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Between freedom and control: journalism's role in the media system: a study of print journalism in postcommunist Poland

Lena Ziegert
University of Wollongong

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BETWEEN FREEDOM AND CONTROL
Journalism's Role in the Media System.
A Study of Print Journalism in Postcommunist Poland

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

MASTER OF ARTS (HONOURS)

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Lena Ziegert

Graduate School of Journalism
2000
DECLARATION

I, Lena Ziegert, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts (Honours), in the Graduate School of Journalism, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Lena Ziegert

23 March 2000
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BETWEEN FREEDOM AND CONTROL: 

Journalism’s Role in the Media System.

A Study of Print Journalism in Postcommunist Poland

1 INTRODUCTION

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the dramatic political, economic and social change, which occurred almost simultaneously throughout the region, has been the subject of a variety of studies. Different theories on the collapse of communism have approached this from perspectives based on assumptions such as the system’s inability to “modernise” or secure progress, relative deprivation, loss of legitimacy, and institutional dysfunction, to name just a few (Wnuk-Lipinski 1995, Juchler 1996).

All of these studies were based on some kind of “transformation” concept, or more recently, “transition”, which is extended to studies of mass media in postcommunist societies. “Transition” conceptually can have very different meanings and needs to be clarified. It suggests that there is a movement from one stage to another, that is, from communism/authoritarianism to capitalism/democracy. The problem with this view is its inherent value-ladenness: these labels referring to different political systems have the connotations of “control” on one hand and “freedom” on the other. This duality is too simplistic, and does not accurately describe the way media systems function.

The research presented here challenges the idea that political and economic labels can be used exclusively to describe any media system. Such labels tend to redefine
the media systems of postcommunist countries as “progressing” from one type to another. Theoretically, it can be said that all media systems are in transition, in the sense of continuous adaptation, and that this is a process of mediation, adjustment, and trying to reach a compromise between freedom and control. The role of the journalist, at the centre of this transitional process, will be examined.

This research on the press in postcommunist Poland is geared towards three outcomes. Firstly, previous research on the media, specifically the press, in Poland and other postcommunist or “transitional” countries will be analysed to suggest a more general theory which can be used to describe and compare media systems. Secondly, based on the general theory, a model for describing media systems, including those in transition, will be proposed, using Poland as an example. Thirdly, the role of journalists in Polish print media today is examined within this framework.

In examining the practice of journalism in postcommunist Poland, this study recognises that journalists are a product of society, and more specifically, a media system. I intend to address two main issues. The first is to identify the components of a media system and to describe how media systems may vary according to the interaction of these components. The second issue I will inquire into is the role of the journalist within the media system. The analysis will be based on the following questions.

On what basis can we describe, or classify, different media systems? Is it valid to classify a media system according to political, cultural and economic conditions?
the concept of a “free” media a valid one for describing media systems, and if not, which term could be used instead?

Secondly, how can we describe the journalist’s role in the Polish media system? Does the role of the journalist vary depending on the type of media system, and if so, how? Studying the practice of journalism in Poland, a country that is undergoing political, economic and cultural change, may offer an answer to these questions.

1.1 Research Methods

This research methodology comprises a literature review and an empirical survey of Polish journalists. The review focused on developments in the Polish media and other societies in transition; a range of relevant materials were gathered from journalism, media studies and sociological journals.

Polish newspaper and magazine articles, particularly the English-language newspaper The Warsaw Voice, available on the internet, are the main sources of up-to-date information. Other sources acquired through the internet included international journalists’ and media research organisations: the Open Media Research Institute (OMRI), Freedom Forum, Freedom House, and the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Statistics are mainly drawn from research conducted by the Press Research Centre in Krakow, Poland (OBP), the Polish Bureau for Foreign Investment (PAIZ), the private market research organisation SMG/KRC Poland, and the official polling centre CBOS.
The empirical survey involved face-to-face in-depth interviews with Polish journalists from a variety of national newspapers, conducted in Krakow and Warsaw in October and December 1998. These were semi-structured interviews intended to assess journalists' opinions on their role, their attitude to social change in Poland and its effects on their working conditions.

1.2 Limitations of the research

The literature included in this research can be divided into two categories. The first group of studies are recent analyses of "transitional" media systems in postcommunist and communist societies. The second type of literature I have reviewed represents different theoretical approaches to the study of the mass media and journalism.

The empirical research, due to its in-depth nature, was limited in number. A total of nine journalists were interviewed. All of the journalists interviewed worked for national publications of different frequencies of publication, and various political and non-political orientations. These publications were chosen to represent the wide variety of newspapers in Poland. Only nationwide newspapers were selected for this research, due to the difficulties of obtaining sufficient material from the regions. Also, high-circulation newspapers were chosen over smaller publications.¹

The newspapers the journalists worked for represent three different types when classified by frequency of appearance (daily, weekly, or monthly): four dailies,

¹ The newspapers with a circulation of over 250 000 were: Gazeta Wyborcza, Rzeczpospolita, Super Express, and Polityka. These are the highest figures for Polish national newspapers. Tygodnik Powszechny, Wiez and Gazeta Polska have circulations of less than 100 000. (Source: OBP, Krakow, 1998)
three weeklies, and one monthly. They can also be classified by political orientation as two right-wing, two left-wing, one centre-right, one centre-left, and two non-political.\(^2\) Divided according to date of establishment (postcommunist or communist), the newspapers fall into two groups of four.\(^3\) A variety of other daily and weekly newspapers were also studied.

\(^2\) Political orientation according to journalists working for the newspaper.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, approaches to the study of media systems and journalism are discussed. Of particular interest are those studies that focus on the idea of the "transitional" media system, a term which has been used to describe postcommunist media systems. Another way to describe media systems is in terms of whether they are "free" or "repressed". This chapter will show that such labels are value-based and therefore not valid categories for the classification of media systems.

2.1 The Concept of "Transition"

Before outlining recent theories of the media in countries that are said to be "transitional", it should be noted that the idea of "transition" can have several meanings. At the most basic level, "transition" can be simply defined as the movement from one state to another. Applied to the postcommunist countries in Eastern Europe, "transition" refers to the political and economic change from communism to capitalism. However, applying this term means implying a "direction", or the idea of a "progress toward" a particular political or economic destination. It becomes too easy to project ideas of what "should" be happening onto the actual situation.

In fact, a transition from one social order to another involves multiple institutional changes in areas outside politics or economics, which do not necessarily occur simultaneously. It has been observed by theorists such as Dahrendorf (1990) that
socio-cultural change is much slower than legal changes. Thus, a society may have adopted new political and economic institutions, but its political culture, traditions, values, or social mood may still reflect the old order. A theory of transition needs to take into account these "soft variables relating to culture and consciousness" (Sztompka 1998:46).

The significance of culture - shared beliefs, customs, language - is worth noting, since journalism, as part of a particular society, will reflect aspects of that society's culture. While this means that each media system is unique, in a sense it is also a reminder that journalism's most basic function - communication - which is based on culture, is fundamentally the same. Of course, the practice of journalism may be more or less restricted at different times, or in different places.

The point is that the similarities between media systems, however basic, should not be neglected. This avoids the division of society according to the ideological categories of capitalist or communist. After all, as Jakob Juchler, a specialist on postcommunism, observes, these two types of society are not fundamentally different. Although there are many differences, both labels refer to modern, industrialised societies, with similar institutions of state and established divisions of labour (Juchler 1994:22).

Studies of media systems in "transition" take significantly different approaches. Several of these will be summarised briefly, before deciding which approach, if any, is most useful in understanding media systems. As suggested above, a suitable theory would be applicable to any media system, not just the media in societies which are said to be in transition. The aim is to analyse media systems as they are,
not for what they will be. Surely, in every society, communication is continually adapting to the conditions in which it takes place.

2.2 STUDIES OF “TRANSITIONAL” MEDIA SYSTEMS

2.2.1 The Transitional Press System - Mass Media in Bulgaria

In a recent study of the media in postcommunist Bulgaria, Ekaterina Ognianova (1997) outlines a theory of the transitional press system. Ognianova reviews several media system classification theories, pointing out that these are usually based on the assumption that the type of media system that exists in a country depends on that country's political system. However, Ognianova stresses the importance of also including the economic system in the model, a factor which was used by Ralph Lowenstein, for example, and extended by John Merrill (1979, cited in Ognianova 1997), in their theories of media systems.

Lowenstein and Merrill also expanded the fluidity of the media system categories, describing systems as “authoritarian tending” or “libertarian tending”. Robert Picard (1982-3, cited in Ognianova 1997) added the “duo-directional” category to these, which refers to media systems falling on a continuum between libertarianism and authoritarianism. This concept, along with Herbert Altschull’s (1995, cited in Ognianova 1997) classifications based on economic systems, influenced Ognianova’s transitional press system concept (Ognianova 1997:4-6). The transitional press system is defined as one which can be found in “a society that is in transition from one economic order to another” (Ognianova 1997:11).
The factor which distinguishes the transitional press system from Picard’s duo-directional system is the possibility of the coexistence of differing prescriptive press concepts within the system. Applied to Bulgaria, this model showed that elements of authoritarian, communist, libertarian and social responsibility ideologies were found within the press system. This model of media system classification according to economic categories, yet allowing for a variety of prescriptive concepts, “suggests a possible solution to the old problem in press typologies of confusing descriptive and prescriptive press concepts” (Ognianova 1997:13).

Open market systems and centralized economy systems may also contain a variety of prescriptive concepts that shape the working environments and practices of their media personnel. However, Ognianova asserts that there are differences between these and transitional systems. Prescriptive concepts within the transitional media system are continuously, often dramatically, changing. Moreover, there are more likely to be opposing press concepts in a transitional press system, with greater conflict between them, than in the other systems.

While the concept of the transitional media system is a flexible one, it defines transition as economic change. This means that although multiple competing ideologies may exist in such a system, these are not as important in defining it as the state of the economy. The advantage of this is that it is easy to classify media systems. However, there are several disadvantages.

The model is somewhat vague, for according to Ognianova, it is not important what kind of economic order a society is changing from or to, merely that it is changing. Thus the transitional concept can be applied to press systems which are
in fact quite different in other ways. There could be some difficulty in comparing countries like Bulgaria, Poland, Hong Kong, Yugoslavia, China or Russia. All of these societies could be said to be experiencing political and economic transition of some kind, but putting them in the same category may reveal more differences amongst them than similarities. In this case, why bother to categorise at all?

Focussing on economic change simplifies the classification, but not the comparison. This is not the only type of change to consider. Political, social and cultural change do not necessarily parallel economic change. For example, Hong Kong is undergoing economic and political changes characterised by increasing control and domination by the Chinese Communist Party, and would therefore be classified as transitional. Bulgaria, or other eastern European postcommunist countries, are also transitional. Yet the demands on journalists in each of these countries from various groups (such as public, politicians, public relations organisations) are not the same. And if we want to examine the role of the journalist in the media system, this is of more importance than the economy.

Transitional media systems seem to have a monopoly on change. Open market and centralized systems are not seen to change because their economic order does not. This gives a false picture of one dynamic and two static systems. It also gives us a question that is hard to answer: when does a transitional system stop being in transition, and become one of the other two types?

Instead, we could say that every system is transitional, because every system is dynamic, regardless of the type of economy. While the economic order may remain unchanged in an open market or centralized system, the system may change in
other ways. The changes may seem small, like a new law on the media, or gradual, like the infiltration of foreign words or jargon into common use. But they will impact on a journalist's work.

The following studies of media systems which could be described as transitional take a different approach to the model described above, explaining developments in journalism as part of political, social and cultural change.

2.2.2 Post-Soviet Russia

A study of post-Soviet Russia by Brian McNair (1994) illustrates the discrepancies between economic, political and cultural factors. In post-Soviet Russia, the weakness of the economy and decline of state economic control are forcing more newspapers to look to private sponsors or western companies. Still, most newspapers are still dependent on government subsidy for survival.

Politically, the press law of February 1992 guarantees press freedom and editorial independence from proprietors or politicians, and prevents publication of material that may incite racial hatred or violate national security. This law was based on the Soviet model, which had been generally regarded as progressive. However, there were some objections to the inclusion of media restrictions which could be implemented in the case of 'emergency', which was seen as a provision for potentially excessive state power (McNair 1994:129).

Still, the political and economic changes in the Russian media are occurring against a background of the "authoritarian tradition" (McNair 1994:131). McNair notes that "the readiness with which politicians in the new Russia have shown
themselves willing to attempt to control the media where they can is the logical continuation of Soviet practice over seventy years, when media were openly viewed as instruments of ideological mobilization” (McNair 1994:130).

President Boris Yeltsin demonstrated this traditional attitude by first appointing, and then sacking, Yegor Yakovlev, head of the state broadcasting company Ostankino. Both Yeltsin and his opponents proposed setting up supervisory committees to watch over Russia’s broadcasters. In March 1993, the Congress of People’s Deputies set up a council of politicians from various groups in parliament for this purpose. In January 1993, Yeltsin set up a new Federal Information Centre, which supposedly enabled journalists to have increased access to information on government bodies, but to journalists its function appeared to be political control. Fortunately for journalists, in May 1993 the Constitutional Court ruled that this centre was illegal (McNair 1994:128).

The authoritarian tradition affects not only politicians but also journalists. This means that journalists are still coming to terms with western journalistic ideas such as “objectivity”, which are being introduced by European and American journalists. Western European training has now been made available to Russian journalists to help them question, rather than simply obey, political elites (McNair 1994:131). As I have mentioned earlier, cultural change is a complex process that takes time.

2.2.3 China in the 1990s

The effects of cultural change on journalism can also be seen in China (Liu Hong 1998). In China, most newspapers have not been subsidised by the state for the last
15 years, which means they are forced to rely on the market - but at the same time they are still controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, so "they are required to go on functioning as ideological tools used by the party-state" (Hong 1998:34). Journalists are put into the difficult position of having to satisfy both the Communist Party, their advertisers, and what they perceive as "public interest".

According to Hong, the content of daily newspapers has become more commercialised, based on light entertainment rather than political information, in order to satisfy both the government and the advertisers. This reflects the extension of political consciousness into the realm of economics in Chinese society. Rather than associating prestige with political status, Chinese now look to the area of economics as a source of status. Journalists in China have had to adapt to the changing situation which means that "idealism has had to be abandoned for realism and even pragmatism" (Hong 1998:37).

Alan P.L. Liu (1993) found that there has been a dramatic increase in the mass media industry in China since 1980, with a growth in the number and range of titles available. However, the number of newspapers is still relatively small considering the size of China's population. Liu asserts that it is through television, radio and audio cassettes that China has truly developed a mass culture. Like Hong, Liu suggests that the public are disillusioned with politics. "In the West, mass culture is considered a debasement of cultural standards, whereas in mainland China it represents the people's revulsion against excessive politicization and regimentation" (Liu 1993:124).
Liu concludes that the spread of mass communications in China has had a 
"liberating effect" and has exposed the reality that "under the Maoist facade lay a 
diverse, plural and partly segmented society. Next, free communications have 
dissolved, to a significant extent, the artificial nationalism created by government 
propaganda. Important groups in society, each in its own way, declared their 
alienation from the regime" (Liu 1993:140). This conclusion is a reminder that 
political conditions are but one indicator of the state of a media system; a question 
worth asking is what use the public can make of communications media. I will 
address this question later in this chapter.

2.2.4 The Former German Democratic Republic

Another analysis of a "transitional" media system which reveals the centrality of 
culture is Hagen's (1997) study of the former communist German Democratic 
Republic, now part of the Federal Republic of Germany. The research was 
conducted through content analysis of East and West German newspapers, and 
interviews with journalists. The study first looked at the opening of the market in 
the GDR, which enabled West German publishers to take over the largest 
newspapers. The differences in economic structure are only briefly dealt with, as 
the study focused on examining the cultural differences between East and West 
German journalists.

West German journalists surveyed for the study felt that East German journalists 
were not skilled in the areas of news editing and investigation, attributed to their 
lack of experience with a wider range of information. However, the study found 
that only a few differences in content or style exist between East and West German
newspapers. This is said to be a result of journalists beginning to adapt to their present situation, that is, East German journalists are gradually becoming socialised into practising West German style journalism, rather than continuing with their previous journalistic methods.

2.2.5 Former Yugoslavia

A particularly interesting example of a media system which could be labelled transitional is that of former Yugoslavia. Seen from an economic perspective, the country is in transition from communism presumably to capitalism, which would imply that ownership of the media has changed from state to private enterprises. However, this does not provide a complete picture of the complex Yugoslavian media system, which was regionally and culturally divided. The current crisis dramatically illustrates the strength of the ideology of nationalism, which has become more influential since the decline of communism.

Under communism, Yugoslavian society was governed by an official culture of "self-managing socialism" which was perceived as less authoritarian than other systems in the region (Radojkovic 1994:137). The media were decentralised, with each territory controlling its own press, radio and television. In 1991, after Yugoslavia's political system became a multi-party democracy, attempts to privatise the media were made, but only political parties had the finances to participate. Further changes made the system even more subject to political control, such as the power of government officials to allocate editorial or management positions.
As Yugoslavia disintegrated into separate territories, the ideology of nationalism came to dominate. News is regulated, with government agencies the only official sources of information, and there is minimal exchange of news between the states. Journalists have no choice but to take part in a nationalistic "media war", spreading propaganda to accompany the real civil war, instead of furthering democratisation. Miroljub Radojkovic describes the media systems here as "confined information spaces" (Radojkovic 1994:147). This term is certainly appropriate, considering the reaction of Serbia’s state-controlled media to the crisis in Kosovo, and the attempts by the government to block out alternative sources of information. However, this has not been entirely successful, due to the use of the internet. We cannot merely put this down to Yugoslavia's political or economic status. The communist-authoritarian culture is more important in defining this media system.

2.3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE MASS MEDIA AND JOURNALISM

2.3.1 Classification of Media Systems as Free or Repressive

The studies by Hong, McNair and Hagen have all revealed, in different ways, that cultural factors are as significant as politics or economics in shaping the media system. However, these studies do not provide a comprehensive theory which can be applied to different media systems. Such a theory is proposed by Paul S. N. Lee and Leonard L. Chu (1995). Lee and Chu propose a classification based on five factors: political structure, economic structure, media proprietors’ culture, media practitioners’ culture, and audience’s culture.
As the determining factors used in Lee and Chu’s model are not limited to politics and economics, but include cultural factors, far greater importance is placed on the role of the actors involved, namely audience, media practitioners and proprietors, besides political and economic elites. The definitions of structure and culture used by Lee and Chu are taken from Almond and Verba (1963 and 1989). Structure is defined as an observable pattern of activities, whereas culture refers to values (Lee and Chu 1995:91).

Based on the interaction among the above five factors, each factor having two possible outcomes, four ideal-type media systems were identified: Free System, Relatively Free System, Relatively Repressive System and Repressive System. The latter are basically watered-down versions of the former.

A combination of libertarian government and diffused economic interests, professional journalists’ culture and idealistic proprietors, and a participant audience, adds up to a “free” system. In a free system, media content is diverse, a “marketplace of ideas”. Individual rights are respected by journalists, who feel that they are part of a responsible professional community. Their duty is not to promote the government but to take on a “watchdog” role. Since this is an ideal type, the media systems of most western democracies are closest to the free system category, but cannot be called free, because media content is not truly diverse but dominated by white middle class interests.

The opposite of the free system is the repressive system, characterised by authoritarian political elites, monopolistic economic elites, profiteering proprietors and self-oriented media practitioners. In this system, the audience is “passive or
apathetic”, as media content does not reflect their interests, and does not attempt to. Journalists take on the role of propagandists, conveyors of government policies.

Lee and Chu stated that media systems could change, or be changing, from one type to another. Noting this, they analysed the media in Hong Kong in 1995, two years prior to its return to Chinese rule. According to Lee and Chu, Hong Kong’s media is in transition from a relatively free system to a repressive system. This is based on predictions of increased political restrictions, economic domination by the state, the growth of a media practitioners’ culture that values jobs above the ethical aims of the profession, and an increasingly apathetic audience.

Lee and Chu’s theory is significant in that it emphasises the importance of cultural factors, and provides categories for them. However, these categories depend on the dominance of one ideology, rather than allowing for several as Ognianova’s model did. There is another problem with this model: although both structure and culture are incorporated in the model, it still depends on political and economic categories as the basis of determining whether a media system is “free” or “repressive”.

Lee and Chu affirmed that the labels of capitalist and socialist were not important in determining the economic category. However, they maintain that diffused capital interests enable a free system. They also use the distinction between libertarian and authoritarian political elites to point out that libertarian politics and a free system go together. However, this could be giving us a false picture.

Even though many western democracies do have liberal political systems and diffused capital interests, media content can be restricted by commercial or political
interests - yet they are described as almost “free”. This gives a rather biased view of some media systems, such as those found in western Europe, the United States, and Australia. The meaning of a “free” mass media should be considered more carefully. Can media systems be described as “free”?

2.3.2 The Development of the idea of “Freedom of the Press”

The idea of “press freedom” is promoted by organisations such as Freedom Forum, Committee for the Protection of Journalists, and Freedom House. Freedom House, the U.S. based organisation which releases an annual report on “Press Freedom Worldwide”, compares the mass media in the countries of the world with numerical “ratings”. This approach suggests that “freedom” can be measured subjectively.

The rating for each country is calculated with an assessment of four categories, each one divided into print and broadcast media. The four categories are A) legal restrictions (15 points each for print and broadcast, giving a total of 30 points), B) “political pressures” (30 points), C) “economic influences” (30 points), and D) “repressive actions” against journalists (10 points). Countries are regarded as “free” if their ratings are from 0 to 30, “partly free” if they score from 31 to 60, and if they receive 61 to 100 points, they are “not free” (Freedom House 1999).

According to the Freedom House annual “Country Ratings” report released on January 1, 1999, many countries are described as “free”. Yet the Freedom House definition of freedom, although presented as measurable in numerical terms, is not as precise as it may appear. Benin, for example, is classified as “free”, although the media never reach the majority of the population, who are illiterate. It is
questionable whether the mass media can be described as “free” in countries such as Benin, where only a privileged minority have access to them.

The report on Benin also mentions that two journalists had to serve six months in prison for slander, yet this was not noted as a “repressive action”. In South Korea, also “free”, a journalist served two years for defamation of the president. “Free” Bolivia’s media laws from 1925 still apply, under which defamation of a public official is punishable by two years in prison, and twice that for criticising the president or vice president. Journalists who commit defamation offences can be imprisoned by law in Poland, Panama, Greece, and Ireland, all of which are labelled as “free”.

Israel’s media are also regarded as “free”, although the defence emergency regulations enable the government and military to ban publications, restrict distribution, and “censor any material reported from Israel or the occupied territories regarded as sensitive on national security grounds” (Freedom House 1999:17). In Ireland, censorship of material on northern Ireland is still practised, and there are increasing numbers of illegal pirate radio stations.

The line between “free” and “partly free” media systems seems to be blurred, which becomes apparent when comparing some countries in these two categories. For example, the Seychelles, which scored well into the “partly free” category, has much in common with Sao Tome and Principe, or St. Kitts - Nevis. Yet the latter were rated as “free” with scores of 30 and 18 respectively.
In the Seychelles, the government has a monopoly on nearly all media. According to the report, broadcast media are supervised by “independent, bipartisan directors … but the government still determines content”. News reports are described as having a “marked partisan tone”, but we are also told that coverage of the general election balanced government and opposition views, and that there are several opposition publications (Freedom House 1999:32).

In Sao Tome and Principe, “broadcast and some print media are owned and controlled by the government”. Print media are subject to a law against “abuse of press freedom”. This law also amounts to a form of government control. In the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis, the broadcast media are also government owned and controlled, and moreover “are regularly accused of favoring the ruling party”. In both of these countries, opposition publications are available (Freedom House 1999:31). However, this does not distinguish them from the Seychelles. There is no clear way of distinguishing between these three countries; comparison seems to be based on subjective judgements on how partisan media are.

Considering all of the examples above, we can conclude that the media systems of different countries are too complex to be labelled as either “free” or “not free”. Not only are these terms too simplistic, but they are also difficult to measure. As we have seen, the definition of “freedom” presented by Freedom House appears objective, but is in fact based on subjective criteria.

The idea of a “free” media, or “freedom of the press” is often used but rarely analysed. It has a long history in Anglo-American journalism, beginning with Milton in the 17th century. Milton wrote on freeing the press from the state in an
era of supreme state power. John Henningham (1992:8), in an examination of “press freedom”, points out that the idea of a free press continued into the 18th and 19th centuries with the growth of capitalism. It could be explained in terms of Adam Smith’s classical theories of free exchange on the market, as a choice between competing ideas. Freedom meant freedom for the individual to choose and freedom for journalists from government control.

John Henningham believes that “press freedom” in practice today does not live up to Smith’s theory of freedom of choice. The “choice” in Australia has been narrowed considerably by the growth of monopolies, which have “grave implications for the concept of press freedom” (Henningham 1992:9).

However, this idea of press freedom needs to be re-examined. Henningham’s belief that a broad choice is an indicator of press freedom is questionable. It is possible for a wide range of titles to exist on a free market, published by a variety of owners, which are nonetheless not “free”. In other words, these titles are controlled by several specific political or economic interests, rather than two or three. But fifty versions of the truth are not necessarily any more accurate than two or three. Instead, the different publications are likely to specialise in their own particular version. This may be observed in Poland.

Henningham further suggests that journalists themselves may define the limits of “press freedom”. In Australia, Henningham argues, journalists do have a certain amount of “freedom” from government control. For example, they are free to
conduct investigative journalism, because there are no laws against it - and yet they have displayed a lack of commitment to it.

Another way in which journalists can limit their "freedom" is by failing to respond to public criticism, according to Henningham. If journalists cannot earn themselves a better reputation by raising their standards, and public opinion of the media is low, governments can easily restrict press freedom without fearing that they will lose votes for doing so.

However, there is some evidence to suggest that Australian journalists are not as dismissive of investigative journalism as Henningham believes. A study by Julianne Schultz (1998) found that most journalists did feel that investigative journalism was an ideal that needed to be aspired to, but they also felt hindered by the management of their news organisations.

"This demonstrates that Australian journalists recognise that the ideal is constrained by the commercial reality," noted Schultz (1998:134). There are many ways in which the commercial reality interferes. Linking the concept of "freedom of the press" to the absence of state control obscures other constraints such as those within news organisations, as Ralph Negrine (1994:23) observes:

"[A]lthough today's press is structurally and organizationally outside the control of the state, it daily confronts pressures and constraints which limit its freedom. Like all other institutions, it cannot enjoy absolute freedom. No editor is absolutely free to do what he/she desires. Their working contexts impose certain limits on what they are able to do; for example, how many journalists they can employ and how
much news space they have on the paper. Such ‘limits’ on the freedom of the press are often overlooked, yet their consequences may be just as severe as those which the state can impose.”

The definition of “freedom of the press” is not universal. How the media system is viewed depends on the viewer. What one person experiences as a “free” media system may seem restricted to another. There is certainly no agreement on this by media practitioners in Poland - for some journalists, Poland has a “free” media, but others are more sceptical. Some think that the media have too much freedom to be rude and nasty. Poland will be examined later in more detail; the point here is that the idea of a “free” media does not really help us to describe media systems, but refers to an ideal. In that case, what kind of terms can be used?

2.3.3 Mass Media as a System

The study by Lee and Chu mentioned above, and also Ognianova’s research, have analysed the media by viewing it as a system. The concept of a system, which is common to the natural and social sciences, is a useful tool for analysis. The system concept enables researchers to conduct analysis at a macro level, as it refers to an entity in terms of its interrelated parts. Also at a micro level, it provides a broader perspective than the study of separate individual units.

