locality. All investments into its technical modernization and the design-text content as well into the journalistic resources had to meet the expectations of the director for its effectiveness. The director personally controlled the policy, the content and the staff. Along the way, the recruiting in the editorial office had been based both on the high professional qualities (practically, all professionals of *Novaia Kondopoga* had been invited to join the staff of *Avangard*) and belonging to the mill; for instance, a working telephonist had been moved up to working as a journalist). The journalists were to popularize the activity of the mill and the image of its director. Any criticism or alternative view offering to discuss problems such as the violation of the labour code, delays in wages, labour conflicts, drug addiction and AIDS among the youth, prostitution, or ecological threats, were impossible.

The director was the key political figure in the Kondopoga locality and the Republic, for not only subjective reasons including the personal and professional qualities of the leader, but also based on objective grounds. Firstly, this was the case historically, as before in the Soviet era and now the mill was and remained one of the biggest and most successful enterprises of the paper industry in Russia.



New economic ordeals of the 1990s revealed its unquestionable significance for the town well-being as well for the Republic. Whereas practically all-local enterprises became bankrupt, the mill *AO Kondopoga* kept up stable development, workplaces, paid wages to workers and taxes to the local and the republican budgets. Thus, for instance, its taxation payments to the local budget comprised more than 90% of all the taxation revenues of the local budget (*Avangard* 25.4.2002) and 30% of all the taxation revenues of the republican budget. It produced as much as 20% of the total industrial output in Karelia (The Republic of Karelia in 2003, May 2004, 6). From the second half of the 1990s, the director began to realize grandiose social projects (building of cultural and sport centres, medical sector) while not stopping the production modernizing. In other words, he turned the town into the social sector of his enterprise. At the same time, the local political scene became empty: there did not appear any influential party, or strong political and economic groups. Beginning from 1998 the mill administration began energetically to participate in political life, promoting its representatives in the municipal and the republican bodies of government. The industrial and social successes of the mill became the main trump card of the administration in its fight during the elections of 1998 and 2002. The task of the paper *Avangard* was and remains propaganda about all achievements of the mill.

The elections of 1998 had brought a convincing victory to the mill's candidates, one of whom occupied the post of the head of the municipality, with the others forming the majority of the municipal council; some of the mill's candidates became deputies in the Republican Parliament. The elections of 2002 were also successful for the mill's administration, which retained its people in the post of the head of the municipality and in the majority of the municipal council. That is, in *Kondopoga* since 1998 not only the economic but also the political power belongs to the administration of the mill. This provides grounds to assert its power also in the information field, in particular, through attempts to sterilize the content of the independent local paper in its favour. The journalists of *Novaia Kondopoga* pointed to an increasing closeness of information from the municipality and the mill and at the same time to an increasing unwillingness of the inhabitants to talk with the journalists and to provide any information, their revealing fear of losing their jobs and facing troubles for themselves and their children. Many people remembered the lessons of the mill's privatization when the mill workers were punished economically and even dismissed from the mill because of the sale of shares to outsiders. It should be pointed out that the mill remained the most desirable workplace in *Kondopoga* because of relatively good wages and social benefits. In addition, the atmosphere of fear had been supported with the prohibition of any critique toward the mill. For the professional work, the best way was to express everything relating to the mill in a positive light. The

journalists of the local and the factory papers had to hide their mutual aid in the professional issues from the mill's administration. Everyone saw the future for journalism as depending on the will of the director of the mill.

## The Petrozavodsk Case

The research sample selected on the advice of the experts included the most influential and popular media friendly to the government: *GTRK Karelia* (TV and Radio), TV *Nika*, Radio *Melodia*, the papers: *Kurier Karelii*, *Nabliudatel* as well the oppositional *Guberniia*.

In 2002, the state *GTRK Karelia* (a branch of the All-Russian Tele-Radio Company *VGTRK*: the second channel of the Russian state television and state Radio *Rossiiia*) was in a hard economic state, facing a lack of professionals with their fluctuation caused by the low wage. The pensioners continued to work in the Company and to teach newcomers who had to resort to additional income (a second job and the *black PR* during the elections). The federal financing covered only the expenses of wages within the most modest limits of 3 000–5 000 rubles (100–170 euros) a month for a journalist whereas the means for technical modernization, education and work-related travel were practically – absent. The advertising brought non-essential profit, coming mainly from Moscow and St. Petersburg. The Karelian government supported *GTRK Karelia*, paying its heating and the tax for the land. The head of the national broadcasting pointed out that in the last decade changes had an impact both on the professional and economic areas. In particular, the role of the television and radio increased dramatically whereas its financing crucially worsened:

The journalists stated that nowhere are there independent media, every media serves the government, or economic groups:

I am not satisfied, you understand me, we are in the frame of the state company, we are dependent. All the time we are dependent, for instance on the government, which promises money for buying the equipment. It is completely normal in Russia because our holding company *VGTRK* provides financing only for wages. Therefore, we cover every step of the government, everything there. But we would like to have more journalistic freedom because there are many topics to cover.

Researcher: You would like to move up to the commercial television company?

Respondent.: No, absolutely not. Because we don't have a big market. Yes, the commercial company exists here. But you know, that state of things there... my friends work in this company, they do not get wages for four months. It is better to have a small but fixed wage. It is the best option (R.8).



The private TV *Nika* appeared in 1991 as a cable net in the city's areas focused on the local news right up to the prognosis of the weather in the nearest areas of Kukkovka and Drevlianka. During the decade, *Nika* increased its broadcasting bulk and rate whereas the informational coverage broadened and the programs' quality reached a professional level. It kept the cable broadcasting and got the live air broadcasting reaching to the other towns, such as Kondopoga, Belomorsk, Medvezhegorsk, Pudozh and Segezha. In the area bordering Finland the town Kostomuksha received its TV programs in recordings. Moreover, *Nika* agreed with the other city's private TV *Petronet* for mutual exchange and showing its programs that allowed increasing the Petrozavodsk audience. Also the channel *Nika* became a net partner of the national REN TV along with adopting its style for its own programs: a half an hour of news and a half an hour of the author's program every day. It had about fifteen journalists on staff and some are on contract. In 2002, *Nika* experienced financial difficulties and delays in wages. As the journalists explained: "not because we work badly, but because Karelia has such a market where there are no big enterprises to pay for advertising that a TV Company could exist on" (R.15). In 2002 in Karelia 55% of the enterprises did not work, their corporate profits declined by 75%: that was due to the foreign trade difficulties, and to negative changes in the taxation regime (The Republic of Karelia in 2002).

The journalists did not see a principal difference between working in the state or in private television; censorship of the content affected both. In their words, in 2002 the political situation was more predictable and guided than it was in 1998. The results of the last republican and municipal elections showed that the candidates from the government kept their positions in power, whereas new candidates supported by the government also gained the victory (for instance, the head of the TV *Nika*):

*Nika* never hid that it is the pro-government company and the information policy especially in the pre-election period is oriented to these structures. It is difficult to say it was easier in the 1990s or not easier than now. It is very subjective. At that time, we were glad because we did a new business, the people watched us [TV] and they were glad. Today it is somewhat another feeling and this feeling is not much connected with the work but rather with the politicization of society itself, endless elections ... and it is clear what some want – to take power, the others – to take it away, still others – to remain in power. Unfortunately, the effects are also felt in the time between elections (R.15).

The journalists did not believe very much in the opportunities for investigative journalism in Karelia. On the one hand, it was dangerous for a journalist; on the other hand, nobody was interested in investigations. The prospect for developing oppositional media seemed for them improbable whereas moving from the

pro-governmental to the single oppositional paper did not inspire them. Among the reasons the journalists mentioned were pressure by the media owner on the journalist's work, unstable payment, a lack of social protection, problems of access to information, troubles in personal security and difficulties in the future to find a workplace in a not very large city. The majority shared pessimistic moods for the nearest future proceeding from the present state of media structured and dependent on the government. Some of them emphasized the decisive role of the personality, exactly who will be the national leader in 2004:

Everything will depend on how our state will develop. I think that the state media will become stronger in ten years because the tendency of the development of our society is in centralizing and the state becoming stronger together with declaring how the civil society is developing. Today the tendencies are such that even all national channels have been formed in a certain way. These tendencies will deepen and develop. We depend first of all on the policy. Who will lead our country and us on all levels. The rigid centralizing appears in all directions. What will be resistant to it and in particular what media? If it will be the public television, this phantom, so I shall not believe it myself. Therefore the Karelia journalism and so-called oppositional media will work to a lesser degree than now (R.15).

## The Oppositional Media

The oppositional *Guberniia* (*The Province*) emerged in 1996 as the first tabloid in Petrozavodsk; a year later, it began to change into a social paper for the mass reader. The paper's rating and circulation testified that the paper gained the trust of the audience. In spring 2002, *Guberniia* had a circulation of 35 thousand copies in spite of the fact that all the time it had to raise the retail price in order to keep the ability to pay its way. By the summer of 2002, the retail price had reached 5 rubles. The retail and advertising were the main sources of income. As the editor stated, *Guberniia* had the highest price for advertising in the city, but it did not scare away advertisers and the paper published the biggest volume of advertising in the press market. However, plenty of advertising and striving to earn more and correspondingly to publish it more collided with the duty to inform the audience and a fear of losing readers. In the search for the optimal balance between advertising and informing, the paper gradually increased the volume from 24 to 32 pages. *Guberniia* was firmly convinced that the task of the press is to be in the opposition to – power:

The oppositional press is a wrong definition, it is simply a true press, it is a normal edition, what all media must be. Why does the power not like *Guberniia*?



Because the rest of the media conduct themselves a little differently in the market. Now a competitor appeared for us, the paper *Stolitsa* and it became more complicated to work. Because the living word has been required. Not because we overturn any bases but because to criticise the power is our task. Why the society invented, created us? In order that we watch three branches of – power, we are the fourth one. We must observe and describe where and what is wrong. The other papers do not do this and it is clear why. *Stolitsa* has the same founder as we have (Zhdanova 2002).

A founder of *Guberniia* was the only one from among the entrepreneurs to openly be in opposition to the government. He had undertaken a few attempts to win the elections using his press but he had no success. Interestingly, in his political struggle he used only his media whereas the pro-governmental candidates used exceptionally the pro-governmental media. The oppositeness had a ‘high price’ for the paper, in the list of the pressing methods there were the five-year long taxation inspections to the editorial office, the informational blockade, constant obstacles in the accreditation of the journalists and getting information.