Systems theory, developed in the field of sociology in the 1950s and 1960s, was based on the idea that in a system, each part has a function which is important for the survival of the whole. It is the interaction between the various parts that maintains the system. This theory began to influence mass communication theories
which until then were based on a simplistic model of unidirectional communication - summarised by Harold Lasswell as *Who Says What to Whom through What Medium to What Effect*. As communication theorists realised, the communication process depends not only on a source communicator, but also on message mediators and receivers.

The model of a mass media system constructed by Melvin DeFleur and Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach (1989) shows how various groups are interconnected in the mass communication process. This approach first places the media system within the society's normative code which sets the limits within which the system can operate. The model recognises the complexity of the category "audience", which is divided by factors such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and interests. The audience is subject to investigation by research organisations, which provide information about it to media personnel.

Media content does not flow directly to the audience, but through distributors. These are a network of local outlets linked to larger organisations. The relationship between distributors and audience is largely one-way, with audience feedback reaching the distributor through market research. The producers of media content are primarily interconnected with their sponsors, distributors and research organisations.

The category "producers" consists of production subsystems, differentiated by medium. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach point out that although each medium is different, each nonetheless relates to the entire system in the same way; also, the different media are interconnected. All are involved with subsystems of control,
meaning the legislative system, the official regulative agencies which enforce the laws, and voluntary associations which provide ethical codes.

The model specifically describes the media system of the United States of America. The structure of this system "has been heavily influenced by the general social, political, economic, and cultural conditions that were current during the period when our mass media were developing and that remain important sociocultural forces in the society within which they operate", note DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989:137). Basically, a media system is a component of the social system. Media systems function according to social norms.

Systems theory offers a more accurate alternative way of classifying media systems. Systems theorists operate with two basic categories: closed systems and open systems. These categories can describe social systems as a whole, of which the mass media are a part. Whether the media system is open or closed depends on the social system. In this research, these categories explain differences between media systems in terms of two types of interaction that may occur within systems. In other words, they describe how the various actors in the media system relate to each other. Although "open" and "closed" represent extremes, they can be used as ideal types to describe existing media systems.

Closed systems are simple, focussing on repetition of the same tasks. They depend on unchanging interaction between the internal parts, with "limited monitoring of the external environment. ... The system can't maintain itself when parts wear out or communication links break down" (Baran and Davis 1995:255). Closed systems are unable to adapt to any difficulties that may arise, because communication is too
simple and inflexible. For example, authoritarian regimes, like communist Poland, attempt to maintain power over the states they rule by controlling the media. Such systems are closed because there are barriers in place which do not allow for a flow of communication.

These barriers affect both the producers and the consumers of media content. Firstly, journalists are given access to approved sources only. Secondly, the mass media are subject to censorship. The public may be punished for trying to access opposition or foreign media. In summary, closed systems could be said to be closed to outside influences and closed to opportunity. A contemporary example of a closed system is North Korea, where the “the masses are treated to total ignorance, the few drips of information coming their way through the formidable party machine” (Dariewicz 2000:138).

Open systems, by contrast, *can* adapt to change while retaining stability. The system has the capacity to “monitor its environment and adjust to both internal and external changes. The parts of open systems can alter their functions so that if one part fails, others can adjust and take over its function. These systems are capable of growth and change over time” (Baran and Davis 1995:255). Poland today, and most other countries, have media systems of varying degrees of openness.

Open media systems, unlike closed systems, are characterised by the existence of multiple, and *multiplying* channels of communication. This research does *not* intend to substitute “open” for “free”. Rather, open systems can be described as those which offer increasing opportunities for the mass media to expand and adapt. There is no value attached to this definition. Unlike the idea of a “free” media, the
idea of an open system does not suggest that it is "good". In closed systems, almost nothing new is permissible; in open systems, almost anything is possible. This includes the growth of monopolies, control of the media by competing interest groups, pressure from advertisers, and bribery of journalists.

In fact, an open system could be in a state of chaos. In the Philippines, where journalists call themselves free, "intense competition in a crowded market, the lack of trained journalists, 'checkbook' [sic] journalism, and the business interests of media owners are among the problems that stunt the professional development of Philippine journalism" (Coronel 2000:149). As the study of the Polish press will show, the Polish media system is very similar. The media system has become more open, but it has not become "free": Polish journalists are in fact faced with new problems as their system changes.

Although the ideas of open and closed systems are useful, the theory as a whole is more problematic. I have two main criticisms of the theory. The first problem is that systems theory assumes that the separate parts all function together to maintain the system. Communication is taken to be a link, serving this purpose. But this is not necessarily true. Communication can be disruptive. In Poland, the government tried to filter out damaging information through the official media, but underground and overseas media were able to publicise it. According to systems theory, the failure of one part would cause the whole to break down, but in Poland the parts continued to function, albeit badly.

Secondly, the systems model of mass media constructed by Defleur and Ball-Rokeach focuses on "visible" structures, and leaves out several other factors which
are also important. These are cultural factors, which I have already mentioned. The existence of links between large institutional structures and media producers is made clear, but this alone does not explain the production process. Media personnel are labelled as producers, suggesting that they actively create content. This is not inaccurate, but the theory neglects to elucidate on the process by which this content is created.

The process of media content production needs to be given more attention than the above model allows for. While it does place media production within a social environment, the model does not acknowledge the complexity within this subsystem. There are many types of "producer", working together to create content. The process itself may have an influence on media output. To understand 'non-political', internal restrictions within the media and more specifically, the effects of these on the journalist, a journalism-centred approach is more useful.

2.3.4 The Social Determinants of Journalism

Brian McNair (1998) outlined a sociology of journalism which recognises that journalism is socially determined. McNair argues that journalism is often viewed either as competition, following the pluralistic ideal, or dominance, following the demands of a particular interest. However, neither of these are adequate descriptions of the practice of journalism, which is never a simple matter of ideological control, or lack of it. McNair's approach is an attempt to escape such traditional dichotomous categories which can hinder a more thorough analysis of journalism. The emphasis is not on order and stability, but on "unpredictability and randomness" (McNair 1998:165).
McNair points out that journalism itself is essentially ideological, and as in any form of human communication, a particular ideology may be consciously or unconsciously incorporated in mass communication. "Journalists construct their narratives around their own values and beliefs but these are necessarily informed by the contribution of a wide range of information sources, who thus acquire the power to become "definers" of journalistic reality" (McNair 1998:6).

According to McNair, there are five factors which can be seen to influence media practice. These "social determinants of journalism" are professional and organisational factors, the political environment, the economic environment, the technological environment, and source tactics and strategies. Taking all these aspects into account, it becomes clear that "the journalist is a cog in a wheel over whose speed and direction he or she may have little or no control" (McNair 1998:62).

Professional and organisational determinants of journalism are those which surround the profession itself - professional culture and bureaucratic constraints. To begin with, journalism as a profession is practised according to a code of ethics, which gives it authority and believability. The concept of "objectivity" is particularly important. This concept emerged in the nineteenth century with the development of the commercial market and the commodification of journalism, McNair notes. Before the need to sell, and thus the need to appear as producers of universal truth became the priority, newspapers were readily committed to political parties (McNair 1998:67-8).
The organisational constraints on journalism result from the fact that the journalist is an employee of a bureaucratic organisation - a point that has already been mentioned above - and must conform to its rules. Also, there are different constraints on journalism depending on medium - “the various media of print, television and radio journalism each tend to prefer different modes of communication, utilising different properties of language” (McNair 1998:63).

The organisational aspects of the process of media production are the most significant, according to Rodney Tiffen. Tiffen examines “newsmaking” through three separate, but related, factors: production, input, and values. Production is constrained by the deadline and the news hole. Input is determined by the medium’s resources, such as subscriptions to agencies, specialist and generalist reporters. Values are the “shared understandings” between media practitioners that “stem from perceptions of audience demand and professional aspirations”; these determine what is newsworthy (Tiffen 1993:176).

The political environment refers to a combination of the political system and the political culture, but distinguishing between the two because “within, for example, systems defined as ‘democratic’ there may be great variation in the way journalists approach their work” (McNair 1998:89). Therefore, a lack of formal restrictions does not guarantee that journalists will not be subject to the strict ideological limitations of an authoritarian culture. Depending on the political environment, politicians may attempt to control media through different strategies which can include physical force, the law, censorship, and informal lobbying.
It is difficult to separate the economic environment from the political environment, but McNair points to two specifically economic aspects - firstly, the fact that journalism is the product of an industry owned by particular individuals or conglomerates; secondly, it is a commodity for sale on the market, and therefore “must be both functional and desirable” (McNair 1998:101). McNair concludes that proprietors may be able to exert a certain influence over their publications, “but they cannot buck market trends or ignore the views of their audience” (McNair 1998:123).

An important factor to consider when studying contemporary journalism is the technological environment. Technological developments have changed the way news is produced and received. In short, “news is more simultaneous, and there is more of it, but it is at the same time more ‘bitty’ and unrefined”(McNair 1998:127). Indeed, this ‘new’ news may lack depth. However, the breakdown of the time-space barrier can aid the breakdown of authoritarian control of news - “news gets out” (McNair 1998:129). This includes the use of the internet as a public sphere - which can be observed in the current war in Kosovo.

Finally, there is the significance of sources, linked to journalists through news management tactics, involving an intermediary group of source professionals such as public relations consultants. “Not just routine news coverage but the output of journalism in general is increasingly the product of activity taking place out in the world beyond the journalist’s immediate working environment - communicative work which is deliberately designed and organised to shape news in ways favourable to the individual or organisation initiating it,” McNair (1998:141)
observed. Public relations tactics can, of course, be best employed by those who can afford to pay for them, which tends to result in bias towards the rich and powerful.

2.3.5 Mass Media in a Process of Change

McNair’s sociology of journalism focuses on the profession as it operates within a social system. As mentioned, this study is interested in the social processes that shape media systems, which are themselves involved in the process of change. This view is also held by John D.H. Downing, who affirms that “media institutions are perpetually being set the task of interpreting and reinterpreting the world’s flux” (Downing 1996:235).

Downing’s study of media in Eastern Europe was concerned with the relationship between media and change, concluding that a theory which would best describe this would need to incorporate the idea of movement and not be based on static categories. “Culture” in its common usage is such a category, Downing asserts, “which is why it must always be intimately coupled with the term ‘communication’ in order to signify the flux that actually characterizes cultural process” (Downing 1996:237). Downing also indicates that culture is not a unified set of beliefs, but consists of a variety of cultures - for example, alternative, oppositional cultures that conflicted with the official culture in communist Eastern Europe.

There is also the problem of terms such as “civil society, public sphere, social movements, hegemony and counter-hegemonic currents” which easily become idealised and simplified. As Downing makes clear, the reality of public debate is not
as neat as an us-and-them divide (for example, disagreement amongst the opposition could be observed in Poland in the Solidarity era).

In any case, what is significant here is that these processes of debate "are sparked, sustained, diffused and amplified by media (in the broadest sense). Social and cultural movements live off and through such discussion within and around such media" (Downing 1996:238). Downing's phrase "media (in the broadest sense)" draws attention to a vital part of media systems - that communication also spreads beyond the official broadcast and print media. I will return to this point later.

Another set of issues which should be called to attention are those surrounding media and memory. Memory can refer firstly to the recovery of the historical past, secondly, to the re-usage of inherited media practices, and thirdly, to the rediscovery of tradition and national identity. For example, in Russia, Hungary and Poland, previously forbidden aspects of the past became public again. At the same time, media practitioners were caught up in the authoritarian tradition, as McNair's study of Russia found.

Another interesting set of memories resurfaced in the media - nostalgia for the security of the communist era. This also resurfaced in politics - postcommunist governments once again came to power in these three countries. Downing concludes that "memory and media interact in multiple fashions to assist both cultural change and coagulation" (Downing 1996:240).

Downing appeals for a less rigid media theory which is based on change, and therefore does not use static categories. As systems theorists have already indicated,
it is impossible to divide media from society, therefore the theory needs to recognise
the interrelatedness of all aspects of the media system, rather than separate them for
the purpose of individual analysis. Chaos theory is suggested as a way of
understanding such complex processes as communication, but Downing points out
that this mathematical abstraction is too far removed from human behaviour to be
wholly accurate - obviously, humans do not always behave in predictable ways.

However, Downing believes that there are some concepts from chaos theory which
could be applied to a study of media, namely iteration, refraction and synapse. The
idea of iteration is an interesting one. The well-known statement about the tiny
butterfly flapping its wings making a hurricane on the other side of the world
comes from this idea. It means that communication is not simply a matter of
repetition; a message is not just passed from a source to a receiver. Instead, a
message or idea can reverberate, becoming increasingly significant as it is passed
on.

However, ideas do not only multiply in the communication process. Change or
diversity would not be possible if this were the case. Downing uses the term
refraction to describe the ways in which “messages” are actually transmitted. Like
light or heat waves as they pass through a substance, communicated ideas are
distorted by passing through the communicator. That is, messages are not
transmitted or received in a “pure” form, but are mediated by a series of value-
filters. This means that communication is a process involving a series of distortions,
or alterations.
Synapse literally means a junction of two nerve cells, which can cross long distances to connect all parts of the body. It calls to mind the way in which communication can also connect distant places, and cross boundaries. The concepts of iteration, refraction and synapse, although vague, are a useful way of explaining how communication itself works.

Moreover, these concepts show how change is incorporated in the process of communication. In Poland, for example, people read underground newspapers which criticised the government and promoted democratic values. Having read the newspapers, people passed them on, and discussed them in conversations with their friends. Underground ideas were not only circulated, but iterated. With the combined force of numerous underground papers, posters calling for demonstrations, prohibited books, foreign radio broadcasts, the message of protest was compounded until it was no longer tolerable.

Downing does not elaborate on how the conceptual suggestions discussed above can be used in a model of mass media communication. However, he adds that theoretical approaches must also include the dimension of power relations (political, economic, or cultural; hegemonic or oppositional). Without this dimension, as was noted above, a study of media systems as part of society would be too simplistic, ignoring the significance of human activity.

2.3.6 Power Relations in the Mass Media

The significance of power relations is discussed in more detail by Joseph Turow (1997). Turow divides the actors involved in the mass communication process into
power roles, defined by the typical activities that these actors engage in and the type of leverage they may exercise. This approach does provide some insight into the functioning of the mass media industry, as it highlights the many components that are part of the mass communication process. These include auxiliaries, who provide material supplies to producers, creators with “talent to conceive and arrange mass media material”, and all the necessary distributors, exhibitors, linking pins, and facilitators.

As in Ball-Rokeach and Defleur’s model, journalists are in the producer category, whose activities are described as the creation of “material for release to the public via mass media”. Producers have “control over people and ideas that might get exposure to the public via mass media”.

The role of authority is to “[p]rovide government (or governmentally sanctioned) regulation and arbitration among other power roles”, by means of political and military power. Monetary resources are controlled by the investor and the client. The union has the power of “solidarity and threats of work stoppage”, and public advocacy can exert pressure through boycott or lobbying. The power of the public rests on “[a]n individual decision to choose or not choose particular content” or to “complain through legal or other channels”.

However, one of the shortcomings of this power-role theory is the simplification of its categories, and exclusion of others. Particularly for a study of journalism, more attention needs to be given to the producer role. As I have already noted, media organisations are internally divided, both by specialised tasks and by “power”. A subeditor of a newspaper does a different job to that paper’s sports reporter, and a
freelance journalist may have less influence over a newspaper's content than its chief of staff. This does not mean that one has more power than the other.

It is difficult to attribute "power" to one actor over another, because media content production is a matter of co-operation, and cannot be controlled by power alone. Proprietors, for example, can be seen as having power over their news organisations, but in practice this is not so straightforward; as Tiffen points out, "[p]erfect proprietorial control would require an improbable omniscience" (Tiffen 1993:177). This is not to say that proprietors are uninvolved in the process of media content production; they are involved, and some can be very dominating. But this is not necessarily so, and always varies. The point here is that actors should not be seen in terms of their power, but in terms of their role. However, the concept of "role" itself requires further investigation.

2.3.7 The "Role" Concept

Can the role concept be used to distinguish between media systems? In Lee and Chu's approach, different media systems are characterised by different sets of roles. The basic system types used by Lee and Chu, authoritarian and libertarian, were influenced by Siebert, Petersen and Schramm's categorisations of the mass media.

According to Siebert, Petersen and Schramm, there are four distinct "rationales of the mass media", reflecting four different political philosophies. The libertarian theory of a "free" press, described above, is one such perspective that developed in a specific historical context, namely 17th century England and America. The role of the journalist, according to this theory, is essentially that of "watchdog"
checking on the government. However, journalists may also be “informers”, “entertainers” and “vendors” of a commodity for sale on the marketplace. Libertarians believe that the media should be privately owned and accessible to anyone with the economic means to do so.

Libertarian theory, as mentioned, was a reaction to the earlier authoritarian theory. Authoritarian theory, originating in 16th and 17th century England, holds that the task of the mass media is to promote government policies and prevent criticism. The media may be either privately or publicly owned, but should be government controlled. We could call journalists in this type of situation “partisans”.

By contrast, the Soviet-totalitarian model, influenced by Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism, defines the mass media as exclusively state-owned and controlled. The mass media must reinforce the political system and the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, and eradicate any forms of dissent; therefore the media can only be accessible to devoted communist party members. The role of the journalist that corresponds to this theory is that of “party propagandist”.

The fourth theory identified by Siebert, Petersen and Schramm is the 20th century social responsibility model of the mass media, based on the idea of obligation. To a certain extent, social responsibility view of the mass media resembles the libertarian one - the media should inform, entertain, and sell, but questions the libertarian assumption that the free market is open to all. This theory maintains that mass media have an obligation to promote discussion which is open to all members of society. Social responsibility is defined in professional ethics and
controlled by community opinion and action. Journalists in a social responsibility model would be "guardians" of morals or "agents of civil society".

Gurevitch and Blumler (1976:277, cited in Siune 1984:57) also provide examples of different roles that may complement each other, in their study of the political communication system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party spokesmen</th>
<th>Media Personnel</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gladiator</td>
<td>Editorial Guide</td>
<td>Partisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rational Persuader</td>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>Liberal citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Information Provider</td>
<td>Watchdog</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Actor/Performer</td>
<td>Entertainer</td>
<td>Spectator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What these four different sets of roles show are not different media systems, but examples of different perspectives on the same system. Although these observations refer to the political communication system, they also serve to make a more general point: roles are **complementary**, that is, they come in a set. Roles can be defined in terms of **relationships** between different groups, in this case media personnel, politicians, and public.

Attention needs to be given to the concept of role. At first glance, the definition of role seems simple - it is a person's job or function. However, what it in fact refers to is a person's **expected** function. There is more than one side to a role - it is an idea which can only be formed in interaction between, and within the different
groups. If we are to take the position that roles are formed in interaction, we
should look at the relationship between actors rather than the actors themselves. This
more complex understanding of the role concept has several implications.

To begin with, there is the question of perspective, which has already been
mentioned. As Gurevitch and Blumler's example and Petersen, Siebert and
Schramm's example have shown, there are a variety of viewpoints on the mass
media. Ognianova referred to these as "prescriptive press concepts". This means
that the same group of actors can be ascribed a variety of roles, depending on the
viewpoint. Within a media system, each group may have a different interpretation
of the role of another group. For example, while the public might see journalists as
"entertainers", politicians could define them as "propagandists". The journalists,
though, may think of themselves as "watchdogs".

Because roles are not fixed, but created in interaction, they can be either redefined
or reinforced, depending on what kind of two-way communication exists between
the groups. Journalists may adapt their behaviour, and take on the role of
"entertainers" in response to their perceptions of public demand, or they may
become more politically engaged if political links increase. However, their role
could also become more established as the profession becomes more unified and
defines itself more clearly - for example, as "neutral informers".

There may be contradictions between the expectations on a group and its
expectations of itself. For example, politicians could expect journalists to be
"political campaigners" while the public may expect them to be "neutral
informers", and media owners may prefer journalists who are "entertainers". These
role expectations conflict with each other, but also with the journalists' perceived view of themselves as "informed commentators". Which type of role will dominate would depend on the amount of leverage held by the different groups.

Each group of actors is not necessarily homogenous. What is called "public opinion" in fact consists of a spectrum of diverse opinions. Within the journalistic profession, there may be differing ideas of the journalist's role. Some journalists think that the journalist's role is that of a "neutral information provider", but others see it as that of "commentator". An individual may define her or his personal role differently from that of the group, believing, for instance, that other journalists are concerned with "objectivity" whereas she or he is a "commentator". It could be argued that, with the lack of a unifying code of ethics, and less frequent contact with members of the media organisations other than one's own, an overall 'role' may be less defined.

Each actor may feel that he or she has not just one role but a number of roles, both over time and at any given time. A journalist can believe that his or her role is essentially that of a "provider of information", but can also be an "entertainer" when news is not so serious, a "political campaigner" during elections, and a "commentator" on issues he or she feels strongly about. Although each actor may believe that they have one main role, these supplementary roles should also be considered.

To summarise the above, the concept of role is more complex than it at first appears. A role can be seen as a product of communication between actors, and is based on expectations. Actors form these expectations on the basis of their cultural
background. For example, as McNair found, the authoritarian culture of Soviet Russia continued to influence the way many journalists approached their work, and how politicians and public viewed them. Journalists in Britain, the United States and Australia have the libertarian model as their background, but may be influenced by social responsibility ethics.

A more complex interpretation of roles can further our understanding of the journalist's position within the media system. Journalists may perceive their expected roles, actual roles and personally desirable roles as different. By looking at the differences between these, and the system's capacity to accommodate these, we can see how flexible the system is. An examination of journalists' ideas of their role can also reveal whether there are differences amongst journalists as a group, or whether there is a sense of belonging to a journalistic community.

Political culture, traditions, and moral code are a few of the many cultural factors that can contribute to understandings of roles. This raises the question of whether we are dealing with structure or culture. As noted, Lee and Chu used the definition of structure as institutionalised behaviour, and culture as institutionalised values. In systems theory, actors are part of structures. However, behaviour and values are difficult to separate, reinforcing each other. It could be said that interaction is structured. In other words, it occurs in a recurring, recognisable form. It could also be said that interaction is influenced by culture. It depends on shared expectations based on values.
2.3.8 Journalism and Popular Culture

I have outlined some significant social influences on journalism, and have pointed out that more attention needs to be paid to culture. This is, as I have already mentioned, not easily identifiable, as we are dealing with multiple cultures when using this term. This brings up another point: the idea of popular culture, and how journalism relates to it.

In the introduction to "Journalism and Popular Culture", Peter Dahlgren reminds us not to be snobs and see popular culture as an oxymoron. During the 18th century, with the Industrial Revolution and the development of capitalism, "popular" came to mean "working class", whereas "culture" was an upper-class collection of interests (theatre, opera, classical music, and anything else that cost money). This distinction continued in social science - it seemed that "popular" was a separate class to that of the analyst (Dahlgren 1992:5).

Dahlgren has a point. If we are claiming that journalism is a reflection of society, we had better define society. We need to look at the "mass" in mass communication, not just the communication. First of all, what is meant by "popular"? Perhaps the simplest way of measuring popularity is in numerical terms: the highest circulation, the highest ratings. But does this really tell us about the audience or readership? It tells us how many people use media, but not who or why, or in what way.

Colin Sparks (1992) looks into some interpretations of the term "popular", beginning with Raymond Williams. Williams traces the usage of the word
“popular” to the Renaissance, when it was seen as negative. During the French Revolution, “popular” was used in a more positive way. At that time, “popular” encompassed a very large and diverse group - everyone in the “third estate”, or “people”, which included the bourgeoisie, the urban poor, and the rural peasants. This did not continue into the 20th century, Williams notes. “Popular” ceased to be an idea of the left and became a slogan for right-wing and anti-communist political parties. The modern left-wing view of “popular”, according to Williams, is critical, since this label assumes unity and classlessness - therefore it must be a capitalist construction (as cited in Sparks 1992:25-29).

Another approach is taken by Stuart Hall (1978, cited in Sparks 1992), who sees classes as theoretical, and the reality consisting of “the people” and “the power-bloc”. Hall believes that one social group can convince another to accept a particular ideology by the process of “interpellation”. This means that “popular” can be defined from different perspectives - Thatcherism, for example, could be seen as “popular” because it transferred the ideologies of the right to the working class (as cited in Sparks 1992:32-34).

John Fiske (1992) uses Hall’s divisions of power-bloc and people, defining the former as an “alliance of interest” composed of government, politics, industry, media, law, the education system, and other white male middle-class institutions. Fiske divides news into three categories: official news, which is “generally the news which the power-bloc wants the people to have”, like America’s Newsweek or Time; alternative news, which covers different events, chosen by alternative
criteria, and is radical and politicised; and popular news, disparagingly known as “tabloid”.

Popular news, Fiske surmises, is actually a form of rejection of the official news media, because it does not accept “their” truth, or “their” norms. Popular news does not distinguish between fact and fiction, which is in complete opposition to the official values of “objectivity” and “truth”. Fiske argues that tabloid scandal-stories involving the rich-and-famous are in fact a means of criticising unequal social divisions, as these people are portrayed negatively for having abused their power (Fiske 1992:45-48).

This raises an interesting question - is “popular” different to “quality”? Peter Dahlgren (1992:14) points out that the line between “tabloids” and “serious” journalism is fluid. Dahlgren also reminds us that our definition of journalism implies “hard news” or “politics” - but the majority of journalistic output does not fall into these categories. How do we categorise advice columns, sport reports, gossip, weather forecasts? How do we distinguish between journalism and non-journalism?

Dahlgren identifies this as a “boundary maintenance problem” for journalists, in their attempt to create a sense of professionalism and community. Journalists, says Dahlgren, see themselves as objective individuals going to report on an event as a professional for a media organisation. This view obscures the fact that journalists are part of a social environment, and moreover that journalism contributes to the construction of social meaning (Dahlgren 1992:10).
Dahlgren, like McNair, believes that journalism should be analysed as part of society. However, from a cultural studies perspective, journalists can be seen in a different way - as part of popular culture. Journalists can be called "story tellers", because news is like a narrative which creates its own 'world'. "Story telling", according to Dahlgren, is the link between popular culture and journalism.

Alan Bell (1994), in his study of the language of the news media, found that news differed little from "stories". Unlike personal narratives, news is rarely presented in the first person and always relies on precise facts and figures, creating a sense of objectivity and truth. Otherwise, news and stories share many features, such as repetition. Recognition of familiar themes is comforting to us, since "community is in part built upon members sharing the same stories" (Dahlgren 1992:15).

The cultural studies perspective challenges the divisions of "rational/ serious" versus "irrational/ frivolous", and suggests that journalism should be understood as part of popular culture, not separate from it. It reminds us that journalism draws from the culture it is part of, and is not solely the product of official institutions, so it is inadequate to take only these into account in an analysis of the social determinants of journalism.

We can see that journalists, by presenting news to their audiences in a recognisable format, similar to personal narratives, share the same culture. Moreover, different types of journalism (such as the categories Fiske has identified) can be said to correspond to different audiences. However, if journalism is to be described as popular culture, we need to examine journalists’ relationship with their audiences.
2.3.9 Mass Media and the Public

Mass communication differs from private communication because "audience members are separated not just from the communicator, but from each other" (Bell 1994:86). There is also a time gap, especially with newspapers. Because of this, journalists' ideas of their audience are likely to be vague. Alan Bell believes that journalists are also distanced from their audience by their professionalism, observing that "mass communicators are interested in their peers not their public" (Bell 1994:90). This view was also held by Jane L.Curry (1990), who studied the professionalism of journalists in Poland, and Tomasz Goban-Klas (1994), a Polish media analyst.

Certainly, journalists' contact with their audience is limited. Direct feedback from audience to a news organisation may be possible, but whether it reaches the journalist is questionable. Circulation figures or ratings are not much of an indication. The group "audience" is difficult to measure. Bell points out that the "audience" can be divided into four categories: the target audience; those who were expected but not specifically targeted; those who were not expected; and those expected to be absent (Bell 1994:92).

Bell outlines three different theories of the relationship between journalists and their audience. The first is the theory of audience design, which comes from sociolinguistics. According to this theory, the communicator specifically designs their communication style for the audience, or rather their perceived or target audience. But this attributes a very passive role to the audience.
The theory of audience accommodation stems from social psychology and holds that the communicator modifies, or accommodates, their message to their audience, according to what kind of feedback they have received. This can be seen in interpersonal communication, but mass communication is by nature impersonal, and noted above, it is not so easy for journalists to have direct contact with their audience.

It could be that the audience accommodates, which means that "if the style does not shift to suit the audience, the audience will shift to a style that does suit" (Bell 1994:107). According to Bell, audiences influence media. The audience is at an advantage, because in the mass communication process, they have the power of choice between paying attention to media messages or ignoring them.

First of all, though, mass communication needs to be put into perspective. It must be remembered that mass communication is only one aspect of people's lives, competing with private, or interpersonal communication. In other words, we should not exaggerate the importance of the media as the sole source of information. If the mass media do not address issues people are interested in, they will be rejected, as Bell observes. For example, I have already referred to the public's disrespect for the Polish Communist media. When they were unable to trust in official sources of information, Polish people turned to their own independent sources instead.

Public use of alternative media to compensate for the existing media organisations' lack of relevant information can also be observed in Thailand. From May 17 to 19, 1992, the Thai army attacked a group of demonstrators in Bangkok, killing 19
people. The military censored news broadcasts on television, and attempted to censor the print media as well. These attempts were not entirely successful, as some newspapers did publish reports on the incident. However, the most extensive picture of the riots was provided by Thai and foreign television news footage which had not been allowed to be shown on Thai television. Thousands of video cassettes showing this footage were copied by Thai “video pirates”, and these were sold throughout the country (*The Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 June 1992).

This, however, is not necessarily a characteristic of strictly state-controlled media systems. In any media system, public consumption of media is not automatic, but depends on what the media have to offer. Perhaps the term consumption is not quite accurate. Public use of the media is not necessarily a matter of passive consumption, but can be seen as active participation.

This can certainly be seen in Australia. While there is a chance for people to phone or write their comments or complaints to television, radio or press, there is no guarantee that their feedback will actually be made public, or that it will even be taken into account by the media producers.

However, there are other forums where people can express their views, like television talk shows with audience participation, talkback radio and internet discussions. Groups who share a particular interest can create their own websites, newsletters or “zines”, and anyone with a digital video camera can make their own films. These are only a few examples of how people who are not part of the “media producer” group can actually be involved in creating alternative media content.
What this means is that journalists and other media personnel are not the only information providers (or creators of reality), and moreover, they are not necessarily the most trusted. Whether there are many sources of information available, or only a few, in each case the credibility of the media can be perceived as questionable.

Moreover, news programmes on television, or newspapers which focus on "hard news", compete with entertainment programmes and magazines. This can result in combinations of the two as "infotainment" television or tabloid newspapers. From a cultural studies perspective, this can be seen as a reflection of popular culture. Journalists are perceived by the public as entertainers, not informers.

Another blurring of the line between journalism and entertainment can be seen when television news presenters or newspaper columnists become "stars" rather than journalists. Fact and fantasy are further confused by actors becoming media personnel in dramatised representations (in series such as Murphy Brown, or Lois and Clark, or in movies such as "The Paper", and "Broadcast News", not to mention all of the movies which feature "journalist" characters). The effect of all of this is to reduce news media to the same two-dimensional artificiality as the drama that represents it. It makes us ask whether the news is "real", or as manufactured as the rest. If our images of journalists are Tintin or Clark Kent, can we take them seriously?

There are certainly indications that maybe we do not, since there are many comedies about on news organisations, like Frontline, and NewsRadio, and satires of news content, like Good News Week, and The Panel, which take the
"seriousness" out of the image of news production. It is not surprising that we can easily become sceptical about the media. We can see through the images it attempts to create for itself.

Considering the points above, the idea of "control" through the media loses its validity. This does not mean that manipulation of the media is not possible - not only in the obvious sense of censorship, but also in more subtle ways. For example, by making use of a trendy theme, using clever marketing techniques, and accessing the production process, public relations managers, politicians, or media-wise interest groups can certainly put their message across. But it must be remembered that in this instance, these groups are dealing with a media-literate public, who have access to many other sources of information. Total control of the mass media is simply not possible, particularly with the spread of new technology. In Thailand, for example, many people have acquired satellite dishes to watch foreign news broadcasts.

However, this awareness of the media amongst the public does not exist in all media systems. In some countries, for example Benin, discussed above, only a small percentage of the population are able to read, and only a few have access to televisions and radios. The majority are unlikely to come into contact with the mass media. In this case, the term "mass" media is inaccurate.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined why media systems cannot be adequately described as either "free" or "repressed", nor as "transitional" from one of these categories to
the other. Instead, the classification of media system types as "open" or "closed" is proposed, based on an analysis of social, political and cultural factors. These theories will be summarised in the next chapter, which discusses their contribution towards a theory of journalism's role in the media system.
3 A THEORY OF JOURNALISM'S ROLE IN THE MEDIA SYSTEM

3.1 Points to Address in a Theory of Media Systems

Journalism's role in the media system, in the context of the divergent theories discussed, can be summarised as follows:

Firstly, the idea of "transition", which has been applied in a political and economic sense to postcommunist countries, is a difficult term which cannot account for differences between media systems. Each society has cultural characteristics which are not reducible to its economic and political structure, and these should not be neglected although they are harder to measure.

Secondly, classifications of media systems as "free" or "authoritarian" are based on values which obscure the actual situation. Although the description of a media system as "free" may appear to be based on a subjective definition, this is not possible. The idea of "freedom of the press" is a historical development which reflected and continues to reflect a particular political philosophy. Describing a media system as "free" raises too many questions: Who or what is free from whom or what? Who is free to do what, to what extent?

Likewise, the use of systems theory to analyse mass media communication needs to be re-examined. Systems theory can reveal the linkages between structures but fails to clarify processes. It may be more useful to look at the actors in the media system themselves to observe how media content is produced, particularly the producers of
that content. However, the labels “open” and “closed” can be useful in classifying media systems.

Journalism can be viewed sociologically, that is, in its social context. McNair’s sociological perspective which takes the social determinants of journalism into account is a useful contribution to a study of the mass media. Besides noting the structural influences on journalism, McNair also considers the effects of professional journalistic culture and the practical organisational and technical constraints. McNair did not intend to classify media systems, but his approach exposes the limitations of the authoritarian system/control versus democratic system/freedom viewpoint.

Additionally, we need to consider the connection between media and change, seeing mass communication as an increasingly complex process. However, it is too simple to reduce this process to one which either reinforces or rejects existing institutions. Downing’s suggestions add another dimension to the previous theories - the idea of communication as a process of ever-increasing complexity. This idea also questions the view that the mass media preserve the status quo by reproducing a dominant ideology. However, this does not mean that the mass media do not reflect certain common assumptions, as textual analysis has shown. Moreover, it certainly does not mean that mass communication causes social change. Instead, mass communication could be seen as a vehicle for change, but also as a stabilizing process.

It is inadequate to explain mass communication by applying a biological or mathematical analogy, which suggests that there is some sort of natural progression
in this process. We must consider the involvement of human agency. This means examining power relations within the media system. However, power should not be seen simply as the control which one person has over another, and cannot be understood without analysing the roles of the different groups involved.

The definition of role used here is an expected function. Role should be seen as a fluid concept since it is defined as having multiple interpretations. Investigating roles in the media system can provide an insight into how it functions. Because expectations of behaviour are informed by culture and ideologies, examining roles enables us to see these significant, but hard to measure, aspects of the media system. Beliefs are not visible, but behaviour is: what journalists believe translates into what they aim to do - but in any system, there will always be limits on what journalists can do.

Journalism should not be defined as the reporting of “hard news” only. The boundaries between soft and hard news are unclear, and soft news is often presented as hard news. Journalists present this picture of journalism as serious and objective, but from a cultural studies perspective they are in fact part of popular culture. This can be seen in their narrative style of communication. However, we need to look more closely at the links between journalism and the popular - we need to know whose culture is being referred to. Therefore, a study of journalism should not neglect to examine the links between journalists and their audience.

The audience are not necessarily simply passive consumers of media content, but can use that content for their own purposes. In short, the people using media should not be seen as helpless and gullible. It should not be assumed that media
audiences always believe everything they see, read or hear. They are likely to be familiar with techniques of verbal and technical manipulation, and capable of producing their own content. Therefore, like the ideal of "freedom", which fails to describe the reality of media systems, its corresponding opposite, "control", too, is an exaggeration.

3.1.1 Summary

Considering the above points, we can see that the mass communication process is complex, with many aspects to be taken into account. It is therefore too simplistic to reduce this to either a process of exclusive control by one group over another, or on the other hand a process characterised by "freedom" and equal access. Correspondingly, the role of the journalist cannot be understood as either lapdog or watchdog.

What I am suggesting is that to understand journalism as part of a media system, we first need to look at the overall structural factors and then at the strategies that journalists take in their day-to-day work. Taking elements from systems theory and the work of Downing, McNair and others, it is possible to construct a theory to describe how media systems function, which will enable us to examine the role of journalists.

The theory that is proposed here takes its expansive approach from systems theory, making use of the concept of a system of interrelated parts, and the definitions of "open" and "closed" systems. Systems theory could be criticised for ignoring the
mechanisms of change, as I have pointed out, as it claims that the system functions with the aim of maintaining stability. However, this could be viewed differently.

Maintenance of stability could also be understood as a recognition of the need to adapt. From this perspective, the changes in eastern European nations appear more reasonable than revolutionary. While theories of collapse or transformation assume something has gone wrong, I would argue that change is normal and constant; it is only with sudden change that it becomes particularly obvious, as it did with the so-called “revolutions” in eastern Europe in 1989.

At the centre of this investigation, however, are the producers of media content. As I have stated, it is insufficient to study the connections between the various parts of a media system, as systems theory does. This does not provide us with a description for the process of media content production. It is this process which should be the focus of our study. As Rodney Tiffen has observed, “understanding newsmaking is a necessary basis for grasping the opportunities for, and constraints upon, both the internal and external exercise of power upon news” (Tiffen 1993:177). A study of the process of newsmaking will enable us to take all of the above points into account. Following McNair, we will look at the social influences on journalism. First of all, though, it is necessary to develop a model to describe media systems.

3.2 The Definition of a Media System

Reduced to the most basic level, a media system can be described as media content production and its consumption. This is what all media systems have in
common. All media systems are characterised by the interaction between media organisations which produce culturally determined content, and a public who receive and interpret that content. These media organisations are subject to mechanisms of regulation which restrict their practices. Media consumption may also be limited by political restriction of media distribution; also media may not be equally accessible to all members of the public. This study is interested in the production process rather than the public use of media.

In order to distinguish between media systems in some way, they could be viewed as fluctuating between two opposing tendencies. This is represented by two extremes (although there is no real possibility of either end being reached), which I have already outlined, namely the open system and the closed system. These two types of system are not categorised according to their different political or economic arrangements, but by the different types of interaction within them. The idea of open and closed systems was also used by Tomasz Goban-Klas (1994) in his analysis of Polish journalism.

As mentioned above, open systems can be defined as those which allow for communication to be maximised and diversified. An open system has multiple channels of communication, that is, it offers access to a variety of sources of information. The production of media content in an open system does not occur within a confined organisation, but makes use of feedback from the public.

Closed systems can be described as systems in which communication is limited, its content is narrowly defined, and few opportunities are given for feedback. In a closed system, media production operates within very rigid parameters, isolated
from the public. In contrast to open systems, communication in closed systems is determined by one group which has the intention of total control of the media. Authoritarian governments, for example, minimise the flow of information by imposing strict controls on media production. Sources of information and media content are limited.

Most importantly, it must be noted that an open media system is not a synonym for a “free media”. For example, as the following analysis of the Polish press will show, the Polish media system has become more open, but the press is still subject to certain restrictions and cannot be described as “free”.

3.3 Analysis of a Media System: Three Factors

There are three factors that I suggest should be considered in an analysis of a media system. These three factors are regulation, accessibility, and reciprocity. Regulation relates to the limits within which the media organisations may function; accessibility refers to the extent to which the public have access to the media; and reciprocity describes the amount of interchange between the mass media and the public.

3.3.1 Forms of Regulation

Regulation can be divided into external (legal or political), internal, or professional. Legal regulation refers to the extent to which media are restricted or assisted by legislation. The laws themselves are not as significant as their implementation. Freedom of information laws, for example, can be hindered by other regulations which deny access to information, such as laws on state secrets.
Therefore, when analysing external regulation, we should first look at the laws that exist, and then question whether these are actually enacted or exist only for show, and also whether they may be counterbalanced by other laws.

However, the definition of regulation used here is not confined to legally binding codes. External regulation includes other methods of political containment of the media, which may be either formal or informal. Formal political regulation could include the granting or denial of broadcasting licences, or making appointments to managerial positions in media organisations as part of official practice. Informal methods of political manipulation may involve the cultivation of personal contacts between politicians and journalists.

This factor is dependent on the political culture and the political elites - not how the political system is labelled. We can see the role politicians envisage for journalists from the methods of regulation they employ. Is there, for example, legal regulation involving heavily restricted access to information, backed by harsh punishment? Or does the regulation of the media take a more subtle, informal form?

The relationship of news organisations to the political institutions can also be seen in terms of ownership. We need to distinguish between ownership by a political party and ownership by the state. I am not suggesting that the amount of autonomy a media organisation has is necessarily less if it is owned by the state than if it is owned by a private individual. There is also the question of the media proprietor’s
relationship with politicians. I will return to this issue in the discussion of Poland below.

Internal regulation takes place within the media organisation. Journalists’ work practices will be affected by the organisation’s rules or guidelines, and obviously also by practical considerations. As in any organisation, certain restrictions are simply unavoidable, such as hierarchy of decision-making, deadline pressures, and stylistic constraints depending on medium. This has been summarised above in the work of McNair, Negrine, and Tiffen. Journalists are, after all, employees, and thus are allocated a role by their employers.

Journalistic culture is another indirect form of regulation, which provides journalists with a code of ethics and a sense of duty to the profession. Although codes of ethics are only guidelines and not laws, journalists are still socialised to conform to these expectations. This can be described as professional “regulation”. It influences journalistic practice, not only because it shapes the ways journalists approach their own work, but also because it creates a feeling of shared responsibility for the profession. This sense of community functions as an ethical restraint. If the sense of community is strong, journalists may see themselves as watchdogs over their own profession. The idea of role is useful here, in analysing journalists’ views of their part in the media system.

Another way of analysing the extent of professionalism is by looking at media associations, which include journalists’ voluntary associations, committees protecting journalists’ rights, and organisations monitoring freedom of the press. In an open system, such associations aim to ensure political recognition of the
independent status of journalists, and reinforce professional journalistic culture. In a closed system, these organisations are limited or subordinated.

3.3.2 Accessibility

Accessibility is the extent to which the mass media are available for use by the public. This means, firstly, that factors such as literacy, education, financial resources, technology, and ethnicity are important. Therefore, we should first inquire into these factors when studying a media system. Obviously, those who do not speak the communicated language, or those who lack the money or education for televisions or newspapers, are at a disadvantage.

The distribution of mass media relates to the distribution of these resources. Education is particularly important, because the more educated people are, the more sceptical of the media they are likely to be, as described above. They then have the ability to make more informed choices, and can use media for their own purposes.

Secondly, technological development should also be taken into account, as more advanced technology allows for more widespread distribution, and also more sources of information. As McNair (1998) has shown, technology improves techniques of newsgathering. More sources of information and faster communication do not equal "better", though - there is also more room for error.

For the public, technology can enable more choice. However, this only becomes significant when the first factor is considered. The availability of more advanced technology in itself does not make for an open system. Certainly, it enables an even greater access to information, if the socio-economic and cultural resources
mentioned above are more equally distributed. But if on the other hand, these resources are more unequally distributed, the inequality is compounded. Therefore we should ask not only what kinds of technology are available but also to whom it is available.

3.3.3 Reciprocity

Closely related to this is the potential for feedback, which I will refer to as reciprocity. This factor can indicate the type of relationship that exists between the public and the media. The question to ask here is, are the media willing to pay attention to public feedback, and moreover, are they able to respond to it?

First of all, there must be feedback mechanisms in existence, at the very least. Such feedback mechanisms could be surveys conducted by market research organisations, or official research centres. Market research organisations provide indirect contact between the public and media personnel, and between the public and advertisers, by collecting data on public attitudes to media content. Through this data, which can only be an estimation of the actual public attitudes, an image of the public is created which media personnel take into account.

Most important in the feedback category, however, are opportunities for the public to comment or criticise, which may be provided by the media organisations. Initiative may also come from the public, in the form of advocacy groups which attempt to influence either political decisions or media content. In an open system, we would expect such groups to be influential. In a closed system, they would not exist, or be suppressed, or ignored.
Again, the existence of these mechanisms alone is of little value if there is no subsequent response by the media, which is the condition of reciprocity. If the relationship between media and public is characterised by reciprocity, we can describe the media system as open. The media system in which media are not in touch with the public is bound to encounter difficulty, for reasons I have already discussed.

The term “audience” is not used here, because this term refers specifically to the users of media content. As mentioned above, the audience do not necessarily use the media as the media expect, and they may not pay attention at all. If we use the term “public” instead, we are referring to the population in general, including those who do not use media.

This distinction is important, because a study of the “audience” rather than the “public” assumes that access to the media is equal, and disregards the factors related to inequality. The extent of public participation relates to the openness of the media system. If the audience (that is, those using the media) is in fact only a small percentage of the population, the media system cannot be described as open.

It is, however, difficult to categorise the group “public” as one, as we are divided by gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, interests, and values. Basically, the public is a very diverse group with different uses for mass media. For the purposes of simplifying this model, I have not subdivided this group because, although quite varied, it still represents one part of the mass media system.
I have outlined some of the areas in which we might gain information about media systems. There is one other area which can also be analysed. Media content forms the centre of this model and refers to the output of any media: newspaper or magazine articles, television series or news programmes, radio broadcasts. Content is created chiefly through media practices, but may also include advertising and official press releases from political and economic organisations (which are still processed according to media practices).

The more closed the system, the more media content will be limited - for example, by government regulations or censorship. Media output can be assessed in content analysis, which can show what is presented, and in what proportion, and textual analysis, which attempts to decode this.

In order to show how this model can be used to describe media systems and the role of the journalist, I will now turn to the example of Poland.
4 JOURNALISM IN POLAND: AN OVERVIEW

4.1 WHY POLAND?

Poland has experienced, and continues to experience, wide-ranging economic, political and cultural changes after the collapse of communism. There are some distinct features which make Poland particularly interesting for this study. These will be explained in this chapter.

Throughout the period of communism, Poland was never quite as repressive as other communist countries. For example, the Communist Party did not succeed in undermining the influence of the Catholic church, which continued to play an important part in people's lives. As communism was imposed on Poland by Russia rather than internally established, it was always resented by most Poles, who felt that it was a foreign, hostile ideology which conflicted with Polish national identity.

It must be noted that communist Poland was not a state with a completely clear single-party system. Smaller parties were allowed to exist, although these were forced into some sort of coalition with the Communist Party. This meant that there was at least some potential for debate in the Sejm (Parliament).

Secondly, communist authority was undermined by underground resistance. There was in fact a “dual system” operating under communism - the official and the underground. For many official institutions there was a parallel underground institution in operation. These represented an “opposition counter-culture”, which
grew significantly in the 1970s (Garton Ash 1983:18). The government under Prime Minister Gierek knew of the existence of these underground elements, but did not attempt to eliminate them.

There was a second economy, which functioned independently of the state economy, in which people exchanged goods on the black market. The official press was countered by the underground press, which rejected the propaganda and lies of the communist party press. There were underground publishers, notably NOWA, which published more than 100 banned works, such as Orwell’s “Animal Farm”. There was even a “Flying University” established in January 1978, which held secret seminars. As Timothy Garton Ash observes, Poles “grew up with two codes of behaviour, two languages - the public and the private - two histories - the official and the unofficial” (Garton Ash 1983:280).

The extent of resistance to communism was also reflected in the existence of a strong oppositional movement, which played a significant part in bringing about change. The Solidarity social movement was so powerful that at its height it managed to involve more than half of the adult population of Poland. Today, postcommunist elites continue to be challenged by increasing numbers of political parties in a political system that is characterised by instability.

Of all the countries in the region, it can be argued that Poland was subject to the most rapid political and economic reforms. The constitution was almost immediately completely revised, following the western democratic format, before the end of 1989. Economic reforms were introduced just as quickly in the “Balcerowicz Plan”, devised by the Finance Minister of that name, which involved
large-scale privatisation and freeing up of the market. Poland now has a much higher rate of unemployment than it had under communism, and there is an increasing distance between socio-economic groups.

In postcommunist Poland, there is now competition between print media in a free market. The media are no longer wedded to the communist party. Instead, they can choose their partners amongst the increasing numbers of political parties that now exist in Poland. Publications try to secure their own particular section of the reading public. However, this means taking a specific ideological direction in order to maintain their niche position. Media expert Karol Jakubowicz remarks that “you have to read between two and five newspapers every day to learn what is happening in Poland” (Gross 1994).

Although journalists claim to be “objective”, their connections with politicians continue to be close. In this respect little has changed, as Jakubowicz observes: “Advocacy journalism existed before 1989 and it exists today. The old and new journalists approach the profession the same way” (quoted in Gross 1994). Teresa Sasinska-Klas, Director of Krakow’s School of Journalism, also feels that the Polish media are “still highly politicised”, and that “[j]ournalistic responsibility along with the other elements of professionalization are generally lacking” (quoted in Gross 1994).

All of this makes Poland an interesting case study, particularly the current position of journalists in Poland. Because of the competing ideological backgrounds of communism and the resistance to it, it is difficult to speak of one “dominant ideology” for journalists. We could expect Polish journalists to be influenced by
either one, both, or none of these ideologies. Moreover, the existence of competing ideologies is also significant for an investigation into the journalist's role.

There are several questions to be answered regarding journalism's role in Poland. To what extent is there a "journalistic culture" that overrides other interests? Do Polish journalists experience a definite sense of identity as members of a professional community? How have the social, political and economic changes in Poland affected this sense of professional identity?

Before turning to these questions, which I will address in the section on professional regulation, I will give a brief summary of the historical and contemporary background of journalism in Poland, providing an overview of the political, economic, social and cultural conditions. This research is limited to the press, the oldest medium with a long history in Poland.

4.2 JOURNALISM IN COMMUNIST POLAND

Before the collapse of communism in Poland, two distinct types of journalism existed: official journalism and underground journalism. Since communism was imposed on Poland by Russia after the Second World War, Poland was compelled to follow the Russian social rules, in which information was used as an instrument of social control. According to Stalinist theory, the function of the media was simply to legitimise the authoritarian system.

In the 1970s, there was a slight relaxation of the authoritarian-style communist rule (Garton Ash 1983), and gradual infiltration of trends from the west - the most obvious followers of these were the hippies, punks, and skinheads who appeared in
the streets of Warsaw (Goban-Klas 1994:157). The climate was conducive to criticism of the government. There was certainly an increase in the number of strikes in the early 1980s, and Prime Minister Gierek was expelled from office in October 1980 because the Communist Party wished to maintain an appearance of control. Prime Minister Kania, Gierek's replacement, allowed the “registration” of Solidarity Trade Union (Alexander 1998). At the same time, an alternative, underground press representing the views of Solidarity, intellectuals, and the church, began to develop.

Before the imposition of martial law in December 1981, the bolder of the official newspapers also began to publish more controversial articles. However, just as the communist system appeared to be opening up, there was a severe crackdown on the media. In the late 1980s, Gorbachev’s politics of “glasnost” and “perestroika” found resonance in Poland too, and once again opened up the possibility of political change. This was expressed in the Round Table talks between Solidarity and the Communist Party, which involved discussions on how to reduce the powers of the old system in order for Poland to become a multi-party constitutional republic.

4.3 JOURNALISM IN POLAND TODAY

In the 1990s, Poland is no longer simply divided into those who are for communism and those against. The divisions are now much more complex, affecting journalists. However, we should not draw a clear dividing line between communist Poland and 1990s Poland. Although the communists lost their monopoly on the press, they did not relinquish all of their power over it. The process of privatisation, as I will show, did not enable the press to be free from
political influence. The structures which enabled communist prime ministers to control the press were passed on to their successors, whether postcommunist or right-wing. In Poland, as in other countries, politicians continue to restrict media access to certain information, casting doubt on their claim that the Polish media is free from political control.

However, political factors are not the only ones to consider when inquiring into the nature of the media system. Nor are economic factors. Foreign investors are also blamed for exercising too much influence over the press, but this too is a simplification. Different companies (or individuals) have different methods of managing their newspapers, and not all aim to take control. The existence of foreign ownership is not in itself evidence for self-interested control by the owner.

By looking more closely at media personnel in Poland and the organisations they work for, we can see that there are significant differences between these organisations. This questions the determinism of systems theory. If structures determined the process of mass communication to the extent suggested by systems theory, we would assume media organisations to be almost identical, as they are part of the same system and affected by the same patterns of interaction with other institutions. But this is not the case. Communication is not a unified process. There are many messages, many media, and many communicators.

There was not, as suggested, a sudden and dramatic transformation from one type of press to another. Different types of change took place during and after communism. Commercialisation of media content, for example, was a process that began during the 1970s with the approval of the Communist Party. Several legal
changes took place under the first postcommunist governments, but political regulation of the media continued. Because of these differences, and because of the influence of the past on the present, I have not divided this research into communist and postcommunist Poland.
5 Legal Regulation of the Media in Poland

This study of the Polish print media will begin with the most obvious form of regulation – that is, regulatory laws which determine the limits within which the media can operate. As this chapter will show, the media during the communist era were subject to strict laws deliberately designed to subordinate it to the Communist Party. However, while many media laws have changed completely, and censorship has been abolished, the media in postcommunist Poland are also subject to restrictive legal regulation.

5.1 Legal Regulation under Communism

The Communist Party employed a variety of methods to control the press. The first of these was to bring the press, and the system of distribution, under state ownership. From the outset, the Communist Party had a virtual monopoly over the print media. The Workers’ Publishing Co-operative “Press-Book Movement” (RSW), established in 1947, owned 22 publishing houses, 17 printing houses, 2 press photo agencies, and 34,496 kiosks. This gave the Communist Party a monopoly on distribution, and meant that numbers and types of publications available in kiosks could also be limited as the Party wished. Although RSW did not own the majority of publications available, it did have the largest overall circulation – 86.5% of the daily press and 71.5% of the weekly press in 1989 (Giorgi 1995:74). However, state ownership of the media does not in itself guarantee a malleable press.
Journalists in communist Poland found themselves in a difficult situation. Certainly, some journalists were loyal members of the Communist Party, but many journalists were not. They were expected to serve the Communist Party, yet the Party was suspicious of them. Moreover, there was no respect for journalists from the public, whose opinion was simply “prasa klamie - the press lies”. This opinion went back a long way; in 1961, S.J. Iec, a well-known aphorist, put it bluntly: “It is simply too hard to believe that the lie was in existence before the invention of printing.” Journalists themselves had little control over their own work. The main problems facing journalists during the last two decades of communism were restricted access to information and the system of censorship. All information came from the same source, the Polish Press Agency.

Censorship was carried out by the Main Administration for Control of Press, Publications, and Public Performances, through the Communist Party’s Central Committee Press Department. Censors worked according to a strict and continuously changing book of guidelines, known as the Book of Instructions and Directions. The extent of censorship varied, but was most restrictive during the period of martial law. Some publications were more heavily censored than others; the higher a paper’s circulation, the more cautiously it was scrutinised. The most censored publications included Polityka weekly and Zycie Warszawy (Albright 1983:13-14).