The journalists, (the majority of them of a young age, without professional education) testified about a certain editorial line directed to disclosing mistakes made by the government and hiding mistakes made by the people belonging to the circle of the media owner. “For instance, you know something but it is impossible to write negatively about this person because he is a friend of our boss” (R.17). In the professional work the journalists had to resort to such methods as using a false identity and using confidential governmental and business information without references in order to get information and to keep the sources. Among the biggest dissatisfactions in the work, the journalists mentioned low wages and the aggression coming from the persons criticized by the paper. Some of them were not optimistic about the future, consoling themselves by thinking of leaving Petrozavodsk; the others had hope for liberal legislative reforms:

In Karelia there are not many papers that can openly and strictly say what they think about our government. Now our power was re-elected for four more years and from this appears significantly sad prognoses. Only one paper able to say something against the government remained in the Republic, the rest of the papers – they were all dependent already long ago, the television... – we do not have independent channels. Everything is wonderful. We have the Republic of the cut ribbons. Everything is fine, everything is opening, working, the people are satisfied with everything. The authorities work, as it is required. If the paper is closed, unfortunately I shall move away from here. Now only the work holds me here, I have many friends, but if it happens, I shall move to another city. Already many journalists move away from here, mainly to Piter [Petersburg] and Moscow – there are better and more solid papers than here. Whoever has the opportunity, they go away to Finland and Sweden. It is a wide practice (R.17).

The start of 2002 was marked by a precedent of the criminal prosecution of a journalist for his critical article about the Head of the Supreme Court of Karelia and his son published in the oppositional paper *Stolitsa Karelii*. In May of 2002 the court brought a verdict of guilty to the journalist whereupon the Karelian Union of Journalists began a campaign over the defence of the journalist, making complaints about such a decision to the Highest Qualification Collegiums Judges and to the Glasnost Defence Foundation. A half a year later a response from Moscow rejected the decision of the city court and the Karelian journalists celebrated their victory. However, the situation for the journalists became worse after the election of 2002 and new attempts to begin the criminal court cases against the journalists for their professional work have appeared:

The pressure on the press had increased, not only on the oppositional papers but also on the pro-governmental ones and even on our paper, which is not public or political but a specialized publication. There are attempts to interfere in the editorial line, to forbid some publications, to demand the publishing of other materials. For instance, recently it was demanded that the paper *Kurier Karelii* publish material against the paper *Guberniia*. The editor refused. The establishing of the Ministry of Press negatively influenced the situation in our media, it is the main thing that happened during the year. What disturbed everyone was that they attempted to initiate legal proceedings against the journalists, to bring a criminal court case against the editor and journalists of *Guberniia* apropos their publications. However, the case with the journalist of the paper *Stolitsa* played its positive role and the office of public prosecutor stopped proceeding with the court cases (Meshkova, interview 2003).

Nevertheless, the situation in Karelia did not provide grounds for optimism. The government was increasingly spreading its control of the media in different ways, one of which, for instance was introducing its people into the editorial boards, for instance the daily *Kurier Karelii* got a new commercial director devoted to the government. The journalists considered that it was done purposely before the elections to the Parliament (December 2003). In addition, the government recruited for the work the best journalists from the paper closed in 2002, who before had written critical materials but today made the choice in favour of the stable wages and not being in conflict.

## Conclusions

The analysis of the situation of the media and the journalists in Karelia revealed that the State increasingly showed concern about the Media while increasing its control of it. The re-privatization undertaken of the all-local press had intro-



duced a representative of the government into the staff of the founders although the municipality remained a founder practically in every paper. The printing base was still kept in the state ownership. In 2002 the Karelian government established the new Ministry of Press, Informatization and PR for systematizing and controlling the informational field. However, less than two years later in June 2004 it optimized its structure having cleaned up this ministry and re-transformed the former Ministry of Culture into the Ministry of Culture and PR. It was done following the Federal Center which in spring 2004 started reforming federal administrative organs and in particular eliminated the Federal Ministry of Press, Television and Mass Communications Media but established the Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communication within the new Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications.

The state (the republican government and the municipalities) owned the informational media and controlled the private media broadly using administrative resources. Its relations with Capital and the Media, the State built on a barter basis. In particular, the political loyalty to the government and the support during the elections was in exchange for the low rent and taxes on land for the private media, access to information and the accreditation of the journalists, and favourable conditions for calm work. Moreover, the government decisively supported the loyal media owners who voted in the deputies (the deputy's mandate ensured the deputies immunity for four years). That is, the State and Capital performed together in the elections and according to the results of the last elections, successfully pushed through their candidates into legislative and executive organs of government.

The new political reality after the Presidential elections of 2004 is defined as a "monocentrism of the system of power" (Bunin 2004, 1), as a "dominating State", "Hobbes' contract" when the State develops rights and blocks up rights (Auzan 2004, 26), as a "surplus State" (Medushevskii 2004, 12). In the list of the negative signs leading to the delay of modernization of the system of executive power Andrei Medushevskii notes an increasing lack of transparency in the State apparatus vis à vis the public control, the merging of business and government leading to their criminalisation, the capturing of business by power: combining administrative posts with making business, moving from the high level administrative posts to high level positions in the big private corporations and backwards, indirect control over business via the state structures.

Interestingly, the new Russian capitalists that had emerged in the wave of privatization of state ownership in the 1990s did not differ from the state functionaries in their mentality. They had the same approach to the media, considering it as a political tool in the struggle for power and for the support of the government. The friendship with the authorities and playing under its rules was a necessary

precondition for the successful development of their basic business, lying as a rule in the economic sphere (enterprises, resources, trade). They did not invest capital into their media, keeping it as a tool of propaganda and PR.

Media business in the economic sense arose only in the tabloid press indulging the tastes of the masses and also supporting the government. It was a rare or even exceptional case when a capitalist was not together with the government and established his oppositional media to fight for power. However, it seems that such a time of “eccentrics” is disappearing together with the decrease in the number of oppositional papers. For instance, in Petrozavodsk, there were three oppositional papers, now only one was kept and it constantly experienced different pressures from the authorities and was periodically threatened with closing. The Internet remained a place for the distribution of independent information and an exchange of opinions.

The journalists did not see a big difference where to work: in the state, semi-state or private media, because here, there and everywhere the agenda had been formed in terms of pleasing the media owner, pursuing his own interests and the journalists knew what they should write and what they should keep in silence. The censure of things forbidden by the law on the media (1991) acted in practice as strong self-censure. Professionals preferred to leave for the PR structures of the state and business or to work in the leading informational media, which belonged as a whole or partly to the State (the government and the municipalities) because it was rather prestigious and economically advantageous (public service, stable wage and social guarantees). Whereas in the private media young, little-experienced journalists, as a rule without professional education, experienced delays of wages, a lack of social defence and security and more difficulties in the professional work. The journalists did not condemn each other for *the black PR* and plagiarism that became a reliable and settled means to mend their budgets. They were rather cynical and realistic in their estimations of the media because the media operated not according to the professional canons – to provide information to society – but in the interests of the government and the economic groups.

The local press survived at the expense of the state subsidies coming from the federal, the republican and the municipal budgets as well as different privileges from the authorities, for instance, free newsprint, low or paid rent, taxes, heating and so on. In spite of the common similarity of the position for the media in the Republic, the localities differed in their conditions influencing the journalist's work. Thus, Priazha, Kondopoga and Petrozavodsk provided three original cases of the development of the media in the Republic of Karelia. In particular, the agricultural area Priazha represented the unchanged Soviet model of the press: the paper operated as the propaganda sector of the municipality, completely economically and politically depended on it. The industrial city of Kondopoga re-



vealed a plural model of the existence of both the Soviet propagandist model and a new informational one characterized by its economic and relatively political independence from the municipality and by a new competing approach to the readers' and advertising markets. The Petrozavodsk case represented, on the one hand, confronting the press as a reflection of the struggle between the State and Capital, and on the other hand, completely guided television, in spite of the form of ownership.

The key interest of this article was in clarifying the relationship of the Media and the State in order to understand how the Media has changed and whose interests they have served. In spite of having differences, in essence the three cases with the exception of the newspaper *Novaia Kondopoga* showed that the *Media* remained the political tool of the *State* and the *Capital* and their role was an applied one in the interests of the present groups of politicians and capitalists. A journalistic identity rather developed for the political work and the PR. The *Society* remained an object of speculative bargains and discord between the State and the Capital whereas the Media practically were not able to articulate citizens' voices with the exception of rare examples of the oppositional papers.

The analysis of the Karelian media of 2002–2004 confirms the findings of the study of the St. Petersburg media of 1998–2002, in particular that the view of the media as a political tool and of journalists as propagandists remained an unchanged principle. The State owned the news media and influenced others owing to the administrative resources. The business interlaced with the State, financing the media campaigns in elections in favour of the government. At the same time another type – apolitical, entertaining press and programs had success among the audience. However, both political and apolitical journalism successfully got with the government that predicts no anxiety of journalists and media for developing Civil Society. It revealed that the tradition of the State (Soviet) media as manipulative tools in governing Society remained immutable.

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Thirty in-depth interviews with journalists from 11 media in Priazha, Kondopoga and Petrozavodsk in Spring 2002.





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Russia after the collapse of communism**

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Svetlana Pasti

## Concepts of Professional Journalism

Russia After the Collapse of Communism

IV

### 1 Introduction

In 2005 it had been 20 years since the introduction of *perestroika* (re-building) and *glasnost* (publicity and openness) by Mikhail Gorbachev. This development turned into a flash-point for the ‘velvet revolutions’ all over Eastern and Central Europe since 1989, leading to the collapse of Communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. It continued on in a new spiral of the ‘flowers’ and ‘coloured’ revolutions at the start of the new century in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. A natural question arises: who is next? We are witnesses that the ideas of *perestroika* and *glasnost* continue to work as centrifugal forces in the post-Soviet space, and to inspire the national elites to finally free themselves from the old regime. The collapse of Communism and the break-up of the Soviet Empire continue before our eyes.

These past 20 years of the transition from one pole, Eastern Communism, towards another, Western Capitalism, have been full of drastic changes in all spheres of life and have touched everyone. In the Baltic and the Eastern European countries one was aware of, and verbalised via political rhetoric, “the return home” to a Europe they had left at the end of the Second World War (Hoyer et al. 1993; Tamash 2005). Russia had made a bold move ahead into an unknown world, on the one hand, adapting the Western rallying points – free markets, free elections, free media – and simultaneously revising the recent history of the Soviet era and before, on the other. Ivan Zassoursky (2004) fittingly portrays the stages of its painful balancing between the past and the future via the transformation of contemporary media: the rise and the decline of the free press; the rise and decline of media barons; the rise of television and the decline of printed media; and the rise of the Internet as an alternative information system to the mainstream media with their propagandist role.

In the former Communist world, in the opinion of Immanuel Wallerstein (1999: 16), “many see themselves as having gone ‘back to normalcy’”. But the world “has moved decisively on” and “it is not at all sure that they, or the rest of us, have moved into a safer or more hopeful or more liveable world” (ibid.). On the contrary, Wallerstein argues that after the collapse of Communism the contemporary world experiences “not the final triumph of world capitalism but its first and only true crisis” accompanied by the crash of liberalism and the loss of common belief in progressive development such that a new generation will live in better world (ibid.: 30).

This paper takes post-Communist Russia as a central case to show how the concept of professional journalism is changing. The aim is to clarify how much contemporary Russian journalism shares the aspirations of *perestroika* to develop democracy. If journalism is a mirror of ongoing transformations in society, what does the knowledge about professional journalism suggest to us for a better understanding of post-Communist development?

The analysis is based on the findings from several projects, both academic research (University of Tampere) and educational assistance (Tacis), implemented in Russia in 1998-2004. The empirical research included in-depth interviews with experts and media market insiders, participant observations, and surveys. The work in projects on educational programmes for journalists brought new insight to the research. Personal experience from living and communicating with people in Russia was also an invaluable support for comprehending ongoing changes. The findings have been accumulated from the following projects: the study on St. Petersburg journalists in 1998-2002 (Juskevits 2002; Pasti 2005a); the study on journalists in the Republic of Karelia in 2002-2004 (Pasti 2005b); and the study on regional journalists in Russia in 2002-2005 (Pasti/Pietiläinen, 2005).

## 2 Contemporary Russia

During the past 20 years much water has flowed under the bridge and many changes have occurred. A principal change was connected with *perestroika* and *glasnost* in their attempt to transform *state journalism* into *market journalism*. “State journalism” refers here to the well-known Soviet system which was thoroughly political-administrative by nature. “Market journalism” for its part refers to emerging political, economic, and professional freedoms (with their own limitations). At the start of the 1990s the adoption of new liberal laws had radically changed conditions for the media and journalists. The abolition of censorship had resulted in diversity and plurality of content and forms of dissemination, while the introduction of private own-



ership and advertising had laid the bases for a media market and business that was accompanied by the media boom. This was reflected in the increase in the number, kind, circulation, audience, investment, and also popularity of journalism as a profession. Open access to journalism provided an intake of fresh blood at a time when virtually anyone could become a journalist.

With the opening of the borders, Western influence via the collaboration of media, journalism schools, exchange programmes and visits, literature in translation, and other imports of cultural products to Russia had a profound impact, especially on a new generation which came to work in the media. The majority of these individuals adamantly rejected the principles of Soviet journalism. Thus, the former editor-in-chief of the magazine *Itogy* of the company "Media MOST", Sergei Parkhomenko argued that two generations of contemporary Russian journalists represented two different professions: the people working with information (the post-Soviet practitioners) and the people working with themselves (the Soviet practitioners). In his opinion, the journalism till 1990 worked without sources. The primary source was the author's brains. On rare occasions there was a certain simulation of the source: "a reader's letter", TASS or something like that. But the primary content of the text was the author's thoughts. Parkhomenko was convinced of that till the end of 1990 in journalism there was not *a problem of speed*... There were not perceptions of the type "I am first, you are second"... In the absence of a competition and the perception about that *what* information proceeds from the source, a certain race had an abstract character. He considered that this profession did not exist until the categories of source and tempo became dominant in journalism (Parkhomenko 2000: 384ff.).

A new conception of news held by the new generation clearly oriented to the Western concept based on the separation of fact and commentary, a source of information, and including the speed and accuracy of its transmission. The studies on Russian media of the *perestroika* era and later welcomed the new attitudes to the production of news: more factual with more human interest (Zhou 1988); to the audience: a wish to better meet its needs (Gaunt 1987); to journalism education and practice: more practical training, and more openness and a critical assessment of the Soviet system (Haddix 1990; Remington 1988).

The innovations in journalism, as well as the liberalisation of the economy and politics, caused researchers to speak about the beginning of the process of professionalisation. Thus, Anthony Jones (1992: 85) evaluated *perestroika* as "the attempt to introduce 'professionalism' into Soviet society". That meant to establish "the conditions in which decision-making could be pursued on the basis of occupational



standards and ethics, rather than on the basis of political considerations imposed from the outside”, and also to create “conditions for a change in the status of those occupations that in the West are referred to as professions. That meant that they could move closer to what has been called ‘guild status’, the possibility of controlling the ways in which the occupation is pursued, making it more like a profession” (ibid.).

In the opinion of Owen Johnson (1992: 221), the current situation did not provide clarity as to how the journalist’s occupation will develop: “With so many journalistic jobs in jeopardy because of financial uncertainty, there has been little consideration of these issues; with so many old journalists discredited and so many new, untrained reporters flooding into the profession, the defining characteristics of the journalist are in flux”.

Some studies found the coexistence of old and new journalistic norms and ideas: combining fact and comment; intolerance of articles with diversity of topics and critical viewpoints (Tolz 1992); widely divergent ideas on impartiality and dispassionate objectivity among journalists with their habits of partisanship and self-censoring (Jones 1999); with more factual news transmitted in a more timely manner; and broader in the selection of topics with traces of a high degree of subjective journalistic evaluation (Voltmer 2000). However, some studies were decidedly critical with regard to the role of media and journalistic professionalisation in the second half of the 1980s into the 1990s (Androunaus 1993; Media in CIS 1999; McNair 2000).

Nevertheless, some scholars cherish the hope that “journalism is one of the few occupations that has moved toward professionalisation since the reforms started”, although there is significant apprehension “that it is unclear in Russia and other Eastern European countries what professionalism will mean and what the role of the journalist will be” (Wu/Weaver/Johnson 1996: 535).

During the 1990s, with the rise of commercialism, there emerged another trend of ‘scoop news’ with fake reports bringing rumours, gossip, lies, made-up ‘facts’, invasion of individuals’ private lives, and scandal creation. Done in the genre of entertainment, those news organs indulged mass tastes and reached the biggest audiences everywhere. They also conquered the minds of many editors and journalists striving to work in the new ‘gutter press’ and infotainment broadcasting, often not making firm claims on professionalism, ethics, and responsibility for the source of information, and the audience. Moreover, a growing process of ‘tabloidisation’ had its impact on quality newspapers, which also began to pursue sensationalism, drama, and exclusives in order to attract more readers. Distributors also evaluated a demand

for the press as consumers removing “a spectrum of the press more towards the yellowness, than if ideally the press depended directly, without mediators, on the reader”. The quality press was killed by it (Yakovenko 2001: 643).

A perception of journalistic production as a good identical to other goods on the market had ethically approved venal journalism for political and commercial ends. It turned out not to be shameful to serve political and business groups and individuals by tailoring articles for them, inserting hidden advertising, mixing information and advertising, representing advertising as information, or stealing publication ideas from colleagues (plagiarism). Corruption became a professional norm and a strategy for survival and acquiring wealth. “Today journalism itself is the object of purchase and sale”, said a St. Petersburg expert in his interview in 1998 (Juskevits 2002: 65). Another journalist interviewed in 1999 said, “professionalism is when it is not seen that you have been sold” (ibid.: 186).

All three empirical studies were carried out during the last seven years: the St. Petersburg journalists in 1998-2002; the Karelian journalists in 2002-2004; and the regional journalists working in nine regions, including Siberia and the North-West, Central, Southern, and Ural regions in 2002-2005. All of these studies confirm a tolerant attitude of journalists towards the practice of corrupt articles. It is justified both by the general corruption in society (Transparency International 2004; Sahara 2004), and the individual experience that writing corrupt articles has become a means for survival and prosperity.

The study of St. Petersburg journalists discovered that one third of them produced corrupt articles (Pasti 2005a). The study of the regional journalists found that one half produced such articles, and that an interest in criticising the actions of authorities had decreased: 41% of older professionals from the Soviet era; 13% of the transitional generation of the 1990s; and 6% of the young generation of the 2000s (Pasti/Pietiläinen 2005). The head of the Russian Union of Journalists, Igor Yakovenko (2001: 643), argued that “70% of capital journalism is venal, whereas 40-50% of provincial journalism is venal (the data by PROMASO), although as a rule there are no people interested in buying the local newspapers because they are under the tight control of the local administration”. The study of the journalists of the Republic of Karelia finds the dependence of the local press on the local administration to be practically unchanged (Pasti 2005b).

The ethical codes adopted by the Congress of the Union of Soviet Journalists (1991), and later the Russian Union of Journalists (1994), remained a pure formality since everyday practice led journalists to completely other, unethical decisions, often made in the interests of the political and commercial business of state officials and



rising capitalists. The support for membership in the Union of Journalists clearly decreased from the older to the younger generation. The study on regional journalists finds this support as follows: the Soviet generation at 86%; the transitional generation at 35%; and the younger generation at 4% (Pasti/Pietiläinen 2005).

In the list of 167 countries on the Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders 2004), Russia takes the 140th place. Freedom to do quality and ethical journalism in the public interest is correspondingly becoming increasingly difficult in the new century, whereas providing political and infotainment types of journalism in favour of the state is both safe and profitable. Both presume fraternising with the government and serving its public indoctrination goals. Free voices bringing free facts, opinions, and discussions appear mainly in the Internet, a field still open for free debates in Russia. This forum, however, is not widely available for the majority of the population: Internet use amounts to only 9% in Russia (Vartanova 2004: 202), with the majority of users living in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

### 3 Concepts of professional journalism

The concepts of professional journalism are distillations of ideas on the professional and ethical demands on the work and conduct of journalists. Despite a widely-held notion of pursuit of truth in the public interest, the concepts nevertheless differ in terms of time and space, in particular those ideas about journalism in a given society. They are different in theory and practice.

As schemas, the concepts of professional journalism have been legitimised in the national and international codes of journalistic ethics, which in the 1970s typically emphasised the universal values of “peace, democracy, human rights, social progress, and national liberation”, as it was put, for instance, in *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism* (Nordenstreng 1989: 282). These principles view “the journalist as an instrument for materialising the people’s right to true information – the truth being understood as objective reality to be discovered and communicated to the public as accurately and comprehensively as possible”. The document “prescribes journalism as a socially committed profession” with “the professional role of all journalists to pursue, not only truth in general, but the universal values of humanism as well” (ibid.: 281f).