Not every registered newspaper was under the control of the Communist Party; there were a few independent, legal publications, most of them representing the Catholic church. These played a significant role in uniting different voices in
opposition. Contributors to the Krakow weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* (Weekly Review) and the Warsaw monthly *Wież* (link) included Karol Wojtyła, before becoming Pope John Paul II, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, who became Poland’s first prime minister, and both Catholic and non-Catholic intellectuals (Garton Ash 1983:19). Such publications were allowed a certain amount of freedom because of their status as church publications.

Adam Szostkiewicz, political editor of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, believes that the privileged situation of the paper was due to both its accumulated prestige and the fact that the Communist Party needed a “proof of how pluralist, and how tolerant, this specific Polish communist regime was”. Still, there was no freedom from the censors, who could ultimately decide “what was to be a taboo subject, not to be negotiated in any way”.

A new censorship law was enacted in October 1981, after a year of debate. Although portrayed as a liberalization, it was still forbidden to criticise communism or communist countries, or to mention Solidarity, which was an illegal organisation (Go ban-Klas 1994:171). According to the October 1981 censorship law, the following were forbidden:

Art. 2. A call for overthrowing, insulting, ridiculing, or demeaning the constitutional system of the PRL

Art. 3. An attack on the constitutional principles of the foreign policy and alliances of the PRL

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4 Interview, Krakow, 30th October 1998
Art. 6. A call for criminal activities or praise of them.

This means that any kind of criticism of communism or communist countries was banned, as was mention of Solidarity as it was considered an illegal organisation (Goban-Klas 1994:171). In July 1983, further restrictive laws were passed forbidding the publication of anything considered “a threat to state security or defence” or any kind of ‘criminal’ content (Goban-Klas 1994:193).

The Communist Party’s control of the press involved more than just a set of rules which were simply applied to journalists’ articles. In practice, the system of censorship was “very vague,” Adam Szostkiewicz explained, “on the principle that once you’ve got clear guidelines it’s more difficult for you to manipulate, because a journalist or editor might use these guidelines to disagree with you.” ⁵ Keeping the guidelines unclear was one way for the Communist Party to pre-empt criticism from journalists.

The changes to the media laws in Poland reflected changes to the political system, and to the economic order. In Poland, changes relating to the mass media occurred more rapidly and dramatically than changes in many other spheres, as the concept of “free press” was seen as central to democracy (Borkowska 1999:271). The process of democratisation in Poland did not involve the establishment of entirely new institutions, like in the neighbouring Czech Republic, but rather the modification of existing institutions (Sasinska-Klas 1999:20).

⁵ ibid.
This means, significantly, that the old system of political control of the press was not replaced with a completely different one, although censorship was formally abolished in law in 1990. The old communist elite could easily retain important positions, both in politics and business. Some conservative politicians criticised the process of privatising the press for failing to "de-communise", pointing out that too many publications were still run by the former staff (Goban-Klas 1994:223). In fact the process was highly politicised.

The transformation of the media began with a series of legal changes. The constitution was changed on 29 December 1989, declaring Poland a multi-party republic. Changes to press law, and the abolition of state control and censorship came into effect on 11 April 1990. The privatisation of the RSW co-operative was made a law on 22 March. It was to be transferred to private ownership under the supervision of a Liquidation Committee, which supposedly represented a spectrum of interests in the print sector (Giorgi 1995:19).

However, the committee was appointed by Prime Minister Mazowiecki, as were the heads of state radio and television and the head of the Polish Press Agency. Thus the process of change in the media was politicised from the beginning. The guidelines given to the Liquidation Committee were provided by the Parliamentary Committee of Culture and the Media, and stated that the tasks of the Liquidation Committee were to:

- regulate privatisation allowing for both national and foreign investments,

- protect financially weak titles judged significant for Polish culture,
• protect the rights of employees of existing publications,

• prevent strong political party influence on the press,

• prevent former nomenklatura from dominating (Giorgi 1995: 20).

The Committee was also to divide up and redistribute RSW titles, allocating some to journalists' co-operatives, some to be sold to political parties, and some to be sold on the free market (Goban-Klas 1999:60). This gave the Committee considerable power. However, the guidelines have not been adequately met. The change in ownership structure resulting from these legal changes means that there were also some significant organisational changes as a result. These will be examined later.

The liquidation process supposedly gave journalists' co-operatives priority, but this was difficult to realise. At the time of liquidation, the local journalists' co-operative in Poznan, where Wprost weekly was published, applied for and received ownership rights to the weekly. During that time, the weekly was beginning to become more prestigious.

However, a company by the name of Agencja Reklamowo-Wydawnicza (The Advertising and Publishing Agency) bought the rights from the co-operative and began publishing Wprost. This company was co-owned by Marek Krol, who is Wprost's editor-in-chief. Interestingly, Krol had become the Communist Party's chief of propaganda in 1989, as communism was beginning to end.

Therefore, this takeover was viewed by some critics as "crony capitalism", meaning that the influential positions which were formerly held by the Communist
Party were simply transferred to the old boys.\(^6\) Even more interestingly, though, \textit{Wprost} is seen as ideologically to the right of the political spectrum. Some readers of the magazine specifically chose it over its main competitor \textit{Polityka} weekly, because \textit{"Polityka is associated with the postcommunists"}, and \textit{"Wprost is not communist"}.

In September 1998, the Liquidation Commission argued in court that it still had the rights to \textit{Wprost}. The Commission claims that no co-operative had actually been established at \textit{Wprost}, and therefore the magazine could not be taken over or sold. However, \textit{Wprost}'s lawyer put forward the counter-argument that the Commission had no rights to \textit{Wprost} as it had neither published it nor registered it, unlike the current owner.\(^7\)

\section*{5.2 Current Polish Media Laws and Their Implications for Journalists}

One of the biggest problems for contemporary Polish journalists is the press law. Despite numerous revisions, it continues to be vague. Moreover, these unclear laws, which will be discussed below, can easily become restrictive, as they are open to interpretation. The ambiguous legal framework has a lot in common with the Communist Party's principle that guidelines should not be too clear, in case they could be used against their designers.

Current Polish press laws, although they are presented as liberal, can in fact restrict journalists' ability to report on anything they choose, by denying them access to certain information, and preventing them from exercising criticism. This

\(^6\) (\textit{The Warsaw Voice}, September 20, 1998, no.38 (517))
can be seen as a remnant of communist political culture - or typical of politicians in an unstable political system. Polish politicians’ hesitancy involved in finalising media laws is also a reflection of Poland’s political instability.

Censorship may have been immediately banned from the new system with great idealistic zeal, but once the floodgates of democracy were opened, it began to appear less like an evil practice and more like an efficient mechanism for coping with the mass media. According to a 1992 survey of Polish parliamentarians’ opinions of the media, 55% of the politicians were in favour of bringing back censorship. The survey also found that politicians felt that the journalist’s role was firstly to promote correct values amongst citizens, and secondarily to provide information (Goban-Klas 1999:66-7).

The new Polish constitution adopted in 1997 prohibits censorship and supposedly allows “freedom to express opinions, to acquire and disseminate information” - but it also makes exceptions, in rather vague terms, “to protect the freedoms and rights of other persons and economic subjects, public order, security or important economic interests of the state”(CPJ 1998).

The perspective on the mass media which is expressed in the Polish constitution is that it is vital for the media to be seen as free, yet at the same time, the media need to recognise that there are limits. The constitutional statement of “freedom of the press”, also found in other constitutions in eastern Europe, does not guarantee that this freedom will be implemented in practice.

As Jeremy Druker of the Institute for Journalism in Transition has observed, "[a]lmost everywhere in the region, constitutions guarantee a right to information but leave it up to an envisioned law to define both that right and the way access should actually work" (Druker 1998). These laws, however, often never come into being. Druker cites Bertil Cottier, of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law, who explains that governments are not enthusiastic about preparing laws that will enable others to act as watchdogs (Druker 1998).

From a journalist's point of view, the formal existence of freedoms in a constitution does not reflect the reality, as politicians are well placed to avoid the formalities in practice. "It doesn't matter that the new constitution and the European convention on human rights and freedom guarantee the right to be informed in Poland; the less experienced the government is, the more it keeps secrets from the press," notes one journalist (Podemski 1997).

The law on state secrets is one of the major hindrances that stands in the way of the constitution. Politicians, who often mistrust the media, protect themselves from journalistic investigations by classifying potentially damaging information as inaccessible "state secrets". The 1982 law on classified and confidential information prevents those who possess such information from passing it on. Politicians continued to be attracted to this law, which originated in the period of martial law. In 1993, Prime Minister Suchocka's government approved a draft which was almost identical, and a similar bill was accepted by the next government under Prime Minister Pawlak.
Now the Ministry of Internal Affairs has sent another similarly restrictive bill to the Prime Minister's Office (Rutkiewicz 1999). If the bill becomes law, and does not clearly define what kind of information "classified" and "confidential" information is, this will deny journalists access to anything politicians want to hide. Even if no changes are made, the current laws dating from 1982 are still restrictive.

So-called "state and security service secrets", even if uncovered independently without informants, cannot be published. "State secrets" are currently protected from publication by a 1983 law which was introduced during the period of martial law. In 1996, the Warsaw Provincial Court accused Jerzy Urban, editor-in-chief of the satirical weekly *NIE*, of publishing "news constituting a state secret". *NIE* had published documents from 1958 which revealed that the director of Prime Minister Olszewski's advisory team had collaborated with the communist Security Service, SB. Urban was sentenced to one year in prison and ordered to pay a fine of 10,000 Zlotys (about $AUS5000). Moreover he was banned from working as a journalist and editor for a year (Swiecka 1996).

Articles in Poland's penal code referring to libel could also be used against journalists. Although President Aleksander Kwasniewski promised to remove the provisions on libel in 1996, Prime Minister Buzek's government has made no effort to do so (Committee for the Protection of Journalists: Annual Report 1998). Now that Kwasniewski is being hit with harsh criticism from *Zycie* daily, he is not likely to argue so strongly against the punishment for libel. Article 236 of the penal code states that insulting a public official is punishable by up to two years in prison.
President Kwasniewski is currently suing Zycie for libel. Zycie published an article in August 1997 claiming that Kwasniewski held a secret meeting with a Russian intelligence agent, Victor Alganov, in the spa town Cetniewo three years ago. Alganov was also friends with Prime Minister Oleksy, who was discredited in 1995 for allegedly working as an agent of the Soviet, and then the Russian secret service. After the “Oleksy affair”, the right-wing press began to investigate the past activities of SLD (Democratic Left Alliance) and SdRP (Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland) leaders. Wprost weekly even suggested that there were Russian secret service agents amongst the SLD and that the secret service had assisted in the creation of the party.

The Kwasniewski-Zycie libel case is being debated in court, bringing Zycie a lot of publicity. Kwasniewski’s defence team are trying to prove that the president was not even in Poland at the time of the supposed meeting; Zycie responded with several witnesses who said that they had seen the president in Cetniewo. Kwasniewski is demanding a front-page apology and a payment of 2.5 million zlotys. The extremely high large sum that Kwasniewski has demanded has led right-wing politicians to speculate that the president is trying to bankrupt Zycie, which is Poland’s largest right-wing daily newspaper (Golik 1998).

The laws against libel are easy to apply, and not only convenient for politicians. A regional daily, Dziennik Bałtycki, published an article suggesting that there were certain “irregularities” in contracts drawn up between the Polish Postal Service and the private company Banpol. Banpol accused the newspaper of giving it a bad

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8 At the time of the interviews with Zycie journalists, December 1998, the case was still continuing.
name and took it to court. The regional court in Gdansk then ordered Dziennik Baltycki to pay Banpol a large sum in compensation, and to stop publishing further information about the company. This is a form of censorship.

Besides the law on state secrets and the laws against libel, there are several other restrictions in the Polish press law which could limit journalists, which Izabela Dobosz, a judge at the High Administrative Court points out. Although there is no censorship, there is a legal requirement to publish certain information. Articles 34-5 of the press law state that official notices must be published on demand, unedited. In line with international standards, those involved in court cases are protected by article 13 of the press law, and the right to privacy is protected by article 14.6, which states that no private information is to be given without permission of the individual involved (Dobosz 1999:77). In any case, Poland as a member of the European Union will be forced to change its laws to conform to European standards - although many European countries still have their own laws.

A further problem for journalists is that they can be made to reveal their sources. Two editors from Zycie Warszawy were charged with refusal to reveal the source of a published document in January 1997. The document in question revealed the official reason behind the discontinuation of the investigation into the Oleksy affair (the name given to the scandal involving Prime Minister Oleksy, accused of collaborating with the Russian Secret Service). Marek Zielenswki, an editor of Wprost, called the indictment "an extremely dangerous precedent, dangerous for the entire journalistic community, and for freedom of speech and publication. ...

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9 Rzeczpospolita, 8 December 1998, no.287
The indictment comes into conflict with the principle of absolute protection of a newspaper [sic] sources, one of journalism's most holy rules.”

5.3 Summary

Legal regulation in communist Poland clearly reflects efforts to keep the media system closed. Through communist laws, the role of the journalist was defined as a representative of authority, and a guardian of the security of the state. The strict laws of censorship that were made during the period of martial law determined what Polish journalists could and could not discuss. Although this law does not apply today, Poland's media laws do not guarantee a completely open system. Current laws suggest that the journalist's role is to respect the nation's leaders and to refrain from undermining the legitimacy of their rule.

Firstly, the laws on state secrets are still used to prevent journalists from accessing information that politicians see as damaging to their interests. Secondly, journalists who publicise such information, even if gained through legitimate sources, can be confronted with charges of libel. Moreover, journalists can be made to reveal their sources, which contradicts journalistic ethics. The Constitution may guarantee freedom of speech, but in fact with the current media laws, journalists can actually be punished for criticism of politicians or commercial organisations.

10 The Warsaw Voice, January 19, 1997, no.3 (428)
6 Political Regulation

Although politicians make laws, political regulation differs from legal regulation, as it refers to opportunities for political manipulation of the media which are not set out in a legal code. Politicians are in a privileged position which enables them to use a variety of methods to influence the media. These methods, described here as political regulation, will be examined in this chapter. In Poland, interaction between journalists and politicians was common during the communist era and continues today, as this chapter will show.

6.1 Informal Political Regulation in Communist Poland

The Communist Party was able to exert influence on journalists through informal means. Because many journalists, especially those at the higher levels, were members of the Party, there was frequent interaction between the Party elite and journalists at Party meetings (Curry 1990:83). Party membership was beneficial for journalists as it enabled them to make contacts who were useful sources of information. Also, it was a means of obtaining a promotion to an editorial or management position (Curry 1990:84).

Politicians could not afford to be too obvious in their control of the media, as this might have had the effect of alienating too many journalists. In fact, many journalists were suspicious of government officials and did not trust their information, doing their best to find non-government sources. Therefore
government officials used their personal connections to the editors to prevent the publication of potentially damaging information.\footnote{Adam Szostkiewicz, Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998}

Alternatively, they could try being friendly to the journalist who was writing about them, in order to get a good write-up (Curry 1990:88). The nice-guy strategy was also employed at press conferences. Politicians appeared to help journalists by giving editors answers to their questions and also suggestions on how to write about the issue (Curry 1990:82).

Another point that is important to note when considering the nature of political regulation during the last decade of communism is that it was not consistent. The extent of political restriction varied from region to region; it often depended on individual decisions. The local Party Secretary made decisions on what kind of information was permitted. One Party journalist commented, “What I can write in Krakow I can’t write in Warsaw, what I can write today I can’t write tomorrow” (Garton Ash 1983:138). This was both an advantage and a disadvantage for journalists, as it sometimes broadened, sometimes narrowed, their opportunities.

6.2 Postcommunist Political Regulation

The rapid pace of the political changes of 1989 may have been too much for some, who found themselves at the receiving end of a flood of journalistic criticism unleashed with the abolition of censorship. The Church, for one, became concerned for the need for Christian values in television and radio, and politicians Pawlak and
Walesa also had their reservations about the new idea of press freedom (Weidemann 1999:48).

Not surprisingly, the first postcommunist governments made various attempts to regulate the media in order to minimise its potential for criticism. Again, we must note that political regulation of the press cannot be simplified to either freedom or control. There are two aspects of political regulation of the media which need to be taken into account here - the legislative aims of the political actor, not only the final outcome, which is discussed in the category of legal regulation; and the public relations aspect.

Firstly, prime ministers or ruling political parties can attempt to make legislative changes which will increase their ability to restrict information. These attempts may fail, if the legislation is not passed. In Poland, where politics is characterised by a spectrum of diverse ideologies, and ever-changing alliances, one side’s attempts to pass a law are likely to end in insoluble debate. Even if a political party were to succeed in getting their bill passed, the resulting law could be perceived negatively by the media, who could then damage the party’s reputation. Secondly, political actors can try to use the media to promote themselves and their policies. This depends on the public relations mastery of the politician or party involved. Like legal change, it does not guarantee popularity, and could result in unpopularity.

6.2.1 Prime Ministers and the Media

Tomasz Goban-Klas (1999) has summarised the relationships between the different political actors and the media. Those who were most involved with the
media were the prime ministers. The new political situation meant that prime ministers now had greater cause for concern about their image in the media. Of the many prime ministers that governed Poland after communism, only some were able to deal with the new problem of public relations.

Among the successful communicators was the first freely elected prime minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Mazowiecki was a journalist himself, and therefore had no problems dealing with the press. Hanna Suchocka, prime minister in 1992 and again in 1995, was fortunately charismatic enough to receive favourable representation in the media. Włodzimierz Cimosiewicz, prime minister for only a short term in 1996, had already achieved popularity as justice minister, for instigating Operation "Clean Hands" (stopping public officials' business rorts). Most importantly, he knew how to use media, especially television, by making short and precise comments (Goban-Klas 1999:61).

Considering the circumstances, it is not surprising that a few prime ministers were unable to win the public relations game. Mazowiecki's successor Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, like many other politicians, was simply inexperienced in public relations and did not know how to interact with the media or fend off its attacks (Goban-Klas 1999:61). Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak, who was in office in 1992 and from 1993 to 1995, tried to use Miss Polonia as his media speaker. Nice try, but it failed to convince the public of the Prime Minister's ability to govern the country. Pawlak's statement that "directing a state also means directing information in the interests of the state" (cited in Goban-Klas 1999:62) reveals his attitude towards the press: obviously influenced by the previous regime's ideology.
Prime Minister Jan Olszewski tried to gain more control of the media, and sacked the head of the PAP, the Polish Press Agency, who had been nominated by Mazowiecki, and changed the structure of the agency to suit his own needs.

Olszewski tried to gain control of Rzeczpospolita, but failed. He gave interviews to journalists from the conservative Nowy Świat, but never to the more critical Gazeta Wyborcza. When Pawlak succeeded Olszewski, he too sacked the head of the PAP, as he believed that the agency had spread information which damaged stability (Goban-Klas 1999:61).

Perhaps the biggest media failure was Prime Minister Josef Oleksy, who was accused by the media of collaborating with the Russian secret service. This provided endless amounts of sensational material, particularly for the popular press, and became known as "the Oleksy affair". It has become an enduring topic in the media, and is still referred to in the press today. In 1996, Rzeczpospolita daily called for his dismissal, and the shamed prime minister resigned (Goban-Klas 1999:62).

The current prime minister of Poland, Jerzy Buzek, is aware of the necessity of maintaining a favourable presentation in the media and tries to avoid conflict. So far, Buzek has been relatively successful. This can be seen in the media's treatment of Prime Minister Buzek as he currently faces accusations of collaboration with the secret services in the communist past. The Prime Minister's accuser is Tomasz Karwowski, of the Confederation for an Independent Poland - Homeland (KPN-Ojczyzna), who has filed a motion with Warsaw's Vetting Court for the second time. Karwowski claims that the previous negative verdict of the Public Interest
Commissioner, Boguslaw Nizienski, was politically biased and ignored significant evidence against the Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{12}

Allegations that politicians were involved in spying has been a popular theme in the media since the process of lustration, or vetting, of senior officials began after communism. The Oleksy affair, described above, is still of interest to the media, and the current president, Aleksander Kwasniewski, is also under investigation for spying. Therefore one would expect the Buzek case to be just as sensationalised.

However, many media organisations stated their support for the Prime Minister and refused to continue publicising Karwowski's accusations. \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza} published a statement signed by about 30 newspapers, radio stations and TV stations. The media statement said that Karwowski was trying to draw attention to himself in the media, and that the case had been given enough publicity already.\textsuperscript{13}

6.2.2 Presidents and the Media

The president is another political actor who needs to maintain a good relationship with the media. Lech Walesa, as the leader of the Solidarity movement, had always argued for press freedom, but this soon changed once he was elected president. Walesa felt it was important for the media to support him without criticism. He awarded himself the ability to nominate one third of the members of the Television and Radio Council (Goban-Klas 1999:64). Walesa even called in a general to be a member of that Council, as he found it too hard to control (Weidemann 1999:48).

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{The Warsaw Voice}, May 30, 1999, No.22 (553)
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{The Warsaw Voice}, May 30, 1999, No.22 (553)
However, Walesa did not receive the kind of coverage from the media that he had demanded. Gazeta Wyborcza, which started out as a Solidarity paper, did not support Walesa in his re-election campaign. The Solidarity logo was taken off the paper's title as punishment for its disobedience, but this did not have any adverse effects. The right-wing press also turned against Walesa, accusing him of collaborating with the communists.14

Walesa's successor, President Aleksander Kwasniewski, was able to use the media to widely publicise his election campaign in 1995, proclaiming his interest in entering Poland into the European Union and NATO. Polls showed great popular support for Kwaniewski (Goban-Klas 1999:64). However, this popularity did not last. Even Super Express, a paper with little interest in politics, criticised Kwasniewski on his visit to the United Nations headquarters, noting that the president arrived late, and was drunk during his speech. On returning to Poland, students threw eggs at the president.15 Now Kwasniewski is being cast as an enemy in the right-wing press.16

6.2.3 Disputes Between Media Organisations and Political Parties

Each of the major political parties has a different perspective on the media, which, as I mentioned above, hinders effective changes to media laws. What all political parties seem to share, though, is a readiness to spot bias against them in the media.

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14 Tomasz Sakiewicz - Interview 6, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
15 The Warsaw Voice, October 16, 1996, no 41 (416)
16 Lukasz Warzecha and Andrzej Potocki - Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
The SdRP (Social Democratic Party, consisting of former communists) do not have a defined media policy, but its members feel discriminated against by the media, which they see as biased to the right, particularly television (Goban-Klas 1999:65). In March 1998, the SdRP accused Wprost weekly of slander. Wprost's deputy editor-in-chief, Marek Zieleniewski, replied that the SdRP’s “absurd complaint” to the prosecutor “is nothing more than an attempt to carry out a coup against freedom of the press.” The Wprost articles that the SdRP found offensive revealed that the party had managed to obtain and conceal the extensive assets of the former Communist Party. 17

The SdRP's perspective on the media contrasts strongly with the view held by Andrzej Potocki, journalist for the right-wing Zycie daily. Potocki feels that television is biased against the right because it is owned by the postcommunists. Potocki says that getting a job in television was very difficult because “for a journalist who is generally associated with the right wing, it's not that easy to get a job in media which are generally owned or directed by left-wing politicians.”18

The PSL (Farmers’ Party), which is in coalition with the SdRP, is even more suspicious of the media. The PSL has proposed that PAP, the Polish Press Agency, be turned into a state-controlled organisation, and would like its own newspaper as a propaganda tool (Goban-Klas 1999:65).

The right wing parties are even more suspicious of the media than the left. The Centre Alliance (PC), which in spite of its name is a rather divided party of the

17 The Warsaw Voice, March 22, 1998, no.12 (491)
18 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December, 1998
right, demanded control of the media, and criticised the media as “against the government” in 1992. The Christian Democrats (ZCD) see the media as irresponsible and argue that Christian values are lacking. The strongest anticommunists, the KPN, agree with media freedom, but exercise strict control over their own publications (Goban-Klas 1999:66).

Senator Adam Glapinski, who represents the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (MOP) party, expressed the feelings of many right-wing politicians who think that there is a media conspiracy against the right. Whenever rightist politics are discussed in the media, Glapinski said, “the interviewers most often invite politicians who present right-wing values in a caricatured way, those who are the most demagogic, noisy and extreme”.19

The Freedom Union (UW) is probably the least hostile or suspicious towards the media. The UW is one of the largest parties in parliament, and is described as a party of the centre. It covers a variety of ideologies, its members ranging from Christian-democratic to liberal in orientation. Generally the party is interested in political pluralism, free trade, and a market economy. Members of the UW have commented on the need for an ethical media, but no clear policy on the media has been proposed by the party. The UW has suggested turning the Polish Press Agency (PAP) into an independent commercial agency (Goban-Klas 1999:66).

19 The Warsaw Voice, May 30, 1999, no.22 (553)
6.2.4 Connections Between Political Parties and Newspapers

The connections between political parties and various media organisations are obvious in Poland. Many of these connections in the print media can be traced to the liquidation of RSW in 1990. As noted above, the Liquidation Committee had recommended that this process should not allow political interests to dominate. During liquidation, many newspapers were given to political parties, so the recommendation of restricting political influence was not completely upheld. Solidarity were clearly the winners, gaining control of many major regional and local dailies.

PC, the Centre Alliance, acquired the popular Warsaw tabloid Express Wieczorny (Evening Express). Express Wieczorny was established in 1946. During the 1980s, it was one of the highest-circulated papers in Poland, a popular apolitical alternative to Communist Party newspapers. However, its circulation is now a quarter of what it was in 1980, and it has been overtaken in sales by Super Express, started by a breakaway group in 1991.

The Communist Party's Trybuna Ludu was renamed Trybuna, and given to the Social Democratic Party (SdRP), which was established in 1990 by former communists (Giorgi 1995:77). Trybuna is still partly owned by the Social Democratic Party (SdRP).

It is not necessary for a political party to own a publication for it to exert influence over it. Many newspapers are associated with a particular political party through “connections” between journalists and politicians.
*Tygodnik Powszechny*, like *Wiez*, the Catholic cultural monthly, was established as a form of political opposition. *Wiez* was established at the same time as the Catholic Intelligentsia Club (KIK), in 1958, and together with *Tygodnik Powszechny*, formed the “Znak” (Symbol) movement. This was a significant independent opposition which had, according to *Wiez*, a “symbolic representation in the Sejm (parliament)”\(^{20}\). In the 1980s, the Znak movement supported Solidarity. One of the founders of Wiez was Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Prime Minister of the first non-communist government in 1990. *Wiez* has now cut its ties to politics, but *Tygodnik Powszechny* has not.

Links between the media and politics are commonplace, and usually obvious. Adam Szostkiewicz comments that “[a]lmost each of those major publications or radio stations are linked to some kind of political interest, not necessarily a formal political party. And everybody could tell you which is which. In terms of political interests, *Tygodnik Powszechny* is linked to liberals, with a slight leaning to the social democrats or left wing, as is *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Then there is *Zycie*, which is more or less right wing.”\(^{20}\)

Lukasz Warzecha thinks that the press is dominated by left-wing interests, saying that *Zycie* is “the only conservative newspaper, the only one. We have *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which is much more to the left; we have *Trybuna*, which is definitely to the left; perhaps *Rzeczpospolita*, but *Rzeczpospolita* is very boring and very different in character - it’s official in character and we are not. As for weeklies, we have only two big weeklies, *Polityka* and *Wprost*, and both of them are rather to the

\(^{20}\) Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
left. *Wprost* is more liberal, and *Polityka* is rather more orthodox as far as political views are concerned.21

At the other end of the spectrum are the right-wing publications *Glos* (Voice) weekly, since 1996, *Gazeta Polska* (Newspaper for Poland) weekly, and *Nasz Dziennik* (Our Daily). *Nasz Dziennik* and *Gazeta Polska* are both strongly anticommunist. *Nasz Dziennik*, launched in 1998, describes itself as right-wing Catholic, claiming to present a “different world, better than in the other media” (Golik 1998). Its influences are the Catholic radio station Radio Maryja, and the Catholic daily *Slowo - Dziennik Katolicki*, which was printed until 1997.