However, in practice the concepts of professional journalism include both normative and situational factors shaped and reshaped by journalists in their routines in a particular professional environment on the basis of needs of the market and values prevailing in the profession and society. On a micro level they can be as different as

journalists themselves. Thus, the study of St. Petersburg journalists finds their completely different perceptions on professionalism, including both the ideal hypothetical type of an independent, honest journalist, and the real-existing type of the colleague earning his living with corrupt articles (Pasti 2005a).

On a macro level, the concepts of professional journalism differ in terms of time and space, extending from a model of Soviet journalism versus models of Western journalism. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), the Western media show three general types identified as: (1) the Mediterranean or Polarised Pluralistic model; (2) the North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist model; and (3) the North Atlantic or Liberal model. Every one of these differs in its history and are specific to the development of society, media, and professionalisation of journalists.

This paper examines the Russian case mainly in comparison with the Liberal model, as this most greatly contrasts with the Russian one. In post-Soviet Russia one may find different regional media models (Public Expertise 2000), and even in one region there may be different local media models within which different concepts of professional journalism have been shaped (Pasti 2005b).

Accordingly, the concepts of professional journalism can be filled in with various contents depending on the historical, political, societal, professional, and personal contexts. They are neither sanctified icons of the profession, nor the final results attained jointly by journalists and researchers, but rather open dialogical fields for competing ideas on current practices, stimulating non-stop discourse on the quality of journalism and the role of the journalist in society. The concepts of professional journalism are the 'salt' of journalism theory and practice because they raise fundamental questions of human rights and freedoms: the right to be informed (in order to attain competence for action in the surrounding world) and the right to participate in discussion (i.e., to express an opinion).

In the West the debates on professional journalism account for a long history and include different approaches to the occupation itself and prospects for its development. In particular, these include the questions of whether journalism should strive for professional status or remain an open occupation for amateurs, what journalism is, who a journalist is, and what professional role journalists have in society. Some authors argue that journalism is becoming more professionalised (Lambeth 1992: 106; Splichal/Sparks 1994; Cohen 1997: 97). There is some authority being developed, with increasing emphasis on special or at least higher education, and in most cases on ethical codes and a specific culture (Skolkay 1998: 312).

In the sociological discussion on professionalism, in the opinion of Nordenstreng (1998: 125f), the evolution of journalism as a profession "provided a textbook



example of a functional approach”, although “reflections around media professions over the past two decades include more and more critical voices... and thus one can indeed speak of a democratic shift”:

“When a media-centred paradigm is replaced by a citizen-centred paradigm, one is also moving away from a functional approach to a critical (neo-Weberian) approach. ... More fundamentally, however, it was a paradigm shift away from an approach which understands media and journalists as the owners of communication rights and freedoms toward a paradigm whereby it is the citizens and their civil society that should be seen as the ultimate owners of freedom of information.” (Nordenstreng 1998: 126f)

The point of view that journalism is not a profession is exemplified by John Merrill (1997: 334), who believes that journalism is an occupation, a craft, and a commitment open to everyone irrespective of education. The more journalism becomes a profession, the more it will reject innovations, frighten off irrepressible dilettantes, and contribute to the promotion of second-rate specialists. Journalism will narrow pluralism, and journalists will not think about the public interest but first about their own interests.

However, when the question is posed directly, “is journalism a profession or not?”, scholars prefer to discuss journalism more as an occupation than a profession, the more so as there is no internationally recognised definition of who actually is a journalist (Splichal/Sparks 1994: 4; Alleyne 1997: 111f). According to Bromley (1997: 330), “While strictly speaking, neither a profession, nor a craft, it has displayed many of the characteristics of both”. Lambeth (1992) has suggested the definition of journalism as a craft with professional responsibility. McQuail coins criteria of professionalism as: “control of entry to the occupation, core skills for which training is required, codes of ethics and standards of practice that are enforced, having a significant social role to play, having autonomy in the exercise of skills” (McQuail 2005: 289).

But all this is the Western understanding of professionalism based on the values and beliefs of Western society. From the history of the Soviet press, however, as well as from personal contacts with the old generation of journalists, we well know that in the Communist countries the concept of professional journalism was utterly different from what it was in the capitalist West. In particular, in the introduction to the Russian publication of *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert et al. 1956), the Dean of the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University, Yassen Zassoursky (1998: 7), poses two different approaches to journalism: *journalism as a tool of the political*

*authority* (as in the Communist countries with Communist ideology); and *journalism as the 'Fourth Estate'* (as in the capitalist West with its liberal ideology). The first approach cemented relations between journalism and the state as internally indissoluble, with media operating as an integral part of the state apparatus; the second approach, in contrast, expected from the media, free from the state, that it act in the public interest as an independent monitor of the government and business.

Naturally, the instrumental role of the Soviet media needed *propagandists, agitators, and organisers* (Lenin's types of the professional roles of Soviet journalists) who were accepted and politically educated for state jobs. The journalists with pro-state thinking perceived themselves as supporters of the social order and policy aimed at the formation of a new Soviet man with "a high-level consciousness: collectivism, socialist patriotism and internationalism, personal responsibility to society" (Petrosyan 1969: 44).

The Union of Journalists of the USSR was established in 1958 and was a successor of the first local unions of Soviet journalists which emerged in 1918 for supporting the Soviet state. It was later transformed into sections of press workers within the Soviet trade unions, and regularly held Journalists' Congresses in Moscow with the participation of Communist party leaders (Bogdanov/Vayzemyky 1971: 189ff.). As documented by the last Congresses, the Union of Journalists of the USSR was a creative organisation aimed at the political and professional education of journalists, although without any real opportunities to protect them or to better their working and living conditions (Union of Journalists of the USSR 1982, 1987).

In contrast to this, the Western media were fostered in the liberal tradition to play the role of the 'night-watchman' of the state, and in this way to become the 'Fourth Estate'. They needed to be free *disseminators* of information, *interpreters*, and *adversaries* to the political and economic authorities (Weaver 1986, 1996, 1998). Such a view of the profession demanded the corporative struggle for ensuring self-guarantees of professional autonomy and independence in order to fulfil the core task — bringing up the truth in the public interest. The professional associations were established as autonomous organisations with trade union functions aimed also at the protection of the professional rights and freedoms of journalists, and of self-regulation on the basis of ethical requirements (Elliot 1978: 175).

In essence, these two different approaches to journalism remind us about the thesis of the classic *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert et al. 1956: 1): "that the press always takes on the form and colouration of the social and political structures



within which it operates”<sup>1</sup>. Herbert Altschull (1995: 440) postulates this as one of seven laws of journalism: “in all press systems, the news media are agents of those who exercise political and economic power”.

The socio-analysis of Pierre Bourdieu (2005: 41) enlivens this thesis with its findings, in particular that today the journalistic field, which is increasingly heterogeneous, in other words, increasingly subject to the constraints of the economy “and of politics, is more and more imposing its constraints on all other fields, particular the fields of cultural production such as the field of the social sciences, philosophy, etc., and on the political field”. The conception of journalism as the ‘Fourth Estate’ (serving in the public interest) has actually been substituted for “clientelism” for the elite group of politicians, businessmen, and also media professionals, who pursue their monopoly on power in society, including the monopolisation of the right of public dissemination. Bourdieu calls this “the iron law of oligarchy”, borrowing the term from Robert Michels and Gaetano Mosca (ibid. 34).

In point of fact, the question about the concept of professional journalism is not only a professional issue, but a political one as well. This is because it raises the question of social control in society, in particular regarding who has the authority to implement it: does the state (i.e. the government) control society via its state media; or does society control the state via media which are independent of the state?

In the Communist countries, as is well-known, the state controlled society via its state-owned media. The state was large and it was everywhere; it was like Hobbes’ Leviathan. Professional journalism was recognised as political publicist journalism acting in the Communist state’s interests based on the inversed formula of C.P. Scott that ‘comments are sacred, but facts are free’. A fact was only a cause for the political-biased publicist commentary to exert influence on public opinion, more than to inform it. Therefore, the mixing of fact and commentary underlying a journalism product was a basic rule mastered right from journalism school. In essence, the natural right to know the truth, as it is, was excised from society by the state:

“The development of Soviet journalism was tied to genre, thematic specialisation, but not to functional-operational forms. The publicistic comprehension of reality had occurred in any genre, in any theme and it

<sup>1</sup> Although media theorists have long since recognised the inadequacy of the Four Theories for the contemporary analysis of media systems, and periodically undertake new steps for their revision (in particular in *Last Rights* (Nerone 1995)), they nevertheless have all been inspired by this classic work and again have returned to it in their current attempts to develop theory further: e.g., “American”; “European”; and “Scandinavian” revisions (Christians et al. 2006).

could not to be separated from the gathering and treatment of a material without risk of destroying the content of the profession, its core.” (Bukhartsev 1976: 8)

“Publicistics (*publitsistika*) is literature on public-political questions. Publicist materials operate not only with facts owing to which a reader draws a conclusion, but they include various judgements and generalisations, and propose those or other conclusions.” (Bogdanov/Vyazemsky 1971: 677f.)

In terms of social contract theory, in the Communist countries in the absence of a strong civil society, the state imposed the vertical (i.e., Hobbes’s) contract and principle of hierarchy to its relations with society, exclusively shaping and changing bilateral rights and obligations. The state media propagated and legitimised state policy, and naturally had a basic responsibility to the state (government). In contrast, the history of the capitalist West, at least in its ideology, promoted the horizontal (i.e., Locke’s) structure of the social contract in which a strong civil society had spread its order to its relationship with the state and to the relationship of business and the state. The state was enlisted as an agent for ensuring those rights and obligations about which the citizens and groups of the citizens had agreed (Auzan 2005: 21). Journalism, like other professions, had an idea of serving in the public interest, “centred on the public’s right to know the truth” (Elliott 1978: 182):

“We are bound to tell the truth as we find it, without fear of consequences... [...] The responsibility [...] is more nearly to that of the economist or the lawyer whose province is not to frame a system of convenient application to the exigencies of the day, but to investigate truth and to apply it on fixed principle to the affairs of the world.” (Steed 1938: 76f. in Elliott 1978: 183)

However, today, when the processes of globalisation extend everywhere, unceremoniously intruding in the spheres of the national states, society turned out to be faced with the threat of globally disorganised capitalism that in the quest for maximised profits undermines society itself and the bases of democracy. The post-industrial countries swiftly approximate jobless capitalism when demand for jobs falls and supply increases. Scholars insist on a revision of the former social contract of the modern epoch, but the dilemma is how world society can make a new social contract in the absence of a world state and world government. Today, neither an implanting hegemonic power nor an international regime exists either in the economic or political senses (Beck 2001: 29, 108ff.).