The publishers of *Nasz Dziennik* were hoping to draw their readers from the 5.5 million Radio Maryja listeners. Radio Maryja is not only Catholic, but extremely xenophobic, nationalistic and racist. According to Adam Szostkiewicz, “what they preach on Radio Maryja is clearly in opposition to basic Christian principles. It’s for hatred, aggression, suspicion.”22

*Gazeta Polska* advertises itself on stickers which are half red and half white, like the Polish flag, with the slogan “the truly independent newspaper”. The definition of “independent” as understood by the newspaper seems to be “anti-communist”. The weekly began as a monthly in 1992, started by a breakaway group of journalists from the right-wing daily, *Nowy Swiat* (New World), which supported Lech Walesa. One of the members of that group, Tomasz Sakiewicz, explained the reasons for the split:

21 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
22 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October, 1998
“...[T]here was a conflict between us and Walesa, because Walesa started collaborating with the communist secret service. We decided that we couldn’t help him with this political change. Lech Walesa’s people, who were also owners of *Nowy Świat*, stopped the money. They wanted us to stop criticising Lech Walesa. We were anti-communist and independent journalists, so we decided to leave. Half a year later that paper went bankrupt because people believed us, not the new head of the newspaper. A few of us - it was my idea - decided to make a new newspaper.”

Yet another way in which the media and political parties are connected is through funding. Political parties in Poland are required by law to reveal their largest donors, and their statements released for the 1998 budget named some interesting donors. The largest donor was a company called Agora-Druk, part of Agora, the publisher of *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Agora-Druk gave a large sum to the Freedom Union (Unia Wolności or UW), which “came as no surprise, as [Gazeta Wyborcza’s] predilection for the liberals has long been known”, Tomasz Oljasz commented in the *Warsaw Voice* (January 11, 1998, No.2 (481)). *Gazeta Wyborcza’s* editors felt that UW had acted in accordance with the law by revealing their company as a source and did not see the harm in this donation.

However, Oljasz points out that it is not the donation itself but the public perception of the press that it encourages that is a problem - by making large donations to a political party that it already favours, a newspaper could gain a reputation as politically biased. This opinion was also expressed by Ilija Marinkovic,

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23 Interview 6, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
of BETA Independent Agency in Belgrade, who wrote that "Gazeta Wyborcza has risked losing its image as an independent daily newspaper that is not formally or ideologically subordinate to any political party. ... In giving money exclusively to the UW's campaign, Gazeta Wyborcza has demonstrated the bias lately evident in the newspaper's columns."

Another very obvious demonstration of political favouritism by the press was made by Wprost magazine, which awarded the title Man of the Year 1997 to Marian Krzaklewski, leader of Solidarity Election Action (AWS). The title came with a luxurious prize, namely a Mercedes C class. The car was provided by Sobieslaw Zasada, one of Poland's richest people, who is the Polish partner for Mercedes Benz Poland. Marek Krol, Wprost's editor-in-chief, stated that "Marian Krzaklewski's achievements are in proportion with this brand of car". It is interesting to note that Mercedes has a prominent full-page colour advertisement in Wprost - but so do Fiat, Peugeot, Volkswagen and Audi.

Besides giving politicians financial rewards, journalists have also shown support for them in other ways. Tomasz Wolek, the editor-in-chief of Zycie daily, clearly demonstrated where the paper's political sympathies lie, when he accompanied a group of politicians from AWS (Solidarity Election Action) and ZChN (Christian National Union) on a visit to the ex-dictator of Chile, General Pinochet, held under arrest in London. The group demonstrated their support for Pinochet and demanded that he be released. Youth federations of the PPS (Socialist Party) and the

UP (Labour Union) protested as the delegation prepared to leave Warsaw, calling the leaders “fascists”.

Michal Kaminski, of AWS, later demanded an apology from the leaders of the PPS and UP, accusing the youth protestors of violence. In Zycie daily, Kaminski was quoted as saying, “We will end up like a third world country if physical violence is accepted as the norm”. This is an ironic statement coming from an admirer of Pinochet. Zycie benefited from the whole episode, as the paper could take the opportunity to support its friends and criticise its enemies.

6.2.5 Personal Connections Between Politicians and Journalists

Adam Szostkiewicz affirmed that along with the more general political orientation of the major publications, “… of course, there are some personal links. With us, it is Unia Wolnosci [Freedom Union].” Szostkiewicz believes that connections with politics are hard to avoid. “It is a tradition. Many people who worked for this paper did happen to become politicians after the 80s. there is this grey zone of personal and official relations. It’s a knot - you don’t know what to do with it.”

Tomasz Sakiewicz, as mentioned above, says that Gazeta Polska has political links which make it “powerful in [changing] opinion”. Sakiewicz felt that the newspaper had strengthened its position because of these connections, whereas in the previous government there had been threatening political enemies. “A lot of ministers are our readers, and a few of them also write in this newspaper. Most of them are right

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26 cited in The Warsaw Voice, January 17, 1999, no.3 (534)
27 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
and anti-communist ministers. We have a lot of co-operators or friends in this
government.”28

Gazeta Wyborcza’s Maria Kruczkowska pointed out that “Adam [Michnik, the
editor-in-chief] is very friendly with our president Kwasniewski, but it’s not the line
of the paper, but a personal connection. But we have other connections from when
we were underground in the 80s”.29

The connection between politicians and journalists should not be viewed as a one-
way relationship, from which only politicians stand to gain. In fact, politicians can
be just as useful to journalists as journalists can be to politicians. Tomasz Sakiewicz
suggests that politicians can be key sources of insider information, remarking that
“[t]he most beneficial information … is from our secret informants. All journalists
have their secret informants - in the police, in government, in the banks. The best
articles are based on this kind of information.”30

Lukasz Warzecha of Zycie also felt that informants were important sources of
information, saying that “all of us [at the newspaper] have connections in politics
and in government” and that his colleague, Andrzej Potocki, “is after larger and
more elaborate stories, so he uses deep throat sources - some connections of his own
abroad and here in the world of politics.”31 Maria Kruczkowska also said that

28 Interview 6, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
29 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
30 Interview 6, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
31 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
Gazeta Wyborcza's political connections were useful: “we know some politicians and have the possibility to get some information and some hints from them.”

6.2.6 Unfriendly Relations Between Politicians and Journalists

Besides trying to use the media to promote themselves through public relations strategies, or befriending individual journalists, Polish politicians make use of a variety of avoidance tactics. These are used when they would rather avoid the media and limit journalists' access to less favourable political information. Polityka journalist Stanislaw Podemski (1997) complained about this: “Journalists - the middlemen between the government and the electorate - must wait long hours in corridors to hear a general statement from a politician, they are chased away by politicians and guards, and they generally receive unfair treatment. All of these examples cause rather skeptical [sic] reflections about one of the main rights of citizens: the right to be informed.”

Gazeta Polska’s Tomasz Sakiewicz asserted that under the previous government, his newspaper had been threatened by political opponents due to its strongly anti-communist views. “[W]e had a lot of enemies in government. Unknown: people broke into our office, we had telephone bugs, and we had a lot of legal problems because they didn’t want us to write our articles,” Sakiewicz said, adding that this

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32 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
had changed since then because the paper had acquired more connections in government.\textsuperscript{33}

Artur Gorski of \textit{Polityka} said that there was a lot of interaction between politicians and journalists. However he interpreted “interaction” as having unfriendly connotations, as he also said, “I don’t want to say that this interaction exists between \textit{Polityka} weekly and politicians. We’re not aggressive, and basically they are happy if they have their name mentioned in \textit{Polityka}, or they have interviews in our paper.” \textsuperscript{34} Therefore, Gorski equates political reporting with doing a favour for politicians by associating them with the prestige of \textit{Polityka}.

\textbf{6.3 Summary}

As this chapter has shown, links between journalists and politicians were common under communism and still are. Obviously, the interaction is now much more complex as the number of political parties has grown from one (discounting uninfluential satellite parties) to hundreds. Politicians in the communist era manipulated the media through personal connections with loyal Communist Party journalists. The role of the journalist, according to Communist Party leaders, was not only to pass on selected messages to the public, but to promote favourable information in a credible way. In other words, journalists were seen as propagandists for the Communist Party.

In postcommunist Poland, individual connections still exist, although the political spectrum represented is now broader. Political leaders can no longer rely on the

\textsuperscript{33} ibid.
obedience of the media and instead attempt to gain favourable coverage with public relations techniques. They may favour only selected media and refuse to cooperate with others. This is possible because newspapers are politicised, reflecting clearly identifiable political ideologies. In some instances newspapers have supported political parties or leaders financially.

As this chapter has shown, the relationship between the media and politics continues to be beneficial for journalists as well as for politicians. Therefore these connections are likely to persist. As before, politicians see the journalist's role as a propagandist, either for their own side or for the opposition. The high level of political involvement prevents the Polish media system from becoming more open.

34 Interview 3, Warsaw, 8th December 1998
7 Organisational Regulation

Organisational regulation refers to the news organisation’s internal limitations and rules, but many of these are subject to external influences. In communist Poland, political and legal regulation determined, to a large extent, the nature of organisational regulation, as this chapter will explain. After communism, the dominance of one political power was replaced with competing political and commercial interests. The impact of these will be discussed below.

7.1 Organisational Regulation in Communist Poland

During the communist era, the restrictive nature of the media laws made the self-regulation of news organisations very difficult. Decisions were made outside, rather than inside media organisations. The Communist Party, not the newspaper, determined what to publish and what to censor, and also who to hire and who to fire. The chief editors and managing editors of newspapers were often appointed by the Communist Party, which means that they had usually obtained their positions by being loyal members of the Party. In this way, communist ideology infiltrated the newspapers and influenced how they operated.

Chief editors were in direct contact with their staff and were the ones responsible for hiring and firing. The managing editor’s position was administrative and managerial, involving tasks such as approving and selecting suitable articles for publication, co-ordinating with the publishing house, organising the publication’s
finances, and trying to prevent censorship problems before they occurred (Curry 1990:106). With these key positions under communist control, the newspaper was bound to function as the Party intended - as a propaganda tool.

Although political appointments were criticised in the 1980s, their replacements were usually no less political. When Solidarity became more prominent, a few journals began to choose their own editors, but journalists with 'connections' were still preferable (Curry 1990:101). This is because it was useful to have an editor who had links to the Party, who could try to negotiate with the censors over the telephone. Adam Szostkiewicz of Tygodnik Powszechny observed that this was a frequent occurrence before publication:

“All the negotiations, all the manoeuvres, before going to print each week, were on the telephone. All materials should have been submitted to the censors before selection. They would read it, censor it, and send it back to you with remarks or instructions, like “we don’t want this to be published.” After we looked through this, we would have a discussion, and some of our senior colleagues would call them back. They didn’t even know the censors’ names – they were coded. They would argue with the censors over the telephone: “we can’t possibly accept your suggestions.” There was some space for manoeuvres; sometimes there were concessions. But in times of crisis they had the political guidelines, which we did not know, from the headquarters of the Communist Party.” 35

Szostkiewicz also points out that “[u]nder the communist system of course there was no private sector, no printing business. You are not able to run a paper
without newsprint, and newsprint was in the hands of the system.” Newsprint was granted as a reward for obedient journalism; it was the carrot where censorship was the stick. Thus one of the basic requirements of a newspaper was not freely available, but had to be negotiated for. Journalists realised this, and learnt to avoid excessive conflict which might cost them their jobs, even if it meant censoring themselves (Albright 1983:14).

Staff of newspapers were always divided into departments, with each department specialising in a particular area. Corresponding to this, the government news agency provided stories categorised by subject, audience, and level of secrecy. Regional journals lacking in resources were fed with national and specialised stories. The role of the journalist, according to the Communist Party, was not to seek news or information, but simply to pass it on (Curry 1990:113).

“All of this makes it clear to journalists that, at any level, news is not their business and that, as professionals, they are divorced from reporting actual events and facts - divorced in reality and in responsibility” (Curry 1990:111). This type of work organisation resembled any other communist bureaucracy: tightly organised and highly specialised. This meant that each person was given a very narrow focus and had less involvement with ‘the larger picture’.

A typical organisational restriction which was spared Polish journalists in the 1980s was the pressure of dealing with unexpected subject matter which had to be presented as quickly as possible. Unlike journalists today, they did not work under strict time pressure. Journalism was much more planned. Editorial boards would

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35 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
draw up a list of topics which were to be covered in the next few months and these would be allocated to the various departments. In a small journal, like *Tygodnik Powszechny* or *Wiez*, the entire staff made these decisions together. Larger journals were more hierarchically organised.

The lack of deadlines gave journalists the opportunity to analyse their topic in depth, and pay more attention to how the article was written than what was written about. There was no need for a “scoop”, and therefore less competition between journalists. It did not matter if other journalists had already covered a topic, as this only proved it to be a “safe” topic. This contributed to greater journalistic solidarity. According to Curry, “what is important is how they can best present the idea, be it in a narrative style, an essay, an interview, a straight presentation of information, or an argumentative analysis “ (Curry 1990:114).

Because of the in-depth nature of much of the media content during the communist era, and because of the rigidly divided structure of the news organisation, journalists were inclined to specialise. Another reason for specialisation is proposed by Jane L. Curry, who observed that journalists did not trust information given to them by communist bureaucrats, and therefore went out of their way to acquire other sources - workers, specialists, personal contacts - which they then accumulated into a personal “library” of information (Curry 1990:88).

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36 These two journals still operate in this manner (interviews 1 and 2). Both are concerned with providing detailed analyses rather than up-to-the-minute information.
37 Interview with Anna Sadurska, Australian correspondent for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 1998.
38 An overview of detailed reports and themes is in Albright 1983:55-72.
According to the pre-communist tradition, journalists were not specialists but generalists, educated in the humanities, with some literary aptitude (Goban-Klas 1994:242). However, belief in this tradition was not helpful in a strictly controlled environment. Journalists' tendency to specialise did not mean that they only wrote narrow-minded reports about the same “safe” topic. Specialisation was in fact a journalistic strategy that enabled journalists some control of their work within tightly ordered organisational limits.

It is easy to assume that the communist press was not driven by the need to make a profit, and that the media organisations would not be restricted by commercial considerations. However, this is not entirely true. The July 1984 press law stated that the role of the journalist was not entertainment but “strengthening the country's political system” (Goban-Klas 1994:194). In spite of this, new publications appeared on the market in the late 1980s in the areas of sport, hobbies and television. These simply aimed to make a profit, and did so by addressing interests amongst the public (Pisarek 1999: 134).

The profit motive also prompted existing general interest publications to start to focus on sex, violent crime, and human interest stories. According to Tomasz Goban-Klas, director of the Press Research Centre in Krakow, the press “began to cater more to popular taste” (Goban-Klas 1994:197). Communist Party newspapers began to resemble non-party newspapers in this respect - it made no difference who the owner was, the product was very similar.

The Communist Party realised that the press was not only useful as a propaganda machine, but as a source of income. Advertising had been increasing since the
1970s (Pisarek 1999:134), and one publication established in 1987, TOP, consisted only of advertising. To increase readership, TOP began publishing nudes. By this time, there was not only variety, but also more criticism, in the press. This was allowed, provided that the paper had strong Party connections, like the critical weekly Polityka. It was joked that one was allowed to see the world in different shades – provided that the colour was red (Pisarek 1999:135).

7.2 Organisational Changes During the Liquidation Process

The liquidation of the RSW- Ruch which took place in the early 90s had a profound impact on the journalists working for existing publications. The decisions of the Liquidation Committee affected the fundamental bases of their existence, causing major changes in their workplace (Borkowska 1999:272). There was no protection that guaranteed them a stable position, as the guidelines had recommended. Nor was there protection for “titles judged significant for Polish culture”. Although in theory anyone could establish their own newspaper, or buy an existing one, in practice it was a matter of surviving the market.

Few publications survived liquidation in their original format, as their new owners were often seeking a vehicle for their views. To do this, they preferred to buy an existing title and alter it, rather than start a whole new one, because this ensured a readership. For example, the Catholic church, which felt that it needed a daily newspaper to promote its views, took over the Catholic daily Slowo Powszechne and changed its title to Slowo- Dziennik Katolicki (The Word- the Catholic Daily) and appointed a new editor-in-chief (Goban-Klas 1994:240).
Another problem brought about by liquidation was unemployment. In 1991, more than 2000 journalists lost their jobs for economic reasons, and some also for political reasons, which also had an unfortunate effect on those journalists who were still employed. "The fear of losing a job pushes journalists to accept any working conditions and, perhaps worse, to follow orders from their managing editors," wrote Goban-Klas (1999:241). Many publications were in financial difficulties after liquidation - without sufficient funding, and with the loss of many of their best journalists to bigger publications, they were forced to close down - this applied particularly to Catholic publications (Kowol 1999:236).

The financial problem was heightened by a decline in the number of readers. The same could be said of cultural publications, which had always had small readerships. So "publications judged significant for Polish culture" could not be protected according to the guidelines. Tomasz Wiscicki, of the Catholic and cultural monthly Wieź, sees the lowered circulation in publications like his as a result of increased choice, saying that "during the communist times, people who didn’t want to read what was the voice of the Communist Party didn’t have much choice. Now they do. Before, we were also read by people who were not Catholic, but wanted to read something independent. It was part of the opposition. Now this is no longer the reason to read Wieź."39

Like Wiscicki, Adam Szostkiewicz says that the newspaper he works for has also faced the difficulty of dealing with a loss of readers. According to Szostkiewicz, Tygodnik Powszechny was once "the only major voice for independent-minded

39 Interview 2, Warsaw, 7th December 1998
people [in Poland] that was allowed by the Communist Party. That was not a
normal situation. That was a privilege.” The paper once had a high status due to
this privileged situation, which now no longer exists. Yet the staff of Tygodnik
Powszechny have preserved its serious approach to politics and culture, and
although the readership has declined, the paper is still published every week.

There is another reason why the process of privatisation was not a smooth one.
Just as the level of political involvement could not be kept minimal, which was
contrary to recommendations, foreign investment was also not kept within strict
limits. Although attempts to stop cartel building and limit the amount of foreign
investors were made, the rough competition ruled out those without large
amounts of capital (Giorgi 1995:22).

The most successful foreign investor was Robert Hersant, from France, who gained
control of seven regional dailies and the large national daily Rzeczpospolita
(Republic). Some publications which were not seen as valuable were given to
journalists’ co-operatives, most eventually acquiring foreign partners, because these
did not have sufficient funds (Bajka 1999:85). Alternatively, the publications that
were seen as profitable were bought by Polish or foreign companies.

While liquidation of RSW titles continued, successful European companies were
trying to establish how well popular western publications would fare in Poland.
These publishing companies, which were mainly German and also Scandinavian,
conducted some trial runs before entering the market directly, ensuring their

40 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
success. Foreign capital was also used in the establishment of Polish publishing companies, and to save existing publications that were experiencing financial difficulties (Bajka 1999:85-6).

7.3 The Impact of Foreign Ownership on the Polish Press

As the graph (Figure 1) shows, foreign investment in the press is dominated by Passauer Neue Presse, which has invested US$98 million in the press, according to estimates of the Polish Agency for Foreign Investment (PAIZ). This makes it the top investor in the Polish press, with almost twice as much invested as its nearest competitor, Orkla Media of Norway. There is a significant amount of German capital invested in the Polish press, other major investors being H. Bauer and Gruener + Jahr. The USA has invested the largest amount in the mass media overall, but more of this has gone to broadcast media.

German companies also dominate in the field of special interest publications. I have already noted the extent of German ownership of women's magazines. In fact, German publishing companies together share most of the Polish market, as the publications they own are those with the highest circulation. Ilza Kowol's survey in 1994 found that 13% of the daily press, 75% of the programme guides, and 70% of the women's magazines were published by German companies, and this has grown since then (cited in Kopper 1999:41).

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41 The liquidation committee was initially cautious to respond to bids by foreign companies, particularly Germans and Austrians - but by 1994 the most shares had been sold to German companies (Giorgi 1995:78-9)
The foreign publishers are not only in a better financial position than Polish investors, but they are also at the advantage of having an existing product which they know to be successful in their own country. Now that satellite television, international travel, and tourism are linking Poland to the once forbidden west, foreign trends are easily passed on. This characterises Poland as an open system.

Due to this increased communication with the rest of Europe and America, Poles can easily identify with the foreign products. This has caused some media analysts to wonder whether Polish national culture will be lost with the influx of so many new European and American influences (for example, Goban-Klas 1991, Kopper 1999, Weidemann 1999). And many conservative groups in Poland think that this has already happened (for example, *Nasz Dziennik*, *Gazeta Polska*, and especially *Radio Maryja*).

We need to ask, firstly, whether the foreign companies really have made such a distinctive contribution to the Polish press market. The most prominent press presence, Passauer Neue Presse, certainly has. Passauer's domination of the local press is not restricted to the ownership of the papers themselves, but also extends to their printing houses - the company has six of these, covering the major regions of Poland. Also, Passauer is trying to establish a distribution network for its publications, which is not unlike the old communist system run by Ruch RSW.

One striking example of the influence of Passauer Neue Presse on the local press can be seen in the recent incident involving two newspapers, *Zycie* and *Dziennik Bałtycki* (Baltic Daily). As I have already mentioned, *Zycie* is involved in a court
case with President Aleksander Kwasniewski. Initially, when connections between the President and the Russian secret service were suggested in August 1997, the story was not only published in Zycie, but also in Dziennik Bałtycki, a local newspaper owned by Passauer Neue Presse.

President Kwasniewski accused both newspapers of libel shortly after the publication of these newspaper articles. Dziennik Bałtycki's editor-in-chief, Andrzej Liberadzki, immediately published a front-page apology which stated that some of the journalists' claims were based on dubious evidence and therefore should be disregarded, as "it would be lamentable if the president's authority were to be jeopardized because of our articles". Liberadzki then "resigned" from his position.

The newspaper's apology obviously echoed a letter written by F.X. Hirtreiter, owner of Passauer Neue Presse, to President Kwasniewski. As Anna Hejman points out, Hirtreiter's comment in an interview (prior to the Kwasniewski case) that he was not interested in the content of his newspapers needed the postscript, "as long as there is no trouble" (Hejman 1997).

Kwasniewski withdrew the suit against Dziennik Bałtycki, and took out a new one, against Zycie only. Zycie actually gained a lot of publicity from the affair, and Hirtreiter's treatment of Dziennik Bałtycki was portrayed in the media as an attack on press freedom. As this example shows, attempts at control of the press are in danger of creating a backlash.

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F.X. Hirtreiter made himself more unpopular when he bought Gazeta Olszynska in September 1998. This newspaper from the region of Olsztyn has acquired a symbolic significance, representing Polish resistance to foreign invasion. The paper gained this reputation a century ago for defending the Polish minority when the region belonged to Prussia. It was banned under the Nazis but was re-established after the Second World War.

Not surprisingly, the fact that a foreigner, especially a German, has bought the paper, is offensive to some - or more accurately, is a good excuse for some political point-scoring. Postcommunist senator Janusz Lorenz, who represents Olsztyn, criticised Hirtreiter’s purchase of the paper as a provocation which would stand in the way of Polish-German relations. He was supported by a member of the political opposition, parliamentarian Halina Nowina-Konopczyna, of the ultra-conservative, Catholic party “Polish Family” (Frankfurter Rundschau, August 13, 1998, no.186).

A newspaper that has definitely been affected by its ownership, but in a different sense, is Zycie Warszawy (Warsaw Life), which had been a major daily since its establishment in 1944. During the liquidation process, the paper was acquired by Nicholas Grauso, an Italian linked to Berlusconi, and could be described as a right-wing daily. For several years, Grauso considered selling Zycie Warszawy, which was experiencing financial difficulties and a declining circulation. In 1995, Grauso sacked the chief editor, Tomasz Wolek, and in 1996 Zycie Warszawy was sold to the Polish company Multico (Bajka 1999:88).
Wolek believed that Multico’s owner Zbigniew Jakubas, a mineral water producer, would not guarantee the paper political independence. Wolek and forty other journalists from Zycie Warszawy then founded Zycie, which as I have noted now has a much higher circulation than their original paper. Zycie Warszawy has changed under its new owner and is no longer a right-wing newspaper, whereas Zycie definitely is (Pisarek 1999:141).

The examples of Hirtreiter and Grauso seem to suggest that ownership can be equated with control. The owner of a title does have considerable potential power to determine what form that publication should take, but we should note that this may or may not be exercised. There is no doubt that owners can control or influence their publications, for example by appointing editors and chief executives, and making decisions on the form and content of the publication.

However, even if they attempt this, they cannot always succeed, as the example of Zycie Warszawy demonstrates. In Poland as in other countries, “it is unlikely that such proprietorial power will be exercised without reference to commercial considerations or marketing considerations” (Negrine 1994:64). This opinion was also expressed by Juliusz Braun, a member of the Sejm’s cultural committee, who thinks that foreign investors have been a benefit to the Polish media, as they preserve the independence of the press by pursuing profits rather than politics (Styczek 1998).

This statement certainly applies to F.X. Hirtreiter and his 13 local dailies, as it does to the Swedish company Bonnier which owns the majority of Super Express, a paper

43 The Warsaw Voice, October 6, 1996, no.40 (415)
which is not interested in politics, and definitely is interested in profits. However, we should question the use of the word “independent”, since the fact that a paper claims to be independent of politics does not mean that it is independent of its owner. Bonnier does in fact exert some influence over the newspaper’s layout and content, *Super Express* journalist Tomasz Sommer said, “because they show us how they publish their magazines in Sweden. They give us some ideas.”

Some owners, however, are reluctant to interfere in the running of their newspaper. Orkla Media, the Norwegian company that owns several titles in Poland, prefers to leave the task of organising the style and content of its newspapers to the editorial and managerial staff. Orkla bought many of its shares from Hersant, the French company that gained the most in the first wave of privatisation, and did not attempt to modify the newspapers in any way, enabling them to preserve their original character. This is different to the Passauer Neue Presse publications, which are similar in content and form (Styczek 1998).

Orkla owns 51 percent of Presspublica, which publishes *Rzeczpospolita* daily. This was acquired from Hersant. Grzegorz Gauden, recently made the new chairman of Presspublica, said that he would be hesitant to make any changes: “I feel a sense of stage fright and reponsibility, because *Rzeczpospolita* is an important element of Polish public life. I have my own observations about the paper, but I won’t introduce any changes without first consulting with the team”.

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44 Interview 5, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
45 *The Warsaw Voice*, January 10, 1999, no.2 (533)
The Wydawnictwo Lubpress publishing house in Zielona Gora, Lubuskie province, is another of Orkla's recent acquisitions. Lubpress is the publisher of one of the largest local dailies, Gazeta Lubuska. Before taking over, Orkla was obliged to sign contracts guaranteeing the staff minimum four-year terms of employment and journalistic independence.46

Even if foreign companies, such as Orkla, cannot be unfairly accused of interference in their publications in Poland, there is still the question of the infiltration of foreign culture. Gerd G. Kopper, a German media researcher, has observed that the Polish media is becoming more like the western media. This has both positive and negative aspects.

On the positive side, Kopper believes that the influx of international capital has opened up more opportunities in the Polish media, as it can finance "new ventures" which would otherwise have failed. Moreover, internationalisation can offer Poland new concepts in media management (Kopper 1999:36).