## 4 Conclusion

This paper suggests that a historical chance to transform *state journalism* into *market journalism* with a hope of its further professionalisation on the basis of political, economic, and professional freedoms at the beginning of the 1990s, has been missed. Generally speaking, Russian media could not become economically and politically free and independent from the state. Journalists could not unite their efforts to establish their own autonomous organisations for the protection of their professional rights and freedoms, while the freedoms called for by *perestroika* and *glasnost* proved again to be privatised by the state.

Throughout this time the post-Soviet media operated in a deviant market where their overwhelming number was subsidised, being kept afloat thanks to their bargains with the state and capital closely allied with the state. The influential players, the state and capital, showed little interest in the development of a truly free media market. The abundance of media outlets enabled them to cut media requests and appetites, and to cheapen journalistic services and maintain media loyalty. Galtung's model of Western society (Nordenstreng/Paasilinna 2002: 194) is based on three pillars: the state; capital; and civil society. Media is at the centre, responsible for equilateral communication within this triad. This differs crucially from the emerging Russian model more like a two-faced Janus, an amalgam of state and capital, using the media as a tool for state propaganda in society.

A new proposed Media Law to replace the current one of 1991 appears poised to give media owners total control over newsrooms and the content of media outlets. The state will no longer fund the media, except those which are socially oriented and which publish government documents. However, this does not mean that state interventionism into the Russian media will stop, and that they will gain the long awaited freedom and independence from the state. In the present conditions of the tight alliance of government structures with private business, corruption, and a lack of transparency, there are many hidden ways to influence the media as well to feed them via private funds and individuals. Today the state controls the capital bound to it, and therefore scepticism emerges concerning new freedoms in the media market.

After the collapse of Communism, corruption became an accepted and generally condoned custom at the cost of ethical demands on the self and on others. Journalism turned towards the illicit practices of the state, which ranks high on the corruption scale. Instead of the Soviet mass political newspaper as a 'household friend' for every family, there came post-Soviet mass television maintaining the state propa-

ganda tradition, but already employing the new types of public relations (PR) technologies and entertainment genres.

There is little use in discussing the responsibility of journalists to their profession while the media retain their pro-state Soviet traditions. There did not emerge a competing concept of professional journalism to replace the old one aimed at the authoritarian state's service of public indoctrination. The Soviet approach to journalism as a tool of political authority did not essentially change. It is like a sacred entity in the minds of new post-Soviet politicians and capitalists. The journalists in turn understand that they work in manipulative and not genuinely professional media, and many of them employ a correspondingly cynical approach to their professional obligations and conduct. Today it is even more prestigious and ethical to choose a PR career rather than journalistic work, and this consideration among others underlies the decision of many graduates of schools of journalism to aim rather for the PR sections of industry than for the pro-state propaganda media.

A good 20 years later, after shock experiments in liberalisation and privatisation, the Russian media again came back to their home-port under the piloting of a caring helmsman promising stability and prosperity in the best traditions of the Soviet school of agitation and propaganda. Brian Fay (2003: 227) summarises it aptly:

“The past and the present interpenetrate one another. As Faulkner so well put it: “The past never was; it is”. The present is the continuation of the past, and the past lives on in the present. Moreover, what we take to be the nature of the past is in part a function of what we take to be the present. The past and the present, far from being separate time periods, commingle and define themselves in part in terms of the other.” (Fay 2003: 227)

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**Journalists in Russian regions:  
How different generations view their professional roles**

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## **Journalists in the Russian Regions: How different generations view their professional roles**

Svetlana Pasti and Jukka Pietiläinen<sup>1</sup>

The history of the post-Soviet media offers abundant material for research on the transformation from an authoritarian and closed society to a democratic and open one. The post-Soviet media, as its fifteen-year history shows, has in principle been kept on the leash of the political authority – it is possible to let go of the leash, or to shorten it. During the *perestroika* era and in the early 1990s Russian journalists' understanding of the 'fourth estate' had a real sense of political efficacy and empowerment. Yeltsin's government, fascinated by the spirit of freedom of speech, had given the green light to liberal laws and reforms, and its inability to control the political situation left space for freedom, even anarchy.

A decade later, at the start of the 2000s, the new government of Vladimir Putin adopted a course of strengthening political authority which, according to the Secretary general of the Union of Journalists of Russia, Igor Yakovenko, has resulted in systematic 'purges' of the political, media and financial fields and drastically changed the conditions of media freedom and elections in the country. Yakovenko points out that after the fall of Vladimir Gusinsky's media holding and its core, NTV, there was not a single non-government national channel left in Russia. The Russian media was taught a lesson after which most media outlets introduced a form of self-censorship (Yakovenko and Pasti 2004, p. 7).

Analyses of media developments in Russia have generally divided the post-Soviet period into three stages: up to 1995; the Yeltsin period, 1996–1999; and a third period after Putin came to power in 2000 (I. Zassoursky 2001; Y. Zassoursky 2001).

In recent years Russian and Western experts have noted a reactionary tendency and have described the present political course in such terms as 'quasi-democracy', 'guided democracy', 'pseudo-elections', 'pseudo-referendums', 'no free media' (Shevtsova 2007; Petrov 2005; Furman 2005; Yavlinsky 2004; Lipman and Faul 2001; Oates and Roselle 2000). The Freedom House Annual Survey of Freedom Country Ratings from 1972 to 2000 indicate that the state of political rights and civil liberties do not show a positive dynamic over the last decade (Rukavishnikov 2003, p. 32). For two years running Russia has been in the group of not free countries. In 2006 it is grouped with Burma, Zimbabwe and China (Freedom House 2006). Reporters without Borders (RSF) regularly set a low index of freedom of journalists and media in Russia: the 121<sup>st</sup> place (139 countries) in 2002, the 148<sup>th</sup> place (166

in 2003, the 140<sup>th</sup> place (167) in 2004, the 138<sup>th</sup> place (167) in 2005, the 147<sup>th</sup> place (168) in 2006. The experts of RSF point to increasing State control over media, limitation of information about the situation in Chechnya and an absence of different points of view on television (Reporters without Borders 2006; Moscow Media Law and Policy Institute 2005).

The British newspaper *The Guardian* (11 April 2005) sounded the alarm about the collapse of the liberal press with the closure of the critical to the Kremlin daily *Russkii Kur'er*, difficulties in *Moskovskie novosti* and *Gazeta*, and problems in *Izvestiya* because of its coverage of the Beslan school siege, all of which 'in part mimics the demise of its political equivalent – the liberal and libertarian parties virtually extinct in parliament and facing annihilation at the ballot box from new left and rightwing alternatives crafted by the Kremlin'. *The Guardian* cites Alexei Simonov of the Glasnost Defence Foundation: 'Our state does not defend the press, it defends its citizens from the press'.

On the other hand, some researchers see post-Soviet Russia as a normal country among middle-income countries in which state intervention in the media is almost universal. In 2000–2001, while Putin's government was hounding the tycoons Berezovsky and Gusinsky out of the media business, a similar campaign was unfolding in South Korea (categorized as not even partly free but free by Freedom House) (Schleifer 2005, pp. 173–76). As is the case in poor or middle-income countries, there is little public demand for alternative, non-government media. The Russian media have matured as businesses, but they have not created better journalism. Reporting is too muffled, and too bland as far as political coverage is concerned (Media Sustainability Index 2004, p. 191).

Another comment on the present situation in Russia suggests that there is no turning back because the majority of transformations are irreversible, while there is an appearance of *sovietism*, the core of the political culture that is evident in the common process 'of *sovietization* of the political and social spheres' (Blum 2005). The Levada Centre in its numerous opinion polls confirms the strong adherence of the people to Soviet habits and values (Levada 2004, 2003). One of the most recent studies revealed that the Soviet model of political system remains the most attractive in comparison with Western democracy and the present post-Soviet system, and its popularity among ordinary people increases every year (Dubin 2005, p. 14), whereas Russian support for the adoption of a democratic political system based on a Western model has been in decline since 1996 (EU-Russia Centre/Levada Centre 2007, p. 14).

The aim of this chapter is to find out what kind of differences exist in professional values among Russian journalists on the basis of their background in terms of age, gender, education, income, professional position and type of media. A central background feature was also belonging to the older or newer generation of journalists, whose importance has been noted Sosnovskaya (2000) and Pasti (2005a,

2005b, 2004) and was also suggested on the basis of journalistic texts and practices (Voltmer 2000; Geisslinger 1997). We shall also consider whether the values of journalists in Russia are similar to those of journalists in Third World countries which have until recently been ruled by authoritarian or one-party systems, and in which journalists are poorly paid and subject to conflicting pressures.

### Earlier research

In the United States, research on the professional values of journalists has a long tradition. Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (1976, 1972) used eight variables, and, distinguished by factor analyses, a *neutral orientation* and a *participating orientation*. They classified functions like ‘investigate government claims’, ‘provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems’, ‘discuss national policy while it is still being developed’ and ‘develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public’ as a participant orientation to journalism, while ‘get information to the public quickly’, ‘importance of verified information’, ‘concentration on the widest possible public’ and ‘provide entertainment and relaxation’ were classified as a neutral orientation.

Weaver and Wilhoit (1986, pp. 112–17) called the orientations identified by Johnstone et al. an *information disseminator* role (neutral orientation) and an *interpretive/investigative* role (participant orientation). They also added a third, *adversarial* role, which has a sceptical orientation both to public officials and to business. Both Johnstone et al. and Weaver and Wilhoit found that the organizational environment was most predictive of journalistic role orientation. First, star reporters with higher salaries had the strongest leanings toward the interpretive role. Second, journalists working in print media were more likely to subscribe to an interpretive orientation than their colleagues working in other media. Third, persons with supervisory editorial authority tended to lean toward the disseminator role. Values also had an impact: journalists who valued autonomy highly favoured the interpreter role while journalists who placed greater importance on job security tended to be disseminators (Weaver and Wilhoit 1986, pp. 117–21). In their follow-up study, Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) added a fourth role, *populist mobilizer*, now with a battery of 12 questions. The new populist mobilizer function consists of four elements: ‘developing the interests of the public’, ‘providing entertainment’, ‘setting the political agenda’ and ‘letting ordinary people express views’.

The questionnaire was developed further by Ramaprasad (2003, 2001), who included six additional questions on media roles for her survey of Tanzanian journalists in order to make it sensitive to the specific political and press dynamics in a developing country. Similar surveys have also been conducted in Spain (Canel and Sánchez-Aranda 1999), Nepal (Ramaprasad and Kelly 2003), Uganda (Mwesige

2004), and Brazil (Herscovitz 2004). Weaver's global survey (1998) also included other countries.

A comparative study of American and Russian journalists was made by a team of researchers from both countries based on material collected in 1992 (Wu, Weaver and Johnson 1996; Kolesnik, Svitich and Shiryayeva 1995). Wu, Weaver and Johnson reported that they had tried to employ the same factor analysis as Weaver and Wilthoit (1986), but 'failed to produce similar composite measures in either the Russian or U.S. surveys'. Therefore they used individual variables to define disseminator and interpretive roles. It was possible, in this study, to discern the traits of the role of agitator in Russian journalists. They believed 'more in such active roles as setting the political agenda and developing the interest of the public, but not in investigating government claims'. This suggested that 'Russian journalists see themselves playing a role as creative, independent agents in the Russian political and social context', as members of the intelligentsia of that time (Wu, Weaver and Johnson 1996, p. 544).

It seems that a change in values occurred rather quickly among Russian journalists in the first half of the 1990s. While in 1992 journalists could be divided into three equal groups (authoritarian-technocratic, humanistic and informative-cognitive) on the basis of their professional ideologies, by 1995 over two thirds supported the informative-cognitive model while the authoritarian-technocratic approach had almost completely lost its support, although in practice this approach still seemed to have quite a lot of backing (Dzyaloshinsky 1996, pp. 156–57). Roudakova (2004) points out that in the first half of the 1990s Russian journalists engaged fervently in public battles and therefore became indistinguishable from politicians and other players on the field of power, instead of becoming a guild that maintains a certain distance from the state. In this respect Russian journalism is very similar to the political journalism era in the history of Western journalism.

Most Russian journalists now reject the political role of journalists, while they support the idea that a journalist is 'an objective observer and analyst who is not supposed to take somebody's side'. Nonetheless only seldom do they see journalism as a fourth estate (*Glasnost Defence Foundation* 1995, pp. 37–40). Voltmer (2000) has observed that despite the news becoming more factual and timely, a high degree of subjective evaluations has remained in Russian journalism. Sosnovskaya (2000, p.194) has pointed out differences between Soviet, *perestroika*-era and post-Soviet journalists. While *perestroika*-era journalists were primarily interested in public relations and to some extent fulfilled the function of a civil society, the post-*perestroika* journalists are primarily concerned with the commercial sphere. According to journalists of the old school, the public needs journalistic opinions. They also think that opinionated journalism demands greater literary mastery than factual journalism (*ibid.*, p. 178). Sosnovskaya (2005, p. 146) continues that in the Soviet era the cognitive component of professional identity was dominant, during



*perestroika* the affective component dominated, while in the post-*perestroika* period practical knowledge is the dominant component.

Koltsova (2006, 2001) has pointed out that Russian journalists are aware of political control and consider it inevitable. This seems to be due to the sudden collapse of old power relations, ‘while “new” ones are still not routinized and thus have become highly visible to the actors’ (Koltsova 2001, p. 333). According to her, Russian journalists are more controlled than their Western colleagues but less dominated. Pasti (2005a, 2004) argues that Russian journalism of the 1990s has been formed by two types of professional roles, representing two types of professional subcultures: the old generation (practitioners entering the profession in the Soviet era) and the new generation (practitioners who entered the profession after 1990). The old professionals perform the role of social organizers with the inherent functions of upbringing, educating and punishing, whereas the young generation of the 1990s is orientated to the new role of entertainers of the masses. Despite their differences, both accept the political function of journalism as a propaganda machine during elections and other important events.

## **This study**

The European Union together with other international organizations continues to initiate and invest in programmes for the support of democracy in Russia in different fields, including the media. One of the recent TACIS projects was titled ‘Promoting Independence of Regional Mass Media in Russia’ and implemented in 2002–2004 with the participation of the University of Tampere Department of Journalism and Mass Communication by the Internews-Europe Consortium and the Union of Journalists of Russia, with the support of the professional journalistic associations and the schools of journalism of the universities in selected regions. The project provided three cycles of seminars for journalists on the problems of journalistic ethics in nine regions of the North-West, the Volga, the Urals, Siberia, the Central and Southern parts of Russia. In total about 1,200 media professionals took part in the programme (Glasnost Defence Foundation 2004).

The profession of a journalist has a low status in contemporary Russia, while it typically functions as an appendage of the political system. The seminars were aimed at raising this status by strengthening the self-regulation of the professional community on the basis of ethical norms. A new round of seminars on journalistic ethics started in spring 2005 for journalists in the same regions (Glasnost Defence Foundation 2005).

For the authors of this chapter, a fortunate opportunity arose to combine their work as invited experts in the seminars with the collection of primary data. As experts we had been involved in the elaboration of the training curriculum,

preparation of books for journalists and schools of journalism and delivery of lectures. As researchers we had an opportunity to observe the journalists' seminars aimed at generating discussions on questions of journalistic ethics and professionalism and current problems of professional practice focused on conditions for the media and journalists in the given region, and on efforts to elaborate suggestions for strengthening journalistic autonomy and independence.

In the course of the seminars we carried out a survey of journalists aimed at gathering information about the social profile of regional journalists, their professional values and attitudes to their work. The research task was to clarify to what professional roles regional journalists are inclined and what contents fill those roles. How have the concepts of the professional role have been patterned and what kind of belief systems emerge? How is the professional consciousness of Russian journalists developing in comparison with journalists of other countries? How much do Russian journalist generations differ from each other in their perceptions of the profession? And what implications on the further development of journalism in Russia can be derived from a better understanding of the views and attitudes of younger generations?

The survey was carried out during the third cycle of the regional seminars held for journalists, editors and other media professionals in October-December 2003 in the cities of Ekaterinburg, Kazan, Nizhnii Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Petrozavodsk, Rostov-on-Don, Samara, Tomsk, and Yaroslavl'. Participants were invited to the seminars by local trainers, among whom were teachers of schools of journalism in universities and members of the Union of Journalists of Russia. The participants, in total approximately 400 persons, represented different types of media of their own and neighbouring regions. A total of 237 questionnaires were returned. The study does not claim any generalizability of its findings for the whole journalistic population. It is possible that the sample is biased toward those who are more conscious of ethical questions and interested in developing their skills. However, the sample is varied and represents Russian regional journalists widely and can be used to detect differences.

A questionnaire comprising 35 questions was based on earlier studies by Weaver (1998), Weaver and Wilhoit (1996), Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003), Ramaprasad (2001) on journalists in the United States, Tanzania and Nepal. Added were some questions topical for the study of Russian journalists such as second job, attitudes to and the practice of producing stories paid by political or economic interests, and as well as support for censorship. Professional functions were elicited with a battery of 19 questions. Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with statements on a five-point scale. Factor analysis was used to process the questionnaires. Additionally comparative analysis of the responses was conducted on the basis of age in the profession (the journalist's generation), gender, type of media and region as well as crosstabulation of the variables.

## Findings

**Journalistic generations.** The sample was divided into three groups labelled ‘journalistic generations’ on the basis of the year in which they started in journalism. The first generation, the Soviet one, had started in journalism before 1990, the second generation, the transitional one, had started in journalism in 1991–1999, and the third, the post-2000 generation, had started in 2000 or later. Some differences were apparent between these three generations of Russian journalists; they are summed up in Table X.1.

**Age.** The mean age was 38 years, a third were less than 23 years old while a quarter were over 50 years. A quarter had started in journalism before 1980 while more than half had started in journalism only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. One third had started in journalism after 1999; the most common starting year was 2001. The age group difference between the old and the new generations was as much as 57 years: the oldest respondent was born in 1928 and the youngest respondent in 1985, whereas the age difference in professional experience between the generations amounted to 51 years: some Soviet journalists had started journalistic work in 1952 in the era of Stalin, whereas the young journalists had started their work as late as 2003. The number of Soviet journalists was reasonably large in the journalistic population of regional Russia. Thus, the sample included 99 Soviet journalists, 75 transitional journalists and 61 journalists who had started their career after 2000.

**Gender.** Of the sample of 237 respondents, one third were males. The gender analysis showed an increasing intake of women into the profession in our sample: 40 per cent of the Soviet generation were males, 30 per cent of the transitional generation were males and only 15 per cent of the new generation were males. That is, the rising generation of males already did not perceive journalism as a masculine occupation and a worthy business although in the Soviet time it had traditionally been a male profession. For example, in the 1970s only a third of journalists were women (Svitich 2003, p. 84). In this respect, Russia is similar to some other countries, like Finland, in which journalists are increasingly women, although the ‘feminization’ of journalistic profession may be happening more rapidly in contemporary Russia. One of the reasons for the decrease in the number of male journalists can be found in new educational requirements that have recently reappeared in the media, preferring to employ graduates of the schools of journalism at universities. In comparison with the transition period, the number of journalists with a journalistic education is increasing. Thus, the profession is becoming closed to those without a formal education. In order to attract more men into higher education some state universities have started to enrol males after military service through an easier examination, which is in a certain sense a return to the Soviet practice of recruiting males for higher education. The other reason for the lack of attractiveness of journalism is the

low salaries. Thus, in the media young journalists begin earning about 2,000 roubles a month (about 57 Euros), whereas in the PR service of a big company or bank a graduate of a school of journalism begins at about 40–50,000 roubles (1,400 Euros) a month. The old generation has an opportunity to stay in the profession getting the pension and the salary, and its income on average is higher than the income of the transitional (middle) generation and the young generation of the 2000s.

**Income.** Income was elicited on a five-point scale in roubles. One third of the journalists earned between 6,000 and 10,000 roubles, which was equivalent to 170–300 Euros (on an average exchange rate of 35 roubles to 1 Euro in May 2005). One third of the journalists earned less than 6,000 roubles (less than 170 Euros) and one third earned more than 10,000 roubles (more than 300 Euros).

**Education.** Approximately half had an education in journalism (completed or not) and most of the others had higher education in some other field.