On the other hand, Kopper points out that the development has not been even throughout the different sectors of the media. There are notable differences between those sectors of the media which are internationally controlled, and others which are nationally controlled, so the overall development of the media industry has not been specifically "Polish" in character - in other words, the changes in the media have been largely out of Polish control.

46 The Warsaw Voice, January 10, 1999, no.2 (533)
There are also great differences in the kinds of qualifications, training, and professional orientation of media personnel in Poland. The disunity amongst media personnel is also a result of a lack of professional exchange infrastructures, especially in the print media (Kopper 1999:37). This will later be discussed in more detail.

Joachim Weidemann, who has also studied recent developments in the Polish media, agrees that media organisations have aimed to copy the west and become "free, fast, colourful", which has had mixed results. As for freedom, this exists in an official sense, Weidemann believes, but there is some doubt as to whether it exists for journalists to question their own organisations (Weidemann 1999:48-50).

The media can be seen as "colourful", in the sense of variety, as there are certainly many types of publications to choose from in Poland. In the print media, there literally are more colours than before, as newspapers as well as magazines try to attract readers with bright pictures and less information. Artur Gorski said that Polityka became a "full colour magazine, destined rather more for young people", and Tomasz Sommer describes Super Express as "rather more comics than paper". Moreover, this "colour" is not coincidental; Polish publications aim to copy successful western titles. Tomasz Sommer says that Super Express is modelled on other tabloids, "[m]aybe the Sun, or the Mirror, from England." Sommer said that he often took his stories from these two papers. Polityka, says Artur Gorski, is "a combination of different models. I think it's like Newsweek magazine, and some

47 Interview 3, Warsaw, 8th December 1998
48 Interview 5, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
German papers like Spiegel ... and also Stern. I think Newsweek is a better comparison because it’s a smaller paper, and as for size ... German papers are extremely fat!\textsuperscript{50} Maria Kruczkowska does not think that Gazeta Wyborcza actively follows a western model, but the paper did have “ambitions to be the Polish Le Monde”.\textsuperscript{51}

7.4 The Impact of New Technology

One plus point of internationalisation of the Polish media that Kopper observed was the introduction of new technology, which can bring Poland up to western European standards (Kopper 1999:37). Like Kopper, Weidemann sees new technology as a benefit which can speed up the flow of information. One example is the spread of mobile phones and notebook computers which have enabled politicians to report straight from the Sejm (Parliament). However, this has led to misreporting, as information has been publicised too quickly without being properly checked for accuracy (Weidemann 1999:50).

The technological modernisation of the Polish Press Agency (PAP) started during the process of democratising the media along western lines. The PAP began its modernisation process in 1990, aiming to “achieve organizational and legal status as well as technical standard fully meeting contemporary requirements of democratic states.” The list of “Major dates in the PAP history” (http://www.pap.com.pl) explains this development. On 1st March 1993, the PAP introduced satellite transmission of its news services, using its own satellite station.

\textsuperscript{49} ibid.

\textsuperscript{50} Interview 3, Warsaw, 8\textsuperscript{th} December 1998
From 1994 to 1996, the agency introduced the Typlan internal editing system. In January 1995, PAP started its online databases, and in July, it began using new digital technology for photographic news services.

Online access to PAP, but also to the international news agencies, especially Reuters, has definitely changed the ways in which Polish newspapers acquire their information. Again, this has both advantages and disadvantages. One of the main advantages of the internet has been its speed and the vast amount of information it has made available. However, for some newspapers, the internet has replaced correspondents and become the most important source of information. Moreover it is very simple for journalists to simply copy information from the internet.

This has affected the way some journalists view their role. Tomasz Sommer, of Super Express, described a typical day at work: "I go to my computer, then I check the agencies - Reuters and others. Then it depends what happens. Usually I just write what happened in the past 24 hours. Sometimes I write about a special topic. For example, now I'm writing about the man who injected AIDS into his son." Sommer was not enthusiastic about his work, and admitted, "I don't feel very attached to this job. I just write." Asked to describe his role at the newspaper, he responded, "I'm just a translator. What more can I do?"

Almost all of the journalists interviewed mentioned the internet, and the press agencies Reuters and Associated Press as some of their main sources of information. Zycie's weekend feature writer Andrzej Potocki said agency archives were "a very, 

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51 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
52 Interview 5, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
very deep well of information”. Gazeta Polska journalist Tomasz Sakiewicz said, “I take about thirty percent of my information from the internet”. Judging by the amount of articles in the press that show agencies as their sources, Sakiewicz is not an exception.

7.5 NEWSPAPERS IN POLAND: Survivors and Newcomers

The privatisation of RSW brought many new problems for existing publications, and not all were able to continue publication. Those that did continue were forced to change in some way. Several newspapers (Nowy Świat, Express Wieczorny, and Zycie Warszawy – described in more detail below) experienced internal divisions, causing some of their journalists to leave their jobs there and start their own newspapers. The phrase “survival of the fittest” describes the postcommunist press market. Survival depends on adaptation and/or finding a convenient niche.

Among the national general-interest dailies, not a single newspaper remained unchanged. The old communist paper Trybuna is one example of a publication that has had difficulties adapting. Although Trybuna changed its size and title in an attempt to modernise, its circulation continued to decrease; in 1983 its circulation was over a million copies, but by 1997 this had dropped to 100,000.

As mentioned, a dispute occurred in the fifty-year-old Zycie Warszawy (Warsaw Life) leading to the publication of Zycie in 1996. The situation that Zycie

53 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
54 Interview 6, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
Warszawy is now in is exactly the same as that of Express Wieczorny, which lost readers to the breakaway Super Express, but the former has a much lower circulation. Express Wieczorny advertises itself with the slogan “the whole paper for half the price”. While it is indeed half the price of other dailies such as Gazeta Wyborcza and Rzeczpospolita, it also has less than half their amount of pages.

Rzeczpospolita, the largest-sized and most serious-looking national daily, managed to become independent from the government in 1990. Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki offered the position of editor-in-chief to Dariusz Fikus, secretary-general of the Polish Journalists’ Association when it was banned under martial law. Fikus had been involved in underground publishing and represented the media in the 1989 Round Table Talks, and has been credited with turning Rzeczpospolita into “an objective and independent newspaper that quickly won respect from both readers and government” (Swiecka 1996). The paper now has a higher circulation than in communist times. It is one of the highest selling dailies along with Super Express.

Special interest dailies which had a place in the communist era have not automatically kept that place in the postcommunist press market. The communist youth paper Sztandar Młodych survived, and was still selling well in the early 1990s. However, now its sales have decreased, which is due to the competition from new magazines for young people. These are mainly Polish versions of German publications, which are aimed not just at “youth” as a group, but at more specific audiences. The magazines cater for audiences such as young rock and pop music
fans, young sports fans, girls in their early teens and older teenage girls who are not yet interested in women's magazines.

The newspaper for soldiers, *Zolnierz Wolnosci* (Soldiers of Freedom) changed its title to *Polska Zbrojna*, and underwent many changes. *Gromada-Rolnik Polski*, the newspaper for villagers, also faced changes due to internal and external conflict, and some staff left to establish *Gazeta Rolnicza* – unfortunately, neither of these publications are selling well.

Amongst weeklies, few have been able to maintain the level of popularity they once had. *Polityka*, started in 1957, is one weekly that has succeeded. It has been circulating steadily for the past two decades. It has managed to hold on to its “old faithful” generation of readers who started reading it twenty years ago, and according to the magazine’s own polls, is gaining younger readers. The magazine went through a facelift, becoming more colourful, glossier, and smaller. *Wprost* weekly, established in 1982, is *Polityka's* main competitor, and sells roughly the same number of copies. *Wprost* has a similar format and layout, but its content favours business and economics.

Several weeklies that were once very popular amongst intellectuals are now selling very few copies. *Przekroj*, which in the 1980s had a print run of several hundred thousands, is now down to 75,000 - about a quarter of which is not selling. The magazine used to be owned in part by Orkla Media of Norway, but this company sold its share at the beginning of the year, preferring to focus on more profitable publications such as *Rzeczpospolita*. 
One of the leading opposition papers, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, has also seen its circulation reduced drastically. *Tygodnik Powszechny* has not modernised its layout; its large page size and title font are exactly the same as they were in the first edition. It has a very serious appearance compared to other papers – it has longer articles which are not interspersed with colour photographs, advertisements or text boxes. The articles often have headings in the form of questions, which underlines the paper's analytical approach to news.

The newspapers mentioned above are all distributed nationally, and are only a small sample of the many publications in Poland. Among the "survivors" we should also include many of the local and regional titles that began under communism. There are too many local and regional papers to describe in this sample, but for comparison I will mention two local dailies from Krakow, *Dziennik Polski* and *Gazeta Krakowska*. These two papers have a very similar format. *Dziennik Polski* translates as Polish Daily, but it is a regional paper. Stories are short, with short sentences. Local news takes priority, although the paper also covers national events. Throughout the paper, "advertorials" are placed together with copious advertising. Most of the paper consists of advertising and classifieds, not news.

The other major daily newspaper for Krakow, *Gazeta Krakowska*, was once very critical of the communist system, but now is more interested in advertising the local companies that finance it. The front page and the following page contain brief news summaries of major national and international events, taken from press agency reports. The rest of the paper, like *Dziennik Polski*, is dominated by advertising, or advertising thinly disguised as local news.
Many new titles appeared after communism, but most disappeared again. The losers will not be dealt with here. The most successful newcomer is *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which is Poland's best selling national daily. In fact, it is debatable whether the paper should fall into this category or not - which shows the difficulties of attempting to categorise in this way. *Gazeta Wyborcza* is interesting as a case study, because it reveals how a newspaper can be established at a crucial time of dramatic change, and then continue to succeed by keeping up with social change.

_Gazeta Wyborcza_ was established in 1989, before the first free elections, as an election campaign paper for the opposition, at the request of Solidarity leader Lech Walesa. Its editor was (and still is) Adam Michnik, one of the intellectual leaders of the opposition movement, and its main organiser, Helena Luczywo, and the staff were from underground newspapers, mainly Tygodnik Mazowsze (Mazowsze (region) Weekly).

When _Gazeta Wyborcza_ was established, no-one, including the staff, thought that it was anything but a temporary campaign update, printed on donated computers in a kindergarten classroom. However, the daily became not only permanent, but "the opinion-maker of the nation". The paper was able to survive because it adapted to changing conditions, by changing its size and layout.

During the 1990s, editorial staff observed that the newspaper's sales were falling, while sales of tabloids were on the increase. _Gazeta Wyborcza_'s editorials gave strong support to Tadeusz Mazowiecki in his campaign for the presidency in 1995, and at this time the paper's sales were dropping sharply. Piotr Pacewicz, one of the
editors, felt that this obvious political side-taking was too "arrogant" (Oljasz 1999). It seemed to the staff that the paper needed to change, and they decided to give the paper a less serious look (Schmidt 1995).

In 1996, a special team was created to rejuvenate the paper (Oljasz 1999). *Gazeta Wyborcza* is now a tabloid-sized newspaper, but with many supplements adding up to make it quite thick, from 100 to 200 pages. Each edition of the paper also has a local supplement, depending on the region (there are 18 regional variations in total), and then a daily supplement, depending on which day of the week it is.

On Monday, there is a large employment section (including different supplements depending on the region); on Tuesday, a section on office and computers; on Wednesday, advertisements for real estate, and a section on home decoration; -on Thursday, a motoring section, and a weekly colour magazine; on Friday, there is a weekly entertainment guide, and weekly television guide; on Saturday, a new weekly magazine for women has been introduced.

What is it about *Gazeta Wyborcza* that makes it so successful? These supplements are certainly one of the special features of the newspaper, but it is also unique in other ways. Maria Kruczkowska, a journalist for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, who has been with the paper from the beginning, believes that "the weaknesses of [*Gazeta Wyborcza's*] adversaries" may contribute to its success. Most importantly though, says Kruczkowska, was the fact that the paper was the first of its kind:

"[W]e started first, and we got the most [out] of the experience of the new [situation]. It's very difficult to make a new title out of an old title, if you observe
what’s happening with *Polityka*, for instance. It’s difficult to give a new dynamic to a paper from the old system. They had their staff, they had to throw out everybody. But we didn’t have this problem. In this new time, it’s rather good that we started nine years ago … we started at the right time for a political paper, when there was a lot of political interest. Today it would be almost impossible to start a political paper.”

*Gazeta Wyborcza*’s success can be attributed to the following factors, according to a Polish media analyst. To begin with, it was the first independent daily in postcommunist Poland. Secondly, because it started out as a Solidarity paper, it represented opposition to the communists and support for democracy, which made it very popular. Thirdly, it was printed in different towns, with large local advertising sections. Moreover, due to the large amount of advertising, the paper has a large income and is able to offer readers better quality for their money. Also, it has various specialty supplements and a television guide. Overall, *Gazeta Wyborcza* is a very clever combination of local and national, sensational and serious (Pisarek 1999:143).

The tone of *Gazeta Wyborcza* is similar to that of *Polityka*, serious but witty. The newspaper publishes long analytical essays by experts in various fields, and its commentators are well-known. A characteristic feature of the paper are the eye-catching, dramatic photographs. It is also known for its clever headlines. Puns and ironic statements are commonly used to grab the reader’s attention. The paper employs professional headline writers for this task (Oljasz 1999). By using this

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55 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
tone, Gazeta Wyborcza's staff have identified the cynical attitude towards the media that exists amongst the public - they are not treated as if they will believe anything.

Gazeta Wyborcza is undoubtedly the best-selling general-interest daily newspaper. However, its success needs to be put into perspective. Its circulation may be close to half a million copies, on average, each day. But by far the most successful publications in terms of circulation are those which fall into one of two categories: women's magazines and television guides. These weekly magazines regularly have circulations of over a million. Out of the top ten highest circulation weeklies, eight are women's, and the remaining two are television. The weekly magazine market is dominated by German companies: Bauer, Springer, and Gruner + Jahr. All of the top 10 best selling magazines were established after 1990.

Nie, one of the best-selling publications that is not a women's weekly or television guide, is a satirical tabloid, expressing the extreme views of its owner, Jerzy Urban. Urban, called "the most hated person in Poland" and likened to Goebbels, wrote for the Communist Party's Propaganda Department and was appointed spokesperson for the Jaruzelski government during martial law. He was in favour of state control of the media, and against everyone and everything else - particularly Solidarity and the church. These views are reflected bluntly in Nie. The paper's circulation has declined in the past few years, because the initial shock value has worn off.

The daily newspaper market has been difficult to break into, with several newcomers attempting and failing. Nowa Europa (New Europe) and Nowy Swiat (New World) fall into the latter category. In Poland, the percentage of the
population interested in newspapers is relatively small. Therefore, a new newspaper has to target a group that is not already served by existing papers.

Super Express and Zycie are the two breakaway newspapers that have actually fared better than their parent papers. Super Express was started by some journalists from the old tabloid Express Wieczorny who disagreed with the “structure of ownership … they decided that ‘if we can write for somebody, we can do it even better for ourselves’”, said Tomasz Sommer, of Super Express. It is a “classical tabloid”, according to Sommer, which claims to have no interest in politics. The daily prefers human interest stories, about both famous and ordinary people.

Super Express is more interested in scandal than Express Wieczorny, often taking stories from the front page of England’s Sun or Mirror. Its success may be due to its eye-catching layout, sensational but simple content and clever marketing. The ideas for this paper are clearly copied from overseas, says Tomasz Sommer: “[If] the manager thinks that if in England or America it sells better in this shape - red and big titles - why not try in Poland.” The paper’s sales have increased steadily since its debut.

In 1996, Zycie Warszawy’s ex-chief editor Tomasz Wolek, sacked by the previous owner (or as part of a communist conspiracy as some of its journalists believe), and some of his followers amongst the staff decided to produce their own paper, Zycie. They got into legal trouble for using an almost identical name, but were not punished. Zycie has now become the major national centre-right daily, aiming to rival Gazeta Wyborcza daily, but with a completely different political perspective.
In fact, Zycie has taken on the role of balancing, or countering Gazeta Wyborcza, by operating in a similar format with an opposing ideological slant. In the words of one of its journalists, Lukasz Warzecha, “I think just to balance them [Gazeta Wyborcza], we have to be on the other side. That is my view. We have to realise what this paper that we work for is, and what our views are.”

7.6 Ownership and Control of the Local and Regional Press

As I have already noted in the brief descriptions of major newspapers above, those that were able to succeed were those that were able to adapt. However, in the case of many of the smaller newspapers, adaptation has meant compromising their original principles, and survival the loss of their editorial independence.

Gazeta Krakowska, the Krakow daily, is an example of a newspaper that has changed its tone considerably in the past two decades. It was one of the more critical dailies during the period of criticism in the early 1980s, publishing, for instance, a story on the problems of pollution caused by the nearby Skarwina aluminium factory. Journalist Jerzy Sadecki visited the factory, which did not use filters, and interviewed the factory workers. Doctors testified to the health problems the factory was causing, and the newspaper organised discussions with officials. The story was taken up by Polska, and became so well publicised that the plant felt compelled to close down some sections (Albright 1983:61).

Possibly, Gazeta Krakowska was able to be more critical because Krakow was one of the more liberally administered areas, where censorship was not as excessive. Also, the editor, Maciej Szumowski, was on good terms with the local authorities
(Albright 1983:76). These days, the paper is more interested in advertising local companies than in criticising them for polluting the environment.

Another feature of the paper that made it stand out in the early 1980s, introduced by Szumowski, was its reliance on its own reporters rather than the official news agency, PAP, for information. As with many other regional and local papers, this has changed. News reporting is now limited by financial considerations. Particularly for many of the smaller papers, it is cheaper to take pre-prepared information from a central source than to pay for permanent correspondents or even freelance journalists.

Financial constraints are especially obvious in the local press, as Anna Hejman (1998) observed. According to Hejman, many independent local publications were started by local intellectuals during the period of the first democratic elections and changes to press laws. Like the underground press in the 1980s, these newspapers began as primitively produced newsletters which aimed to act as the local community's watchdog, but with time adopted more sophisticated printing and production techniques.

Hejman defines only those publications that are completely self-financing as independent. There are fewer of these than might be expected (she estimates 100 at most), because many titles that are classified as independent are in fact dependent on local government inserts as their source of income. This makes them a mouthpiece for local governments rather than their monitor.
Other local titles, owned by foreign companies such as the German publishing house Passauer Neue Presse, are not interested in editorial involvement in local politics. Hejman observes that for Passauer and other foreign companies, "emphasis is placed on avoiding conflict. The newspaper, therefore, ceases to fulfil its control function, it becomes indifferent to the local authorities." The same applies to local newspapers owned by Agora-Gazeta, Gazeta Wyborcza's publishing company, which due to its size is able to win control of the local advertising market from any competitors (Hejman 1998).

These newspaper profiles give us a picture of a press that is quite diverse. Competition has not produced monotony, but variety. Like Negrine, we could conclude that "as soon as a news organisation is established within a competitive economic system, it has to exercise choices about what sort of medium it is, what it does and for whom it does it" (Negrine 1994:24). In Poland, these choices are not based on the question of which competitor to copy, but of which group of target readers to aim for.

"The Polish market has no room for publications addressed to a wide audience, to the average Joe", observed Ryszard Pienkowski, who built up a publishing house specialising in law and economic publications (Styczek 1997). However, at the same time, the major national newspapers are beginning to extend their target group of readers to include those with more specialised interests. One example of this is Gazeta Wyborcza's new supplement for women, Wysokie Obcasy (High Heels). Rzeczpospolita has several special supplements, coloured pink and yellow,
which address legal and economic issues. According to surveys, 62% of the managers polled said that their preferred source of information was *Rzeczpospolita*, and 19% favoured *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Styczek 1997).

### 7.7 The Influence of Advertising

Newspapers in Poland must choose their target readers carefully. This decision is based not only on how to sell as many copies as possible, as we have seen, but also on how to generate the most profit from other sources. Advertising is a major source of revenue for many publishing companies in Poland. As the chart below shows (Figure 2), advertising is a large percentage of the total income for most successful publishing companies in Poland.

Agora-Gazeta, the publisher of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and several regional dailies, is one of the most profitable press companies in Poland and the biggest advertiser. In 1997, Agora made 71% of its profits through advertising. Presspublica, *Rzeczpospolita*’s publishing company, also receives the majority of its revenue (54% in 1997) through advertisements.

For the newsmagazines *Wprost* and *Polityka* advertising is between one third and one half of their income (estimated by *Businessman Magazine*). Because many publications are dependent on advertising, which in most cases also makes up a large portion of their content, they have developed specific ways of targeting advertisers.

Agora’s strategy is to attract as many advertisers as possible: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, especially the local supplement, contains more advertisements than *Zycie*, a national
daily of similar layout and writing style. The local supplement includes articles that are advertising, such as a guide to supermarkets in the area and where to get the best prices, or a travel section where local agents present their best deals.

*Gazeta Wyborcza* has cleverly expanded its target audience to include specialised interests. Apart from the travel, motoring, computers and office, home decorating, and entertainment sections, the newspaper now has a new women’s supplement. Advertisers are attracted to these special areas, where the target reader is easier to define.

*Super Express* has taken a slightly different tactic - the one taken by cheap scandal-and-gossip magazines and women’s weeklies - which is to attract the largest possible audience of general consumers. This means papers can profit from their high circulation, and again attract advertisers because of this.

*Rzeczpospolita* daily looks for quality advertisements that are profitable, rather than a large quantity of advertisements. *Rzeczpospolita’s* staff intend its main source of income to be advertising. The price of the paper covers printing costs. A large advertising department is attached to the paper, with about 50 staff involved in selling advertising space. “As far as advertisements are concerned, we have the so-called ‘high-rank’ advertisements - for example, Volvo rather than Fiat. I think that these advertisements are directed at our mixture of readers,” managing editor Robert Lutomski said.56 This suggests, however, that rather than displaying advertisements that happen to reflect the tastes of its readers, the paper is trying, as

56 Interview 4, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
are many of the other papers, to attract a group with expensive tastes - to attract the best-paying advertisers.

Not all publications are devoted to advertising. Tygodnik Powszechny and Wieg are almost entirely devoid of advertisements, and are therefore dependent on sales for their income. These publications benefit from a lack of advertising, as it gives them a more serious and non-commercial appearance, which appeals to their narrow group of readers. It is possible for Tygodnik Powszechny and Wiez to avoid advertising because of their small staff and low production costs.

There are a variety of publications, in all ideological directions, which also have very few advertisements, for different reasons. Gazeta Polska, which also keeps costs down by having a small staff (16 people) is able to make profits without advertising. Its ideological opposite, the satirical magazine NIE, prefers to advertise itself, and advertisements would only distract from this - except for a small section on the back page, reserved for advertisements for pornography and telephone sex, to make a statement about its irreverence. Catholic publications are shocked and offended by NIE, but both have one thing in common - few advertisements. One example is the Catholic-nationalistic daily Nasz Dziennik, which is against consumerism, commercialism and any such western nonsense.

Wprost weekly seems to be devoted to advertising. The magazine is not only filled with advertisements, but also with advertisements that are made to look like articles, and articles that are really advertisements in disguise. In one issue (20 December 1998), there were three full-page advertisements that closely resembled articles,
with very similar layout, headlines, and typeface; one of these used a question and answer format that is resembled the style of the magazine’s interviews.

In the same issue, the magazine published several articles that could be described as advertisements. One page, titled “Supermarket”, reviewed four luxury products that are hardly likely to be found in any Polish supermarket (Yves Saint Laurent makeup, Sony pocket video, Motorola mobile phones, and a high-tech colour printer) and gave them one to three “stars” for value for money. Besides a very advantageous review, each product got two or three stars and a colour picture.

A three page article titled “The Oven that Talks” discussed “the successes on the market in 1998”. This praised a variety of expensive consumer products, from cars to cosmetics, that had apparently been best-sellers. Another article described the benefits of treatment at various beauty farms in Poland. Wprost’s “books of the month” list is brought to you by Empik bookshops, and the article on the 1998 journalism awards (containing plenty of self-advertisement) was sponsored by the companies Era GSM and Agros Holding, whose logos were also printed under this acknowledgment.

Express Wieczorny, the tabloid that Super Express originated from, consists mainly of advertorials. Besides promoting exhibitions, concerts, and events, Express Wieczorny has a section called “Cheaper and easier (with us)”’. This includes a series on “Shops unlike any others”, which recommends unusual shops in the Warsaw area. This is typical of local newspapers, like Gazeta Krakowska and Dziennik Polski, which I have already mentioned.
One explanation for the popularity of advertorials is the inexperience of Polish journalists. From the Communist party’s point of view, the role of journalism was to promote the interests of the Party, although cloaked in professional talk that described it as “reporting”. It is not surprising that this practice continued after communism, with advertisements replacing propaganda (Zakowski 1999:262).

7.8 The Growth of Public Relations Agencies

Public relations was unknown in the communist era. There is a story that illustrates this. At a business conference not long after the first democratic elections, a Polish manager asked a western businessman what this thing called “PR” was. After it was explained to him, the Pole’s face lit up in understanding. “Ah yes, I know what you mean,” he said. “We had the same practice in our country, but we called it propaganda.”

Public relations is now a growing field in Poland. Since 1990, the number of public relations agencies has increased. By July 1996, when the Polish Public Relations Association held its second congress, there were 50 PR agencies registered. At the conference, PR companies and journalists discussed their respective roles, debating whether PR agencies aim to manipulate the media. Agata Miedlar, PR consultant for The Rowland Company obviously thought they did not. “Manipulation can only occur if PR firms give false information, and that clashes with our professional ethics.”

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57 (The Warsaw Voice, July 7, 1996, no.27 (402))
Rzeczpospolita deputy editor-in-chief Bozena Wawrzewska said that PR was about manipulation, and “journalists are susceptible to this kind of pressure.” However, she agreed that “it’s not really harmful, as long as the media, with a modicum of self-respect, sift through the information they receive.”

However, most of the PR agencies’ clients are foreign companies. The idea of public relations is still new, and many Polish companies are not yet familiar with the services PR agencies can provide. Neither are journalists. Because of their lack of experience in dealing with it, and the tradition of passing on information rather than looking for it, PR material that is given to the media is likely to be used unquestioningly.

7.9 Organisational Guidelines

I have discussed some of the ways in which several publications have targeted groups of readers and planned their advertising strategies. Naturally, these decisions will affect the journalists who work for the publications, whether or not they themselves have been involved in the decision-making process. While not every organisation has a clear set of guidelines, each does have a distinctive ideology or style which its journalists are expected to follow.

Tygodnik Powszechny’s editorial policy is shaped by its Catholic background. Adam Szostkiewicz said that “as it is a Catholic paper, or Catholic-oriented, because we are a mixture of all sorts of people here, not all of them practising Catholics, we try to avoid brutal criticism or very biased journalism. This is not to say that we are afraid of “tougher” texts. Not really. But the policy is not to use very strong
language, not to attack the people – perhaps it’s rather the problems, the issues, we
would raise as the topic of our analysis, rather than persons." 58

He added that this does not necessarily pay financially. But not to follow this
policy could alienate existing readers, who may not continue to buy the paper if it
changes. Tygodnik Powszechny is in a difficult situation: “It’s 40 000 [in
circulation], the risk is very high, we are not very well organised as a business,
there are many problems, financial and with the staff, because we are understaffed
– but there are so many problems with new people coming in, we can’t accept any
new journalist coming to us.” 59

This also means that journalists at Tygodnik Powszechny have to be careful not to
lose any readers who might choose the paper because it is Catholic. One
particularly noteworthy example is the paper’s depiction of Pope John Paul II.
Szostkiewicz commented that many of the weekly’s journalists disagree with some of
the Pope’s ideas, but could not afford to publish these views. This could cost them
readers, as the journal is described as Catholic.