**Second job.** Nearly half of the respondents had some other job besides the main job and one third worked in several media. Approximately one fifth of the respondents were not journalists working in any media; most of these were PR specialists and teachers of journalism. However, the results of the analysis did not differ much even when the non-journalists were excluded from the analysis. The new generation demonstrated less mobility than the Soviet generation in getting a second job. Half of them had a second job outside journalism, as was also the case among the Soviet generation, but only every fourth worked in several media.

Interestingly, some questions on the questionnaire were omitted by the respondents. For instance, the question on their posts (*dolzhnost'*) was missed by every fourth. They were those journalists who worked in one or several media, who combined work in the media and PR sectors, pensioners who received a pension and continued to work in the media and other organizations, and also students of schools of journalism whether or not they were working in the media. It was assumed that some of the respondents probably did not know – or were not interested to know – how their post was defined in their contracts (if indeed any contracts had been signed), whereas those combining work in different media and PR sections felt confused as to what post should be selected for the questionnaire response. This calls to mind the former lack of clearly defined labour agreements between journalists and employers, a system of keeping work and payment officially and non-officially (paid under the table) and a weakly developed professional identity, since journalists revealed confusion in their self-identification.

**Membership.** The Union of Journalists meant nothing to the post-2000 generation. Whereas a vast majority of the Soviet generation continued their membership, only a third of the transitional generation of the 1990s were members and very few of the new generation.

*Attitudes to materials paid by political and economic interests.* Approximately half of journalists produced hidden advertisements – stories favourable to and paid for by a particular source, but presented as news. There was a major difference in attitudes between those who produced paid materials and those who did not. Many of those who saw paid materials as normal, or normal but not part of journalism, also produced them, while 80 per cent of those who thought they should not exist did not produce them. Soviet journalists most often considered these materials should not exist while transitional and post-2000 journalists considered them a private matter even if they did not personally produce any. Table X.2 shows the relationship between the practice of producing paid materials and attitudes towards them. One third of the Soviet generation believed that articles paid by outsiders but presented as news should not exist. The post-2000 generation saw them increasingly as a private matter. On the other hand, the number of those who saw these materials as ‘normal’ or ‘normal but not journalism’ remained stable at around one third in each group.

*Professional roles.* Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a number of professional functions on a five-point scale as shown in Table X.3. Of 19 tasks, seven were the same as in the study by Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) while most of the others were taken from Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003). The journalists perceived accurate and timely information, objective reporting, development of intellectual and cultural interests of the public, and analysis of complex problems as the most important functions. The least important were all functions related to support for the authorities (the last six tasks on the list in Table X.3) as well as criticism of the authorities and entertainment. As was the case with the earlier study by Wu, Weaver and Johnson (1996), Russian journalists tended to give higher scores to these professional functions than American journalists.<sup>2</sup> Possibly because of the selected sample (participants in professional training seminars), in this study support for some tasks (providing analysis and commentary on complex problems, giving ordinary people a chance to express views on public affairs) received significantly stronger support than in the Wu-Weaver-Johnson study, while some others (investigating government claims, criticizing the actions of authorities or opposing government officials) were supported at the same level as in the earlier study.

Analyzing the rating of professional functions, these 19 variables were subjected to factor analysis.<sup>3</sup> The results are summed up in Table X 4. There five factors emerged, but it was decided that four factors were sufficient since the fifth had a heavy loading in only one variable. These four factors together explained 43 per cent of the variance and were only slightly correlated. The strongest correlation (.17) was between the third and fourth factors.

The first factor was composed most clearly of six variables: portraying regional leaders positively; portraying the head of the regional government positively;



portraying a positive image of the region; propagating the regional government policy; portraying a positive image of the community; and actively supporting regional development programmes. This cluster could be called ‘development journalism’ in line with Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003) but in the Russian case it would be better to call it a *propagandist* role. A majority reject this role rather than supporting it. Yet there is a minority of nearly 20 per cent who support an open propagandist role.

The second factor was composed of five variables: discussing regional policy when it is still being developed; informing voters about local politicians’ viewpoints; reporting objectively on regional development programmes; keeping voters informed about the work of the regional government; and providing an analysis of complex problems. It comes close to the *informer* role, although it also includes one function, discussing policy while being developed, classified as participant by Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (1976).

The third factor was composed of four variables: promoting the strength and unity of communities; developing the intellectual and cultural interests of the public; working with letters to the editor; and giving ordinary people a chance to express views on public affairs. These functions establish an *organizer* role – well in conformity with the Soviet tradition of journalism.

The fourth factor was composed of three variables: investigating claims and statements made by local government; providing accurate information in a timely manner; and criticizing actions of authorities. This was a somewhat strange combination: investigative and critical functions together with accurate information. However, those journalists who emphasized criticism and investigation also emphasized accurate informing as the grounds for criticism. In fact, over 95 per cent of those who considered criticism or investigation to be very important also perceived accurate and timely reporting as very important. We call this role *investigator*, although it has also strong elements of both the adversary and informer roles as defined by earlier research.

Russian journalists differed from journalists in both Tanzania and Nepal, on the one hand (Ramaprasad and Kelly 2003), and from journalists in the United States (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996, 1986) and Spain (Canel and Sánchez-Aranda 1999), on the other. American journalists displayed functions belonging to three or four groups: (i) neutral or information disseminating, (ii) interpretive or investigative, (iii) adversary and (iv) populist mobilizer. The Spanish survey also included an advocating value. In the Nepal study, the functions were grouped around development journalism (support for national leaders and their policies), citizen education (educating people about how government operates), public advocacy, and culture. In Tanzania the value groups were very similar to those in Nepal: national development (support for national leaders and their policies), educating about government, information/analysis and entertainment (Ramaprasad and Kelly

2003). In Brazil three value groups – interpretive, adversary and disseminator – were discovered, but these factors had different loadings than in the US survey (Herscovitz 2004, p. 79).

In Russia the most interesting difference was the close connection between the adversary role and factual information. In other words, there was no distinction between the neutral and participant roles. Russian journalists rather made the distinction between various forms of participation: (i) supporter of the public good (informer), (ii) supporter of the community (organizer), or (iii) supporter or opponent of the authorities (propagandist and investigator). Russian journalists perceive journalistic functions in a somewhat similar way as Brazilian journalists, who also connect factual information and the adversary role. Moreover, the same connection between the adversary function and factual information was found in public opinion towards the media in Russia (Pietiläinen 2005, p. 113).

In this study further correlations were made between background variables and types of roles identified on the basis of the factor analysis. The results are shown in Table X.5. The *informer* and *investigator* roles were supported more among Soviet journalists while the *propagandist* role was supported more often among those journalists who had started in the post-Soviet era but were older and had earlier worked in some other profession. Younger post-Soviet journalists supported the *propagandist* and *informer* roles less than others. The *organizer* role did not depend on journalistic generations, while the post-2000 generation was not significantly correlated with any of the roles. In general, younger respondents tended to respond more ‘in the middle’, while older journalists tended to give a lot of support to most of the statements.

The *propagandist* role was characterized by supporting political censorship, lack of education in journalism, an older starting age in journalism and a positive attitude to articles paid by political and economic interests. Support for this role was linked with working in the press service. It was opposed by those working as rank and file journalists.

The *informer* role was characteristic of older journalists with high salaries and long experience in the profession. They also had a negative attitude to paid articles and were often members of the Union of Journalists. They worked in several media less often than other journalists. Those working in the press service also supported this role.

The *organizer* role was characteristic of journalists with lower salaries, who did not produce articles paid for outsiders. They also had education in journalism more often than others. Many workers in the press services also supported this role.

The *investigator* role was supported by journalists with an education in journalism. They did not produce articles paid by outsiders and they opposed political censorship. The correlations between support for four professional roles

and other variables suggest interesting differences between the three generations as summarized in Table X.6.

Age caused significant variance only in the transitional generation, in which older journalists rather supported the informer and propagandist roles. Among this generation, lack of education in journalism, high salaries and union membership increased support for the informer role. The practice of articles paid by outsiders reduced support for the organizer role among the Soviet journalists, whereas among the post-2000 journalists it increased their support for the propagandist role and reduced support for the investigator role. Support of political censorship led to support for the propagandist role among the Soviet and transitional generations, while it reduced support for the investigator role among the post-2000 generation. Education in journalism had a significant impact on the post-2000 journalists, reducing their support for the propagandist role and increasing their support for the investigator and organizer roles.

## Discussion

This study of regional journalists in Russia focused on differences between three generations of practitioners in order to identify breaks and continuities among older and newer journalists in their attitudes and values. Three generations of Russian journalists entered the profession in different political epochs: before 1990, in the epoch of socialism – the Soviet generation; in the 1990s, the crisis decade of the dismantling of the Soviet system with simultaneous introduction of the capitalist patterns – the transitional generation; and in the 2000s, heading for the stabilization of society and its consolidation which can be seen also as a return to Soviet traditions and values – the post-2000 generation.

The present situation differs from the previous stage of the 1990s when journalism as well as other institutions experienced a crucial transformation in all respects. It ceased to implement official instructions for ideological campaigns because after the collapse of communism the media became free from state and party control. Journalism became an open field for anybody caring to try his/her hand in an increasingly popular profession. Two utterly different generations began to form journalism: on the one hand, the homogeneous and disciplined professionals of the Soviet school of journalism, and newer and more heterogeneous practitioners, often lacking education and experience in journalism, who rejected some elements of Soviet journalism and searched for new models, also from the West, on the other. The two generations were in a professional and ethical conflict with each other, with different understandings of the profession and of the journalist's role in society. Whereas the old generation retained 'a cultivated view of journalism as an important societal task' with the advocacy, organizer and educator functions, the new

generation gravitated towards a newer and more fashionable genre of entertainment 'aiming at a sensationalist media agenda. Many of them perceived journalism as a type of PR, working for the interests of influential groups and persons in politics and business' (Pasti 2005a, p. 89). However, both conducted propaganda during elections because the media remained political instruments of the state and big capital (ibid., p. 108). The information wars, full of lies and scandals paid for competing interest groups, became an attribute of Russian journalism of the 1990s (Zassoursky 2004).