Moreover, the Pope reads Tygodnik Powszechny, and acts as a kind of prominent
advertisement for the weekly. 60 Tygodnik Powszechny has been linked with the
Pope for the past twenty years. In fact, the weekly had a special status under the

58 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
59 ibid.
60 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
communists and was the only publication in Poland that was allowed to show a photograph of the Pope on his official visit to Poland in 1978.\textsuperscript{61}

\textit{Wie\ matière,} which is also a Catholic journal, consists of people who "all knew more or less what this monthly is about", said Tomasz Wiscicki. The staff is small, and "there are no people who are here by accident ... there is some way of thinking that is common to us." This means that the staff agree on key issues, such as how to write about the church and politics. As for the latter, the guideline which they follow is "to abstain from the call of politics." Asked whether it would be possible to criticise the Pope, Wiscicki replied, "we do not feel the need to criticise, because we agree with him."\textsuperscript{62}

In a large newspaper like \textit{Zycie,} the staff are not always in agreement and conflicts can occur. Łukasz Warzecha questioned the amount of freedom he had writing articles. "If I were given a scale of ten points to evaluate it I would say seven. There are some topics which you could give ten points to on that scale, but with others you have to negotiate. Andrzej [Potocki] can accept the scale of liberty but given one point less he will quit. But given ten topics he can write what he wants about nine of them ... but the case is about that one remaining topic."

Examples of topics to avoid are "the truth about the Polish People's Republic [the name of communist Poland] and the connections between today's politicians and the PRL, or the connections between people who create public opinion today and the former system. Revealing those connections can always cause very serious

\textsuperscript{61} Twenty years later, that has changed dramatically: on the anniversary of his pontificate, Pope John Paul II's photograph was on the cover of every publication in Poland.
problems. Also showing some mechanisms of the current politics, particularly within the right-wing parties. For example, the very famous case of Deputy Prime Minister Tomazewski, which we had in our newspaper, and journalists were not allowed to write about it as much as they wanted to.

Artur Gorski feels that he has complete freedom in choosing his topics as *Polityka*’s culture editor. He is not aware of any political guidelines. “It should be written well, that’s all. Ideologically, our paper has been associated with the political left. Actually the people who work here have different political outlooks. ... No, ideologically, there are no rules that I have to keep.” However, Gorski works in the culture section, so it would be unlikely for him to encounter any problems of contradicting the paper’s political orientation.

Maria Kruczkowska describes *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s guidelines as “our own system of values, which originated in our political engagement in the 80s, and it doesn’t determine all our preferences, but some of them. For instance, we don’t vote for something that is nationalist.” As Kruczkowska points out, the paper’s policy is to support those political and economic values that benefit it: “I think there are some parallels between our political and economic [views]. In economics, we are very liberal, we are rather for liberalism, which is also a reflection of our group [Agora,

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62 Interview 2, Warsaw, 7th December 1998
63 Tomaszewski was suspected of working as a secret agent under the communists when the Vetting Court found discrepancies between his declarations (May 1998)
64 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
65 Interview 3, Warsaw, 8th December 1998
the company which owns Gazeta, has shares on the market], which is flourishing as a result of capitalism – we are one of the beneficiaries of the system.” 66

Rzeczpospolita takes a similar approach. “We are following the guidelines of the free market. Liberal economy. These are our main guidelines,” Robert Lutomski explained. It would be possible to criticise liberal economy, as the paper has “the page of opinions, and there are many people criticising.”

However, Rzeczpospolita’s openness to different opinions does not apply to journalists, but to politicians. “Politicians write their opinions, and we publish them. We publish the opinions of the politicians from the left, from the right, and from the centre of the political spectrum. This is an open page, where they can say what they are thinking.” 67

For Lutomski, who has the advantage of being in a managerial position, there are few restrictions. He is involved in major decisions, such as the content of the newspaper and what will make the front page. Lutomski is attached to his job and says he couldn’t imagine working for another paper. 68

The journalists’ comments show that experiences of restriction differ, depending on the extent to which they are able to conform to their organisation’s guidelines. For those journalists who work for papers that are associated with a political or religious orientation, there is no perceived restriction, provided they themselves agree with that orientation. Gorski, Wiscicki, Sakiewicz, Lutomski and Kruczkowska are in this situation. Also, the journalists with more decision-making

66 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
power, Gorski, Lutomski, and Wiscicki, did not feel restricted as they are to a large extent responsible for the guidelines. However, for the more critical journalists, like Szostkiewicz, Warzecha and Potocki, organisational guidelines are restrictive.

7.10 Summary

This chapter has examined the factors that are involved in organisational regulation. Under the communists, these were largely political. Through political appointments and monitoring, the Communist Party was able to exert influence over newspapers. Newspapers’ internal structures were shaped by their Communist managements, which shows them to be part of a closed system.

Today, each newspaper is in a unique organisational situation (although we can identify similarities between them). As described above, each publication has been managed differently depending on the extent of involvement of the owners and the decisions of its head staff. In an open media system, media organisations have sufficient independence to make their own decisions - such as who their target readers will be and how to attract them.

New Polish newspapers faced a choice of target audiences, but for existing publications the matter was not as simple. They had to determine whether it would be more profitable to stay as they were or to change their appearance and content. As noted, only those that changed succeeded in gaining readers. However,

67 Interview 4, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
68 ibid.
newspaper management is now influenced by considerations of how to attract advertisers, shown to be a convenient source of income.

As for the individual journalists working within the organisation, they may contribute to staff discussions, but ultimately they must conform to the organisation's rules. From the organisational perspective, the role of the journalist is an employee who is responsible for carrying out the tasks set out in their contract. There are, however, some informal constraints for journalists within news organisations, such as individual editorial preferences and pressure from other journalists to conform. At the same time, another set of values also have an influence on journalists – the ethics of the journalistic profession. The impact of these ideas will be dealt with in the next chapter.
8 Professional Regulation

The previous chapters have dealt with external and internal forms of regulation that have affected journalists in Poland. Now I will turn to a less obvious form of regulation, which involves the influence of the profession of journalism itself. The impact of professional regulation in contemporary Poland is difficult to measure.

Journalists in communist Poland were subject to distinctive socialisation, making them feel part of a professional community. However, journalists in Poland today are not such a united group with a common sense of identity. In this chapter I will show this by looking into journalists' perceptions of their role and their differing interpretations of professional ethics.

8.1 Defining Professionalism

Jane L. Curry, in her book "Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics" described journalists as a distinct group, united by their professionalism. Curry argues that to understand Polish journalists' behaviour, the theory of "professionalisation" is the most useful. This applies to professions "who control unique bodies of knowledge not shared by the rest of society" (Curry 1990:3). This is controlled both within a group and according to society's regulations. Professionals are defined as those who establish professional organisations, go through similar training and socialisation, have full-time work commitments, and want the right to control their own work.
Professional groups have more formal and informal interaction than other groups, due to their controlled membership, common values and interests, and their shared "special role". According to Curry, "[i]n any society these groups are able to claim some autonomy and self-control – as journalists in Poland have". Not only can they achieve autonomy, but they can also influence political policy-making.

Curry believes that journalists are in a privileged position because of their links with politicians, enabling them to "enter into the early stages of policy-making and play 'gate-keeper' roles in later stages" (Curry 1990:21). Journalists also act as "channels to modify the impact of policies on individual citizens and to alert policy-makers to problems in how their policies work" (Curry 1990:22).

Curry's theory of professionalisation may apply to journalists in Poland in the 1970s and 80s. However, journalists in Poland today are in a different position. Taking the definition of professionalism used by Curry, we could say that journalists in Poland today are no longer united by professionalism, and this should not be seen as the leading influence on journalistic practice.

However, professional regulation is an important factor to consider, as journalists are still to some extent influenced by professional values. These values are partly traditional in origin, but now are beginning to incorporate the Anglo-American ideal of professional journalism: "objectivity". The process of "westernisation" of the Polish media, which I have mentioned above, has affected the profession of journalism as well as media organisations, with the introduction of western journalistic values.
It is difficult to analyse professional values, for the journalists' use of terms such as "objectivity" or "truth" may be based on a belief that these are necessary values, as they are common in professional discourse, but the journalists' understanding of their meaning may be quite different.

8.2 Historical Background of Professional Values in Journalism

Journalism in Poland has a long history, which can be traced back to the 17th century. As Jane L. Curry has observed, Polish journalists come from a tradition of representing national and political interests. This means that many journalists felt that their role was not to criticise, but to promote particular political ideas.

Poland may have been ruled by one party, but that party was very divided. Factionalisation gave journalists the opportunity to choose their connections amongst the political elite (Curry 1990:32). Thus journalists were given the feeling that they were presenting 'their' political viewpoint.

The practice of journalism is also influenced by the literary tradition. According to Tomasz Goban-Klas, head of the Press Research Institute in Krakow, a journalist in 19th century Poland was "a person who had received some literary education but was not talented enough to become a novel writer" (Goban-Klas 1994:241). Curry believes that they were "champions of national culture and language" (Curry 1990:36).

In the 20th century, and particularly in a period of political instability, journalists continued to see themselves in a literary role. Writing style was important, as was an analytical approach to the subject, rather than simple information. This notion
provided journalists with a professional goal – the achievement of an elegant writing style - which did not conflict with political control.

Another historical aspect of journalism that has had a significant effect on journalistic practice in Poland is not specifically Polish, but common to European societies. The journalistic profession according to European tradition was never as concerned as the English and Americans with the ideals of “objectivity”, and non-partisan journalism, which I have discussed above. This applies particularly to print media, which have adopted new technologies, but have continued to reflect their heritage.

As a recent study of the Hungarian mass media pointed out, “traditionally in Europe, the print media are often affiliated with a political party, or an ideological agenda unlike the system of “objective” newspapers in the United States. … Though nominally independent, nearly all publications can be associated with political groups or political agendas, regardless of the degree of foreign ownership of the newspaper” (Csapo-Sweet and Kaposi 1999:4). The same could be said of Poland.

8.3 Newspapers and Political Partisanship

Most of the Polish journalists I interviewed upheld this tradition of political journalism, and not all saw this as contradictory to the ideals of neutrality and objectivity. “It’s natural that some papers should have one opinion, and other papers a different one. It’s justified. I don’t like those papers that try to balance all the opinions, because it’s without any nerve, meaningless,” Tomasz Sommer, of
Super Express, replied, when asked whether newspapers should represent political viewpoints or be “neutral”.

Sommer also works for another publication, Najwyszy Czas (It’s High Time (literally, Highest Time)). This is a small self-financing weekly newspaper with a circulation of only 10,000, run by a staff of four. Sommer describes it as a “liberal-conservative” paper that looks at political issues in Poland. While Sommer does not feel enthusiastic about his job with Super Express, he does express enthusiasm for working on Najwyszy Czas, since as an editor he is part of the decision-making, and is able to write his opinion on political subjects.

Polityka journalist Artur Gorski said, “there are some party papers which I take because I know when I read the articles, there is some ideological direction. Being objective is important, but sometimes I like to read papers which I know won’t ever be objective.”

Maria Kruczkowska explained that people in Poland were unable to trust the press because they could see that it was politically engaged. “We have no tradition of Anglo-Saxon objective journalism,” Kruczkowska said. “This way is that the press wants to manipulate public opinion.”

However, although she herself disapproved of this method, she also expressed understanding for those journalists who had a background in the underground press. “I think that the press should be about informing, and not manipulating. But I understand that if you have been so engaged in changing realities, and such a

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69 Interview 5, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
tradition that intelligentsia have tried to escape the masters by means of media ... you have to understand this." 72

Adam Szostkiewicz also sees the past as a burden for Polish journalists who have worked in the underground press. Szostkiewicz, who has worked on BBC programmes and often co-operates with European, British and American journalists, indicated the extent of the differences between Polish and western journalists:

“One of the major points of misunderstanding between western journalists and people like myself used to be the role, or the social function of the journalist. They would argue, especially in countries like the UK, that what we need is a certain kind of non-partisan journalism. What we (Polish journalists) would say is ‘alright, we do understand what you mean, but please try to understand the difference in context.’” 73

Szostkiewicz explains that the context of underground journalism in Poland was necessarily political: “[I]t was a totalitarian regime, and there was no other way as a journalist but to commit yourself to this noble cause of fighting for human rights, for democracy, for independence, and for that matter for the freedom of expression, which is quite specific for the journalist’s job. Of course, there was this tension, there was this dilemma of a journalist who is committed to a specific political cause, on one hand, and on the other hand, trying to do his job, to give a picture of the truth.” In the underground press, Szostkiewicz admitted, “that principle of accuracy was not always honoured.”

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70 ibid.
71 Interview 3, Warsaw, 8th December 1998
It was not always simple, or even practical, to be accurate in the underground press. Reporting on the two sides of an issue was often not possible. Because the underground press was illegal, reporters faced problems in gathering the necessary information. "You couldn't imagine, if writing for an underground publication, to go and ask for an opinion from the authorities," Szostkiewicz said. "First, they would never [be bothered to] see you. Second, they would call the police."

The problems faced by journalists who were committed to fighting for a cause continued with the replacement of the communists with a democratically elected government. Szostkiewicz describes it as "the same kind of problem in a new version: shall we commit ourselves to promoting the democratic values, and in what specific way?" Although the answer seemed to be an obvious "yes" to the journalists who had opposed communism, the situation soon became hazy.

"Of course there were mistakes by the first democratic governments. Shall we, or shall we not, discuss it? Shall we attack? Shall we criticise? Shall we raise our accusing fingers at the government who, for the very first time after five decades of repression and unfreedom, were democratically elected? Another problem was that they were composed, to some degree, of our friends from that heroic time of opposition. It is just not easy to criticise a person in such a situation."

Adam Szostkiewicz sees a need for non-partisan journalism, saying of the principle of neutrality, "I think it's an absolute necessity, a must, for the Polish press to adopt it". However, he also believes that sometimes bias is necessary. "The

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72 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
73 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
transformation process is not finished. There are moments, I think, when journalists should support, in their own way, the main cause, which is democracy. In situations like these, I would say forget about being non-partisan and promote democratic values. For example, at this paper, because we write about the church and religion, and social conflicts, one of the big issues is Polish-Jewish relations and the burden of the past. This is not a very friendly society towards Jews. … We published … a story by a priest, who told how anti-Semitism is still alive in some circles of the church. … This is one example of an occasion where I would not be in favour of typical unbiased journalism which shows both sides.”

8.4 Promoting Traditional Values

It is not only journalists with a background in the underground press who are affected by the past. Szostkiewicz says that the combination of isolation from foreign countries and the extensive brainwashing under communism caused some “mental habits” to form which still remain:

“There is still this tendency to wish for a unity, for a consolidation. Because of that, there is still a tendency to search for enemies, for foreign influences as something dangerous, undermining one’s identity. It’s in the genes. And that still happens to journalists. Some of them are writing that we don’t want European Union, we don’t want western culture, we’ll make it on our own. There are so many journalists who would have no problem with answering your question, ‘is there an agenda?’ with ‘yes, of course.’”

74 ibid.
75 ibid.
The conservative national daily *Nasz Dziennik* is extreme in its views concerning the European Union, and any non-Christian foreigners. One of its headlines was “The Nazi Freeway to the European Union”. The editor-in-chief of *Nasz Dziennik*, Artur Gorski\(^\text{76}\), discussing his editorial philosophy, said, “First of all, I could lead a crusade against the European Union, where socialism runs rampant” (*The Warsaw Voice*, July 5, 1998, no.27 (506)).

The paper also condemned women’s magazines from the west because “the woman is presented as a person oriented towards her own pleasures, who devotes a lot of time and attention to her appearance. Such magazines contribute to readers’ frustration” (cited in *The Warsaw Voice*, November 22, 1998, no.47 (526)).

The nationalistic influence is also connected with religion, as the Catholic Church was actively involved in the association of communism with evil (Kula 1993:192). Poland is, as I have noted, extremely Catholic. To say that the majority of Poles are Catholic is an understatement - estimates of the percentage of the population who are Catholic have varied between 91 and 97%. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are many religious publications.

Committed Catholic journalists have their own press agencies and journalists’ associations. This introduces yet another set of what we could see as professional values, since they are presented as such. However, those who identify themselves as Catholic journalists see the role of the journalist in a specific way, which is quite distinct from the first definition of professionalism.

\(^{76}\) Not to be confused with Artur Gorski of *Polityka* weekly, who was interviewed for this research.
Tomasz Wiscicki, of Wiez, says that he and his colleagues “try to see the different fields of human activity as those which should be governed by moral rules.” This includes politics, but Wiez is not political. Wiscicki feels that his publication’s decision not to get involved in politics after communism was a wise one. However, although Wiez cannot be said to have a political agenda, it does have a moral agenda. Wiscicki sees this as important, saying that “for me, the [profession of] journalist is a special kind of vocation. For a Christian, every work is a vocation.

“From that point of view, it was very difficult for me to work for a journal that I do not want to read - I have to be convinced that my journal does the right thing. What do I mean? That it tells the truth as far as this is possible and it does not lie. The role of the journalist is to help people understand. … He cannot let this side say something, and then that side say something, and then say, “I’m impartial, I’m okay.” It’s not okay. He has an obligation to let people understand what is going on.”

Wiscicki explains that Wiez does this by examining issues thoroughly. “We comment, but not like in the daily papers, which say something is right or wrong, wise or stupid; we try to see everything which goes around it, in a broader perspective and a Christian perspective. Not all of us are Catholic, but this is a Catholic journal, and it means something to us. We feel responsible for the Church.”

The above observations highlight one of the main problems of contemporary Polish journalism - how can journalism be a united profession, when there is not even
agreement on what professionalism is? The agenda-following approach to journalism could be seen as unprofessional, if professionalism is judged by western standards.

However, for many journalists in Poland, particularly those with work experience in the communist era, the role of the journalist is to present a point of view. To understand this definition of professional journalism, we need to be aware of the historical background and the influence of the Catholic culture. The development of professional journalism education may counter these influences. We need to examine the type of education that journalists are receiving.

8.5 Journalism Education

Journalism education in Poland appears to be increasingly popular judging by the numbers of courses becoming available. Particularly private schools of journalism and journalism courses at private universities have opened in the past few years. According to the universities and colleges that offer courses in journalism, these courses are in great demand, as are journalism graduates.

However, according to the journalists I interviewed, most journalists do not have a diploma or degree in journalism, but a university degree in the humanities or social sciences. Moreover, many newspapers do not want to employ journalists with so-called professional training. Also, the journalists themselves expressed criticism towards journalism qualifications, for various reasons which I will discuss below.

77 Interview 2, Warsaw, 7th December 1998
A journalism diploma is not required for employment with Poland’s most popular daily, Gazeta Wyborcza. On the contrary, graduates of the Journalism School of Warsaw are seen as “not good as journalists,” according to Maria Kruczkowska. When it was established at the end of the communist era, Gazeta Wyborcza did not hire journalists who had gone through journalism training. This education was seen as politically biased, unsuitable for the new publication which was a forum for the opponents of communism.

Kruczkowska said that the requirements for employment at the paper have changed since its establishment, but “there are still no requirements of having a diploma from a school of journalism. Rather they (Gazeta Wyborcza) take people from Linguistics, Political Science, anything from Humanities.”

Tomasz Wiscicki, editor of the Catholic cultural monthly Wiez, does not believe in hiring job applicants with a journalism education. Wiscicki spoke critically of it: “I have an opinion, and it’s not just my own, that it is not very suitable, especially for this kind of journal.” Wiscicki says that preferred applicants have a humanities degree and a “certain way of thinking”.

Polityka’s Artur Gorski got his position at the weekly with experience gained at the Polish Press Agency (PAP), the official source of all information under the communists, which he believed was the best way to get a job in the press. According to Gorski, “[t]here are two schools of journalism; one is university,

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78 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
79 Interview 2, Warsaw, 7th December 1998
which gives you nothing, and then there is the Polish Press Agency. Even though it is connected with the government it is the best school for journalism.” 80

“There are very few journalists in Poland who have completed journalism studies”, Zycie daily journalist Lukasz Warzecha said. “Journalists would be very willing to have some foreign scholarship, to see how it works in Australia, United States, western Europe.” Warzecha was studying International Relations at the time of the interview, and had acquired his position at the paper through “five or six years” of experience as a journalist with a regional political and Catholic monthly.81

Andrzej Potocki, also from Zycie, studied Law and worked in different fields including television and business before becoming a journalist. Potocki did not think that journalism education was necessary, saying that “journalism is something you can learn just by walking down the street.”82

The opposite opinion was held by Tomasz Sakiewicz, an editor of the right-wing weekly Gazeta Polska. He does not have any qualifications, but many years of experience. Sakiewicz believed that a diploma in journalism was no guarantee that a journalist would be able to write well, because “there are people whom any studies couldn’t help. It’s [a] free and very creative job.”83

It would not be true to claim that all newspapers are dismissive of schools of journalism. The tabloid Super Express is one newspaper that does look for journalism qualifications and takes on young graduates for further training - but

80 Interview 3, Warsaw, 8th December 1998
81 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
82 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
83 Interview 6, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
seeing as even one of its own journalists, Tomasz Sommer, describes it as “rather more comics than paper”\(^\text{84}\), this is hardly a compliment to journalism education.

What is wrong with journalism education? Andrzej Krajewski, editor-in-chief of Przeglad Reader’s Digest and deputy chairman of the Polish Journalists’ Association, complained, “journalism schools that don’t distinguish between a journalist, an advertising agent and a detective are mushrooming” (Krajewski 1998b). Adam Szostkiewicz believes that “it is something new and will take a long time for it to really start to work.”\(^\text{85}\)

For the older generation of journalists there were only very few places which provided formal training, which were all “under the political control of one party, the Communist Party,” Szostkiewicz said. “People like myself tended to avoid this sort of training; they were anxious not to be brainwashed. This can explain why there are so many untrained people working in the Polish press.”\(^\text{86}\)

However, it is not only the lack of tradition that is a problem, but the many doubts that have been expressed regarding the quality of the education. Journalism education has certainly changed its curriculum since communist times. Marek Grzelewski, principal of the Higher School of Journalism in Warsaw, observed that the changes to the journalism education curriculum reflect political, social, and economic change:

\(^{84}\) Interview 5, Warsaw, 9\(^{th}\) December 1998
\(^{85}\) Interview 1, Krakow, 30\(^{th}\) October 1998
\(^{86}\) ibid.
• the values of democracy and pluralism have led to an emphasis on objectivity and neutrality

• aiming for civil society means choosing and presenting information for public participation

• the replacement of a totalitarian state with a constitutional state allows for a critical assessment of politics and society without disobeying the law

• the existence of a market economy means that competition must be taken into account

• the introduction of new technology has enabled the use of modern techniques in information-gathering and disseminating

• the growing importance of unity with Europe means standardisation with European practice. (Grzelewski 1999:282)

The new principles summarised by Grzelewski sound very promising, but in practice there were several problems. The first relates to journalism education at state institutions. At the time of writing, journalism education was available at universities in Warsaw, Krakow, Poznan, Katowice and Lublin. Warsaw’s Institute of Journalism is the largest, co-operating with the Ecole Superieure de Journalisme in Lille. Students choose courses in general knowledge, foreign languages and practical methods. The Krakow, Katowice and Poznan programmes are very similar. At these universities, the political science departments offer journalism as a
specialisation after one year of political science. Krakow can accommodate 120 students, Katowice 70 and Poznan only 60.

In all of these courses, little practical work is available. They lack the facilities and equipment, especially for television and radio; there are only very few computers. I have already referred to the influence of the traditional view of journalism, even predating communism, as "a product of a traditionally well-educated mind" - in the 19th century "a journalist was a person who had received some literary education but was not talented enough to become a novel writer" (Goban-Klas 1994:242). This notion has continued in journalism education also, and along with the more practical problem of a lack of funds, has led to largely theoretical courses (Freedom Forum 1994).

Quite varied programmes are now offered by the increasingly numerous private institutions in Poland. Among the most well-known are the Higher School of Journalism, the Higher School of Communication and Media in Society, the School of Business and Administration and the Warsaw Journalism Center. All of these are based in Warsaw and offer shorter programmes which usually take three years to complete.

The Higher School of Communications and Media was founded in 1994 and given the status of a state institution. It provides a general humanities education and gives students the chance to specialise after the third semester. The School of Business and Administration, established in 1993, offers a course in journalism, but after one year students have to go to Warsaw University for their studies. The Higher School of Journalism, which was established in 1995 and is funded by an organisation
established by the Association of Polish Journalists (SDP) in co-operation with UNESCO, offers three-year courses with specialisations in journalism and diplomacy.

The Warsaw Journalism Center is financed by the U.S. International Media Fund and was set up in 1991. The Warsaw Journalism Center distinguishes itself from other institutions by having both Polish and American media professionals conducting courses. It is said to have a "pragmatic, hands-on approach to teaching journalism" (Freedom Forum 1994).

Several smaller and less well-known private institutions now offer three-year journalism programmes which are typically much more practical in orientation, differing from the five-year theoretical university courses. They offer specialisations in radio, television, or press journalism. However, the problem with such institutions - apart from the limited availability of places and the high cost of the course - is that their concentration on practical work is so great that the amount of theory is reduced, including basic and valuable theory such as ethical work practice (Grzelewski 1999:284).

As Szostkiewicz observed, the new style of journalism education has not been in operation for very long. This means that the academics taking these courses are not yet familiar with teaching the new concepts outlined above by Grzelewski. A survey of journalism education in Poland by Freedom Forum found that "few full-time academics have practical journalism experience and higher academic degrees in journalism/mass media. Nor are they apt to devote a large amount of time to reshaping curricula, revising courses or taking on additional laboratory
assignments, because most hold outside jobs to supplement their income. ... Journalists employed to assist these programs are largely untested teachers who also take such jobs for additional income” (Freedom Forum 1994).

Journalists in communist Poland went through a socialisation process, during which they acquired professional values. This included their education. However, journalists today do not go through the same processes. Their values are, as we have seen, different depending on the publication they work for. Unlike in communist times, these publications are largely in competition with each other, and journalists have little contact with other members of their profession. Another factor to consider here is the lack of a unifying journalists’ association, which was important for journalists in the 1980s.

8.6 Journalists’ Associations

Journalists in communist Poland were represented by one professional organisation, the Polish Journalists’ Association (Syndykat Dziennikarsky Polskich, or SDP), until 1982. It consisted mainly of journalists who were members of the Communist Party. During 1980, when the Solidarity movement was strengthening and developing its own media, the Polish Journalists’ Association began to become more actively involved in representing the real interests of Polish journalists.

The SDP replaced its old leaders at the October 1980 congress, and the new leaders discussed a new role for the media (Albright 1983:43). The newly elected president of the SDP, Stefan Bratkowski, was an influential and respected journalist who managed to speak out against current legal restrictions on the media.
Bratkowski and the SDP argued for the abolition of censorship and increased access to information. Bratkowski was expelled from the Party several months later for his outspoken views (Goban-Klas 1994:170). However, his views were not entirely disregarded by politicians. As changes to press law were deliberated in parliament, censorship began to weaken (Albright 1983:52).

Polityka began publishing articles on the need for new media laws. Other new themes which had previously been forbidden appeared in some of the more daring official publications: accidents, alcoholism and drug abuse, shortcomings of the health services, environmental problems and corruption (Albright 1983:42-69). However, this experimental daring was not permitted to continue very long.

In December 1981, martial law was declared, and lectures, conferences, or gatherings of any kind forbidden, as was travel to other towns. The press was regarded with the utmost suspicion, and many publications were banned. Many journalists lost their jobs. Only the most loyal Party papers, like Trybuna Ludu (People’s Tribune), continued regularly.

In 1982, the SDP was declared dissolved by the mayor of Warsaw. According to the Communist Party, the Association had failed its task. A new organisation, the SDFRL (Association of Journalists of the Polish People’s Republic) was established, whose members supported Prime Minister Jaruzelski.