The present situation in journalism reflects the direction in which the entire society has been moving under the leadership of President Putin towards a stabilization in which some elements of a return to Soviet traditions can be seen. The dependence of the media on state and private sponsors differs little from its previous dependence on the state in Soviet times as federal structures or private investors subsidize up to 90 per cent of Russia's newspapers. Sponsors generally see their publications as a political resource and do not expect the projects to cover their costs. Nearly every serious national daily today has either a financial and industrial group behind it or the state itself, while regional authorities support most of the leading newspapers in the regions (The Russian Periodical Press Market 2005, p. 11). The Russian government report of 2006 notes, on the one hand, dynamic growth of advertising, retail and subscriptions, and on the other hand a lack of development of media measurement, a low trustworthiness of statistics on the media market, the economic and political dependence of some editions, especially regional and local newspapers on the power bodies of different levels (The Russian Periodical Press Market 2006, pp. 8–9).

Television is practically completely under state control. According to Mikhail Fedotov (2005) establishing state control over previously private or formally private media began in 2001, and included control over the advertising media market through the 'Media Committee' under government officials. The journalism of the 2000s received reinforcement from the post-2000 generation which had time to graduate from schools of journalism and came to work in the media. The economically dependent media as well as journalists working in them have to adjust to the agenda and policy of their financers, especially at election times. Before the parliamentary elections of 1999, journalists did not show much understanding of the norms of fair and impartial broadcasting (White, McAllister and Oates 2002, p. 30). The familiar Soviet approach to the media as the instruments of propaganda and manipulation still is inherent in the mentality of government officials and emerging capitalists.

This study did not reveal a large gap between generations in their perceptions of professional roles as found by the study of St Petersburg journalists of the 1990s (Pasti 2005a). On the contrary, this study points to the continuity in professional values across three generations. Thus, the *organizer* role, which includes feedback to the audience, finds support in all three generations. A decade earlier, in the middle

of the 1990s, this work with letters to the editor was practically rejected by the young generation, not least because of that the media were freed from their duty to respond to letters to the editor and the letters rooms were eliminated in the editorial offices (Pasti 2004).

Although the *propagandist* role finds the least support in all three generations, in practice journalists have to perform in this role by promoting a positive image of the authorities. Interestingly, the transitional and post-2000 generations mostly support political control of the media. The *informer* role of a journalist who objectively informs and discusses regional development and local politics has the strongest support across all three generations. However, combining functions of neutral (dissemination of information) and participant (interpretation, investigation and criticising) orientations in the journalists' minds testifies to a lack of neutrality in conformity with the Russian tradition in journalism. This study also confirms the finding in the previous study of St Petersburg media (Pasti 2004) concerning the lack of a neutral orientation among journalists. Moreover, the new generations have little interest in investigative journalism and only a few young journalists support criticising the government. Thus, since 1992 (Wu, Weaver and Johnson 1996) Russian journalists have not changed their professional values but rather remain the collaborators of the state than its investigators and critics.

The results also suggest that the oppositional role of journalism which was part of a professional self-identity in the period of *perestroika* and *glasnost*' is decreasing, since a clearly adversarial function (criticising the authorities) does not elicit much support among the new generations. On the other hand, a paternalistic relationship to the audience has retained its position. The clearly declining functions are those linked with the idea of 'public journalism' such as 'a chance for ordinary people to express their views', 'keeping voters informed about the work of regional government' and 'promoting the strength and unity of the community'. This could be interpreted as a distancing from the Soviet past, in which the journalist was typically a representative of ordinary people and journalism functioned somewhat in the role of public control. On the other hand, it reveals that the journalists have little respect for their audience.

The clearest break between the older and younger generations emerges in their attitudes to the writing of stories paid for by political or economic interests. Many journalists look at venal journalism as an essentially private matter. Viktor Loshak (2005), a reputable and experienced journalist and editor, recently published an article in the newspaper *Izvestiya* entitled 'The plastic boys'. This article became the public protest of an old generation against the 'plastic journalism' that had emerged with coming of those younger journalists who had grown up with the internet and came to journalism primarily to receive thousands of dollars and have a good time. In general, Russian journalists have preserved many Soviet-era values, of which the most important is the willingness to exert influence in society, one way or another,



and a moral conviction that a journalist should not be indifferent to what s/he writes about. The young generation also supports the political tradition of paternalism which results in the arbitrariness of political authority on the one hand and servility in journalists, on the other.

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## Tables

**Table X.1: Differences on the basis of three generations of Russian journalists (percentages)**

	<b>Soviet</b>	<b>Transitional</b>	<b>Post-2000</b>
Gender, male	40.9	29.2	14.8
Salary level, average on scale 1–5	3,60	3,04	2,27
Education in journalism (full or part)	62.5	36.0	63.0
Work in several media	41.3	27.9	24.5
Second job	44.3	41.7	47.2
Union membership	86.4	35.2	3.7
Critical attitude to materials paid for/by political and economic interests	34.1	16.4	11.1
Has made materials paid for political and economic interests	55.2	62.0	50.0
Supports control of entertainment	65.5	75.4	67.9
Supports control of political materials	45.3	54.3	66.0
Portraying regional leaders in a positive manner very important	0	0	0
Portraying a head of regional government positively very important	2.7	1.4	1.9
Portraying a positive image of the region very important	6.3	2.9	5.7
Propagating regional government policy very important	1.3	0	0
Portraying a positive image of the community very important	3.8	0	3.8
Actively supporting regional government development programmes very important	12.5	4.5	7.7
Discussing regional policy when it is still being developed very important	73.4	58.6	58.5
Informing voters about local politicians' viewpoints very important	61.4	40.8	61.1
Reporting objectively on regional development programmes very important	83.1	73.2	74.1
Providing analysis and commentary of complex problems very important	78.3	70.0	68.5
Promoting the strength and unity of communities very important	65.4	47.8	44.2
Developing intellectual and cultural interests of the public very important	73.2	71.4	69.8
Keeping voters informed about the work of regional government very important	70.7	70.4	57.4
Giving ordinary people a chance to express views on public affairs very important	72.3	58.6	49.1
Investigating claims and statements made by local government very important	45.7	32.4	34.6
Criticizing actions of authorities very important	41.4	13.4	5.7
Providing accurate information in a timely manner very important	89.2	81.7	87.0
Working with letters to the editor very important	58.8	59.4	51.9
Providing entertainment and relaxation very important	22.5	17.4	34.0



**Table X.2: Attitudes to articles paid for political and economic interests (number of respondents)**

Attitude to paid materials	Had produced paid materials (regularly or occasionally)	Had not produced paid materials
A normal phenomenon	20	4
Normal but not journalism	29	11
Private issue of every journalist	56	47
They should not exist	11	41

**Table X.3: Support of professional functions (percentages)**

Professional functions	% very important	% not important at all
Providing accurate information in a timely manner	85.8	1.3
Reporting objectively on regional development programmes	77.3	0.4
Developing intellectual and cultural interests of the public	72.2	1.8
Providing analysis and commentary of complex problems	71.9	0.4
Keeping voters informed about the work of the regional govt.	67.0	0.5
Discussing the regional policy when it is still being developed	63.3	0.4
Giving people a chance to express views on public affairs	61.9	0.4
Working with letters to the editor	56.8	1.4
Informing voters about local politicians' viewpoints	55.6	0
Promoting the strength and unity of communities	54.6	2.3
Investigating claims and statements made by the local govt.	38.2	0.9
Providing entertainment and relaxation	24.1	6.8
Criticizing actions of authorities	21.4	2.7
Actively supporting regional government development programmes	6.2	14.4
Portraying a positive image of the region	6.0	20.2
Portraying a positive image of the community	3.0	22.0
Portraying a head of the regional government positively	1.7	35.6
Propagating regional government policy	0.9	32.9
Portraying regional leaders positively	0.0	34.3

**Table X.4: Factor analysis of professional functions**

	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>Propagandist</b>				
Portraying regional leaders positively	.82			
Portraying the head of the regional government positively	.77			
Portraying a positive image of the region	.77			
Propagating regional government policy	.75			-.23
Portraying a positive image of the community	.72			.20
Actively supporting regional government development programmes	.51		.28	
Providing entertainment and relaxation	.25		.22	.21
<b>Informer</b>				
Discussing regional policy when it is still being developed		.71		
Informing voters about local politicians' viewpoints		.71		
Reporting objectively on regional development programmes		.58	.30	
Keeping voters informed about the work of the regional government		.45	.33	
Providing analysis of and commentary on complex problems		.44		.26
<b>Organizer</b>				
Promoting the strength and unity of communities	.23		.73	
Developing intellectual and cultural interests of the public	.26		.67	
Working with letters to the editor			.38	
Giving people a chance to express views on public affairs		.25	.33	
<b>Investigator</b>				
Investigating claims and statements made by the local govt.		.36		.46
Providing accurate information in a timely manner		.25	.22	.46
Criticizing the actions of the authorities				.30
% of variance explained	21.1	14.4	4.7	2.9

Principal axis analysis; varimax rotation. Factor loadings below .20 not included.

**Table X.5: Correlations between the background variables and roles identified by factors (correlations with significance over 0.1)**

	<b>Propagandist</b>	<b>Informer</b>	<b>Organizer</b>	<b>Investigator</b>
Age		.20		
Salary		.21	-.18	
Working in several media		-.15		
Supporting political censorship	.31			-.14
Education in journalism	-.20		.15	.20
Years in journalism		.17		
Starting age	.19	.15		
Has produced paid materials			-.25	-.19
Positive attitude to paid materials	.14	-.21		
Union member		.19		
Rank and file journalist	-.19			
Working in press service	.19	.21	.15	
Soviet		.15		.15
Old post-Soviet	.20			
Young post-Soviet	-.13	-.18		
Transitional		-.13		

**Table X.6: Significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) correlations of professional roles and background variables in three generations (+ means more support for that role, – means less support for that role)**

	<b>Soviet generation</b>	<b>Transitional generation</b>	<b>Post-2000 generation</b>
Age		+ informer + propagandist	
Education in journalism		– informer	– propagandist + investigator + organizer
Salary	– propagandist – organizer	+ informer	
Union membership		+ informer	
Has made paid materials	– organizer		+ propagandist – investigator
Support political censorship	+ propagandist	+ propagandist	– investigator

## Notes

- 1 The authors of the article would like to thank Professor Kaarle Nordenstreng, Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Tampere and Yury V. Kazakov, the coordinator of the Tacis project 'Promoting Independence of Regional Mass Media in Russia' (2002–2004) for the support of this study.
- 2 Weaver, Wilthoit and Johnson used a four-point scale, while this study used a five-point scale.
- 3 The statements were analyzed using principal axis factoring with varimax rotation. Principal component analysis and maximum likelihood analyses were also conducted, but they did not give as easily interpretable solutions.