Jane Curry sees the period of martial law as a test of journalists’ loyalty to their profession – journalists could either stay in their current position, but with limited autonomy, or they could leave. After martial law, journalists were still members of
a professional community, even when not working in their previous positions. The journalists who were surveyed by Curry said that during this time, professional methods took priority over keeping their jobs or collaborating with the communists (Curry 1990:241).

Yet many journalists were communists – over 70% of regional journalists in 1983 were members of the Communist Party. Also, as I have noted, since the Party controlled the right to approve major appointments (nomenklatura), editors or managing editors were likely to be Party members. It is not surprising that journalists during this time could not be independent from politics. However, according to Curry, there is a code of unspoken ethics amongst journalists which holds that the journalistic profession comes first (Curry 1990:164).

This could apply to the SDP Association of Polish Journalists, which dared to speak up, until it got too vocal for the communists. In the case of the replacement association, the SDPRL (Association of Journalists of the Polish People’s Republic), loyalty was not to the profession but to the Party. According to journalists who were not members, the SDPRL was more interested in preserving Communist Party power than representing journalists’ interests (Curry 1990:240).

Today, there is not a single nationwide association of any significance which represents journalists in Poland. There are two main associations, the SDP (Association of Polish Journalists), which was the only one until banned under martial law, and the SDRP (Association of Journalists of the Republic of Poland), formerly the SDPRL, which was the official communist replacement association.
The SDP and SDRP are still rivals, continuing on the opposition of each other which began in the communist past. When the SDP was banned under martial law, its funds were confiscated and given to its replacement, the SDPRL. The SDP re-emerged after martial law, but as it did not re-register, it was not permitted to keep its funds (Borkowska 1999:273). Now the activities of the two organisations are practically identical, yet they are unable to unite.

The SDP organised television discussions on the role of the media after the new democratic political system was established. Now the SDP gives yearly prizes for journalism, sponsored by “The German Marshall Fund of the United States”. The SDP is a member of the International Federation of Journalists, based in Brussels. The SDRP also gives prizes for journalism, and holds workshops for journalists, with counselling on legal and ethical problems. It is a member of the International Journalists’ Organisation based in Prague. Only on the big issue of press freedom will the two organisations make a common stand (Borkowska 1999:274-5).

Few journalists join journalists’ associations. Artur Gorski dismisses them as a relic from the past, which enabled journalists to “feel stronger, or supported by people who feel the same way as you”. He is “convinced that younger journalists do not join these organisations” – unless they “want to make some kind of political career”. Gorski had not even heard of the Polish Media Conference, which is supposed to represent journalists’ views.87

Andrzej Krajewski, chairman of the Association of Polish Journalists, agrees that journalists’ associations are no longer representative of Polish journalists. Krajewski
was critical of "the permanent helplessness and antagonism between journalists’ organisations, in which ever older people fight over disintegrating assets and ideals" (Krajewski 1998a).

The communist origins of journalists’ associations may discourage some journalists from joining them. Tomasz Sakiewicz is also not a member, as he feels that journalists’ organisations were established in communist times, which means that “they accepted lies and wrote what the totalitarian government wanted. Of course there was a group of honest and brave journalists but not a very big group.”

87 Interview 3, Warsaw, 8th December 1998

8.7 Protection of Journalists’ Rights

It seems that journalists’ associations cannot really do much for journalists. They cannot secure jobs, as they have no legal possibility of liaising with employers. Because of this powerlessness, the SDP called for a united trade union organisation in 1991. In 1993 Syndykat Dziennikarsky Polskich (Syndicate of Polish Journalists) was established. The role of the Syndicate is now often discussed – should it remain a union, or should it change its function so that it becomes more focussed on improving journalistic standards? (Borkowska 1999:278) In any case, the Syndicate does little. The situation is summarised by Andrzej Krajewski:

“In the tenth year of freedom, Polish journalists are represented by three authors’ associations, six local press associations, a trade syndicate and a media conference which is supposed to unite this representation. Ethical charters have been prepared, journalistic codes are binding in several editorial offices, and work is underway on
several drafts of a new press law. Nonetheless, employers still disregard the hard-won privileges of journalists' collective labor [sic] agreements (longer holidays, earlier retirement) and access to the profession is not governed by any regulations” (Krajewski 1999b).

Is there any protection for journalists’ rights? There is the Press Freedom Monitoring Centre, established in 1996 by the Polish Journalists’ Association. Its aim is to protect the right of freedom of expression as laid down by the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 10, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19, “especially to protect journalists’ freedom of access to information and to disseminate information, to consolidate the system of independent mass media in Poland, and to popularize the proper use of the principle of free speech” (Goszcynski 1998). The Centre outlines its tasks as the following:

• participating in press trials as a friend of the court

• drafting a Journalists’ Professional Code of Ethics

• reporting on the state of laws regulating public media

• addressing legislative authorities to amend media regulations

• recording court conflicts involving the media and journalists since 1989

• exerting influence on public administration practice, especially to make information available, and reacting to criticism of the press

88 Interview 6, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
• stimulating public interest in the freedom of the press (Goszcynski 1996)

The Centre was able to help *Gazeta Wyborcza* journalist Marek Kozubal soon after its establishment. Kozubal was writing an article on discipline among the law enforcement services and was unable to receive information from the State Protection Office (UOP) which quoted a secret resolution by an interior minister in 1985. The Centre found that all former Security Service regulations, including the one mentioned, are no longer valid under the current constitution, which guaranteed the journalist the right of access to the information (Goszcynski 1996).

However, the Press Freedom Monitoring Centre has not always been able to help journalists. A definite limitation of the centre is that it can only work within the boundaries of the existing press law, which as I have noted contains considerable restrictions.

### 8.8 Journalists Divided

#### 8.8.1 Competition Between Newspapers

Without the guaranteed support or protection of a nationwide journalists’ association or trade syndicate, and without a need for belonging to a journalistic community, it seems that journalists no longer have such a strong sense of “loyalty to the profession”. The disappearance of the common enemy and the common cause has changed the journalistic profession into a much more diverse and divided one. Perhaps this is because in a market economy journalists are competing with each other, and are not forced to support each other for strength in the face of
hardship. Whereas under communism, journalists needed solidarity with other members of the profession, journalists today are more likely to experience a sense of competition.

Robert Lutomski, Managing Editor of *Rzeczpospolita*, pointed out that “[a]s in every market, we compete with all the newspapers in the market.”

*Gazeta Wyborcza* is also very competitive, even though it is “running first”, as Maria Kruczkowska put it. “From time to time, someone tries to catch us, which makes us run even quicker; but until now we have succeeded in losing our eventual [sic] competitor.” *Gazeta Wyborcza* is influenced by U.S. management style, and is set on making profits through gaining the largest share of the advertising market. It has succeeded, and Kruczkowska observes, “it’s one of the things in which no other paper can beat us.”

Competition, as I mentioned above, does not need to result in a narrowing of differences. In Poland, we can see how competition can bring out the differences between rival publications, rather than the similarities. There is obvious rivalry between the two popular newsmagazines *Wprost* and *Polityka*. Artur Gorski of *Polityka* said, “our most significant serious competitor is *Wprost* weekly. I think that thanks to the existing market for *Wprost* weekly, we changed our image actually. We became a full colour magazine, destined rather more for young people.”

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89 Interview 4, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
90 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
91 Interview 3, Warsaw, 8th December 1998
As for the dailies, the rival for both *Zycie* and *Super Express* is *Gazeta Wyborcza*. *Zycie* journalist Lukasz Warzecha observed that “[w]e compare each edition of ours with it, although we are completely different as far as character of the newspaper is concerned.” Warzecha said that this difference was important to maintain. His colleague, Andrzej Potocki, thinks that *Zycie* is competing for the same group of readers. The newspaper’s target audience is the intelligentsia, and its aim is to influence them. “Elites usually read both *Zycie* and *Gazeta Wyborcza* to have what they say is a full view of the affair,” Warzecha said.92

8.8.2 Competition Within Newspapers

Another form of competition that can be observed in the Polish print media takes place within various newspapers, as well as between them. Of the journalists I interviewed, four said that there was no rivalry between the staff of the newspapers they worked for. However, three journalists said that there definitely was a competitive atmosphere at their organisations. Asked whether there was competition within *Polityka*, Artur Gorski replied, “Sure - I can feel the sense of competition.”93

*Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* encourage competition between staff. In both of these newspapers, this does not disturb the notion that everyone is part of a team, but promotes it. “We have a special award each week, so journalists are competing, as far as news is concerned. As in any other work, people are

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92 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
93 Interview 3, Warsaw, 8th December 1998
competing and trying to be better than others,” Rzeczpospolita’s managing editor Robert Lutomski affirmed. 94

In Gazeta Wyborcza, the atmosphere is also very competitive. “There are some parallel systems of journalism and pushing the [competitors],” Maria Kruczkowska explained. “You get prizes every week for the best article and it’s officially announced. Also you receive points for a period of time, which are counted in [shares] … we will have stocks on the market, so the better journalist you are, the more shares you will have.” 95

The Zycie journalists felt that collaboration predominated at their newspaper, although Andrzej Potocki had heard that there was some competition. 96 Super Express does not promote internal competition. 97 None of the smaller publications I surveyed (Tygodnik Powszechny, Wiez, and Gazeta Polska) were particularly competitive. All of the competitive publications are in fact successful and known for their high standards (Gazeta Wyborcza, Rzeczpospolita, and Polityka). Moreover, these three publications are both internally and externally competitive.

8.8.3 Competition or Solidarity?

However, in spite of the fierce competition between newspapers, there is some evidence to suggest that the sense of journalistic solidarity has not completely vanished. I have already referred to the case of Jerzy Urban, who was punished for breaking the state secrets law. Even though many journalists do not agree with

94 Interview 4, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
95 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
96 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
Urban's views, and often criticise his newspaper, NIE, they expressed their solidarity with him in his 1996 court case. Gazeta Wyborcza's deputy editor-in-chief Helena Luczywo wrote that although NIE's content was "frequently repulsive", she believed that "press freedom also means freedom for authors to write such articles."

Urban was also supported by Jorge Ruiz Lardizabal, of the Polish section of the Association of European Journalists, who said, "Being unable to write for a year sets a dangerous precedent. Backed by the authority of an independent court, it restored a mechanism well known in the past, when political censorship also stopped people writing, 'in the interests of the state.'" A resolution passed by the Polish Journalists' Association agreed, "depriving a journalist of the right to carry out their profession is an echo of the times when the press found itself under tight political control." (Swiecka 1996)

This journalistic communal perspective on press freedom is also held by Adam Szostkiewicz, who disapproves of the anti-foreigner radio station, Radio Maryja, yet does not wish to stop them:

"This is a very difficult situation. ... The worst situation would be if the bishops managed to disband them. I don't think this is likely to happen, but if it does, what should I do as a journalist, fighting so many years for freedom of speech? And my answer is, for the time being, I would defend them. Much as I hate what they are preaching, which is extremely damaging to our national interests, I would defend them. For freedom. ... And that's what we use in this paper, to criticise them."

97 Interview 5, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
That's what we hoped for so long under the communists, that we could quarrel and exchange ideas in an open way."98

However, we need to ask whether these journalists are actually showing journalistic solidarity, or whether they are defending the principle of freedom of speech. There have been many more cases where journalists are critical of their media rivals when they get into trouble. The "Karwowski case", for example, has not united all journalists. Although many journalists signed the document banning any further reports of the Prime Minister's accusers, Sejm deputies Karwowski and Slomka, there are also many journalists who do not agree with the idea, as Wprosf's Marek Zieleniewski commented. 99

8.9 Professional Values in the Journalists' Code of Ethics

Concluding his evaluation of Polish journalism, Professor Goban-Klas commented that "[t]he most serious obstacle to the independence of the Polish media is the lack of a professional code among journalists" (Goban-Klas 1994:241). At the time Goban-Klas wrote, there were in fact several codes of ethics. The problem was rather that these codes were not used by all journalists. To begin with, each association of journalists had its own code of ethics. Now there is the Media Ethic Charter, which has been accepted by most associations.

Most major publications, too, have their own guidelines, some of which I have discussed above. However, these remain largely separate, due to the different values that each paper represents. Because not all journalists are members of journalists'
associations, it is more likely that they will refer to their publication’s guidelines than to an association’s charter, as I have suggested in the previous chapter, when I addressed the effects of organisational guidelines on journalists and showed how they differed.

Another problem is that some of the guidelines in the codes may be understood in different ways; concepts such as “truth” and “objectivity” have multiple interpretations. These ideas sound familiar to journalists as they are part of journalistic professional discourse. They are found in codes of ethics, journalists’ conferences, editorials and articles: journalists keep sending and receiving the messages that reinforce these professional values.

The Association of Journalists of the Republic of Poland first devised its Code of Ethics at the third annual congress in 1991. No other associations were involved. This document began with the statement that “the basic obligation of a journalist is to seek after the truth and to publish it.” The journalist is also asked to keep fact and opinion separate. The second obligation is to respect an informant’s wish to remain anonymous. The document prohibits slander, blackmail, contempt of court, inciting hatred or violence, pornography, crypto-advertising, and causing harm to a colleague or to the profession.

The Code of Ethics can be seen as a precursor to the Media Ethic Charter, which was adopted in March 1995 by nearly all of the journalists’ associations in Poland: the SDP, SDRP, Catholic Journalists’ Association, Syndicate of Polish Journalists, Journalists’ Trade Union, Press Publishers’ Union, Polish TV S.A., Polsat TV,

Association of Independent Film and TV Producers, Public Radio Association in Poland, Polish Private Broadcasting Association, and Trade Union of Radio and TV Journalists. The Charter uses very grandiose language, stating that journalists and other media personnel “bearing in mind the principle of common good, conscious of the role of media in man’s life and in civic society, accept this charter and declare that they will perform their jobs in accordance with the following principles:

- The principle of the truth ...
- The principle of objectivity ...
- The principle of division of the information and the commentary ...
- The principle of honesty ...
- The principle of respect and tolerance ...
- The principle of superiority of recipient’s good ...
- The principle of freedom and responsibility …”

The latter two principles indicate a slight change since the 1991 code of ethics. The 1995 charter seems to indicate that social responsibility theory has had a greater influence on journalistic professional values than in the previous charter. This is because the focus is not only on the producers of media content, but also considers media consumers.

The sixth principle is explained as meaning “that the basic rights of readers, viewers and listeners are superior to the interests of the editorial staff, journalists, editors, producers and broadcasters.” However, the charter does not describe in more detail how journalists should respect their readers’ rights.
The seventh principle is also vague, meaning “that freedom of the media imposes on journalists, editors, producers and broadcasters responsibility for the form and content of the message and the consequences which result from it.” This statement assumes that the media are free. It further suggests that the media have control of their content. This is difficult in practice, as we have seen.

The Media Ethic Charter is an illustration of journalistic professional values in Poland. While many journalists are familiar with these “principles”, which are part of their professional discourse, there is not necessarily agreement on what they actually mean. These differences in interpretation emerged in the interviews I conducted.

One of the most enduring journalistic beliefs is the conviction that there is such a thing as press freedom. At the International Communications Forum in Kazimierz Dolny, Poland, held in December 1995, a group of Polish and international journalists discussed the aims and practices of the journalistic profession (ICF 1995). The enthusiastically named session on “Free Society, Free Media, Free Journalists!” demonstrated the predominance of the belief in press freedom. The print journalists I interviewed also felt that the Polish media could now be described as free.

There were three main approaches to press freedom that can be observed in these responses - the first is that it is limited by journalists, the second is that it is a product of capitalism, and the third is that organisational factors limit it.
The idea that press freedom exists, but journalists abuse it, is reflected in John Henningham's views, summarised earlier.\textsuperscript{100} Bernard Margueritte, a Foreign Correspondent in Poland for the French Press, expressed ideas corresponding to the sixth and seventh principles of the media charter. Margueritte believes that the media in Poland are now free, but this alone is not good enough. It is up to media personnel to determine the standards of the media.

“If we have free journalists do we have responsible journalists, who have a sense of mission, a sense of serving the public? The media is as responsible as the people who work in it,” Margueritte asserted. “We have to rebuild ourselves first and then rebuild our society in a way that moral and spiritual value will be respected. So, let us do it!” Margueritte's understanding of free media is a media that is not run by the state.

Michal Komar, editor-in-chief of the Warsaw daily Sztandar (a paper bought up by Marquard which was taken out of circulation in 1997) also believes this. Komar said that after communism, “it soon transpired that freedom did not necessarily go hand in hand with ethical values. Newspapers found themselves to be players in an economic game and became debased by it. Journalists were subjected to bribery and corruption by advertisers, banks and commercial interests. This situation, made worse by a shortage of capital, also enabled political corruption to return” (ICF 1995).

Like Margueritte, Komar sees press freedom as a condition that exists in Poland today, which needs to be kept under journalistic control. If there are problems,

\textsuperscript{100} see chapter 2.3 above.
these are not a result of the system but of unethical practices. This view is similar to that expressed by Henningham described earlier. Komar described the growth of technology and asked, “we have all these means of transferring information but shall we be able to use them in an honest way? And may we not find old habits coming back to haunt us?” Apart from the journalists’ own misuse of freedom, there is still the (presumably political) threat that “there could be efforts to take away the freedom that we have won” (ICF 1995).

_Wprost_ weekly’s deputy editor-in-chief Marek Zieleniewski also expressed the view that press freedom is under threat from journalists. Referring to the Karwowski case, involving a group of journalists signing a document stating that they would not publish any further accusations against the Prime Minister by two Sejm deputies, Zieleniewski commented that

“an unprecedented thing in the short history of Poland’s free press happened. Part of the community has announced the introduction of self-censorship. And if we have any kind of censorship, irrespective of its cause, we are not dealing with truly free press any more.”

Another journalistic approach to the idea of press freedom associates it with democracy and capitalism. Komar, for example, links press freedom and free society by saying that “[f]reedom begins in the press room. A free society cannot function without a free press.” As democracy and freedom have replaced communism in Poland, it seems logical that press freedom has also replaced the communist press. This view of press freedom is optimistic.
Adam Szostkiewicz of *Tygodnik Powszechny* sees press freedom as an import from the west that comes with democracy - but these conditions are still in the making. He is convinced that “after ten years of democratic experience, not only in politics and economy, but also in culture, there is a growing interest in something more serious. After the first shock of having been open to anything coming from the west: the colour, the excitement, the decadence (which is quite nice sometimes of course), it’s gone, finished.”

*Tygodnik Powszechny* is the “more serious” publication that is needed as democracy matures, or so Szostkiewicz believes. He thinks that the exciting, colourful and decadent publications that appeared on the market were just a phase in the process of “freedom”. Szostkiewicz also said, “The transformation process is not finished. There are moments, I think, when journalists should support, in their own way, the main cause, which is democracy.” The role of the journalist as Szostkiewicz sees it is to fight for freedom and democracy, and this is still necessary.102

Artur Gorski thinks that the media in Poland have attained western standards, saying that “journalism now reflects the idea of journalism in the western world. In the past, it was different. It was journalism only in some areas - culture, for instance. Even so, you couldn’t write what you wanted to, particularly in politics, but also in culture. There were many books you couldn’t write about - you couldn’t have dissident writers. It’s absolutely changed.” To the question of whether press

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102 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
freedom existed now, Gorski responded, “of course! I can swear that freedom is basic to this job and I enjoy it.”

Robert Lutomski of *Rzeczpospolita* also believes that freedom of the press exists in Poland now. Like Henningham, Lutomski thinks a free press means free choice: “In each newspaper, you could find the same information. There was just one agency. There was no creativity, just following the scheme which was created by someone else. Now readers have a choice - they can choose from left to right, to culture, to economy. This is a real change.”

Another journalist who sees press freedom as a result of capitalism is *Gazeta Polska*'s Tomasz Sakiewicz. He said that when he started work as a journalist in the underground media “there was no free media. [The] Communists controlled all legal media. Now we have freedom. Our media are more professional.” Sakiewicz sees freedom of the press as a condition that exists because the communists are no longer in power. This also makes professionalism possible, according to Sakiewicz.

The third approach to press freedom is to see it as limited by organisations, rather than journalists. Maria Kruczkowska is sure that freedom of the press exists in Poland now, but she expressed some doubts, saying that “the press functions in the world as it is. Fifty percent of our gains are from [advertising]. ... it’s the power of money. It makes for pressure. I don’t work at the economic desk of *Gazeta* but I

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103 Interview 3, Warsaw, 8th December 1998
104 Interview 4, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
105 Interview 6, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
think that they must be under some kind of pressure..." Kruczkowska’s view of press freedom is therefore less idealistic - freedom exists within boundaries, which are determined by money.

Lukasz Warzecha is critical of the idea of a free press, because there are restrictions within each newspaper. “In a newspaper like this you have self-censorship, you have all the editors who can influence journalists so that they write what they want them to. Consider, for example, television, where communists are most powerful, and you have to watch what they want. ... You always have an owner of the newspaper, you always have an editor-in-chief, you always have your own boss who can tell you how to do that and that and that. It depends on how cunningly you manipulate and zigzag between all those and wherever you can, get across your message and not theirs.”

When I commented that this sounded similar to the old communist system, Warzecha replied, “I think it’s the same thing in western media. I would even say that perhaps in some sense it is more difficult than it was before. Then, you could write something and people just read between the lines, they knew what you wanted to say. Now, you must put it more clearly but you have to lever it between all the people that you have here. It’s the same thing in the western media, because of finance - perhaps it’s even worse there.”

In Warzecha’s view, press freedom is limited by the organisation, but it is possible for journalists to achieve more “freedom”, which requires some talent. It is up to
the journalist to manoeuvre around the editors, managers and owners of the newspaper.

The journalists' affirmations of the existence of press freedom, although different, all included the idea that they are contributors to this condition. It seems that the belief in a free press is helpful to Polish journalists, as it gives them a sense of purpose, or at least control over their work.

The belief in press freedom is supplemented by the conviction that the journalist's role is to tell the "truth". At the 1995 International Communications Forum, Michal Komar spoke of journalists as if they were freedom fighters who would resist attacks on press freedom by fighting with the weapons of "truth" and "morality". Komar gave a stirring speech:

"Are we defenceless? No! Because we have learned what is to tell the truth. That true information is not only a moral course, but that it helps to make our daily working lives more effective in public and in private. It will not be so easy for this sense of truth to be taken away. But the danger obliges us in the media to face our responsibilities. To tell the truth is a greater moral duty, even more now than before. We must talk about decency and morality" (ICF 1995).

The "truth" is very popular with journalists - the idea that the role of the journalist was to 'seek the truth' was expressed by many of the journalists I interviewed.

108 ibid.
However, as with the ideal of press freedom, the journalists' understandings of “truth” differed.

Adam Szostkiewicz explains that the Polish journalist’s relationship with the truth is a difficulty inherited from the communist past. During this time concerned journalists were confronted with a problem of self-definition - “there was this dilemma of a journalist who is committed to a specific political cause on one hand, and on the other hand trying to do his job, to give a picture of the truth.” 109

For Szostkiewicz, the role of the journalist is to convey the truth, but this conflicts with promoting any kind of political values. Being truthful means showing both sides of a conflict, not supporting one over the other. This “principle of neutrality” is what journalists should strive for, Szostkiewicz says. However, he can see instances where he would not do this. 110

Tomasz Sakiewicz believes that “a journalist can’t be neutral. For example, it is the Second World War. You are in [Auschwitz]. How can you be neutral? How can you take the side of the Nazis? No, it’s impossible. But the fact that you can’t be neutral doesn’t mean that you can’t write the truth. You can write the truth.” The “truth” can be equated with “facts”. “Facts” should be separated from opinion, but opinion is necessary, according to Sakiewicz. He is convinced that “journalists should give their own opinion. People must know what is the opinion of the

109 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
110 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
journalist and what is the information. This must be very clear. I think that this is more honest. Journalists shouldn’t hide their opinions.”

Łukasz Warzecha takes a similar view. He answered that “of course, [the journalist’s role] should be seeking the truth, but all the time bearing in mind that we live in a media society and there are some very complicated ways of getting your message across to people and making them think as you think. ... I think that the role of the journalist is first of all, seeking the truth, but below that it’s influencing, it’s being cunning, it’s using all those tricky methods...”

Warzecha believes that influencing people is just as important as telling the “truth”, saying that “as we live in a democracy, everything depends on the people, how they vote. So if we think that something is right, we should influence them so that they choose someone who we think will do something right.”

Andrzej Potocki, like Warzecha, said that “the role of the journalist is to show the truth. But you gain influence anyway, because of the mechanism of the media. And that’s why the journalist should try to get to the truth, and not manipulate the text.” For Potocki, writing the “truth” means not being a conformist: for example, although he happens to write for a right-wing newspaper, he likes to criticise right-wing politicians if he disagrees with them.

Asked whether he believed that objectivity was possible, Tomasz Wiscicki replied, “I think, for me, the truth exists. Objectivity, for me, means to be as close to the truth as possible. Objectivity does not mean to make contradictory statements about

111 Interview 6, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
The truth but not even trying to show where the truth is. ... It means to gather as much information as possible and give it to [the readers], not to judge, not to tell them who is right and who is wrong, but to say who lies and who tells the truth - if I know who lies.” Wiscicki thinks that the truth needs to be ‘interpreted’, and this is the role of the journalist. 114

The principle of separating information and commentaries, and the principles of objectivity and truth, which are all related, are recognised as necessary by journalists - and yet, they are also seen as the theory rather than the practice. Szostkiewicz and Wiscicki, for example, agree with the idea of objectivity but admit that they are not objective. Maria Kruczkowska observes, “In Gazeta we try to be objective, for instance we put information and commentary separately. Information is one column, and the commentaries are in dark print. But it’s more appearance than reality, from my point of view, because information is very selective and [contentious].”115

The Zycie journalists were also sceptical about the idea of objectivity. Lukasz Warzecha spoke frankly about this: “What I’ve noticed being a journalist is that so-called independent and objective media is a myth, because we’ve been talking about left-wing, right-wing media, and it’s quite obvious that they are not so unbiased, even when they have to choose topics. ... For example, the affair with General Pinochet - it depends what you write about him, what pictures you publish, ... what

112 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
113 ibid.
114 Interview 2, Warsaw, 7th December 1998
115 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
words you use. I have some views, of course, and I'm not trying to pretend that I'm objective."

Marek Zieleniewski, in his criticism of the journalists who banned publication of Karwowski's accusations, also reinforced the ideal of objectivity as a goal that must always be aspired to above all else. Zieleniewski wrote that "the press is supposed to be impartial. Its duty is to provide comprehensive and objective information, even if the news might turn out to be unnerving or depressing".116

8.10 Summary

The Polish journalists' views of their role can be seen to be influenced by definitions of professionalism such as those set out in the media ethic charter, and traditional professional and cultural values. While there is no definite agreement on the role of the journalist, the sample of journalists interviewed did use the same expressions to describe their role. The image of the journalist is rather idealised, as is the assumption that freedom of the press must now exist in Poland.

The idea that the role of the journalist may vary with different media systems is difficult to assess, because this varies within media systems, and moreover, the same terms are used to describe roles, but with different meanings. In Poland, there is clearly some continuity from the communist past which still influences the profession of journalism. In particular, Polish journalists see their role as an informed commentator, rather than simply an information provider.

Yet while Polish journalists share this past, and are aware of a common set of professional ethics, they are divided by their different approaches to their work. There is no uniform system of journalism education or training to unite them, nor are they interested in joining a journalists' association. These two factors brought together journalists under communism. Moreover, communist journalists worked in similar environments, and shared the same status. People's mistrust of journalists also contributed to the journalists' need for solidarity. What do people think of journalists in Poland today? The public view of the role of journalism will be addressed in the next chapter.
9 THE MASS MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC

A study of Polish journalism cannot be complete without examining the social context in which they work, and their relationship with the public. We need to ask not only how journalists work, but also whom they are addressing. In this chapter, the Polish media system will be discussed with a focus on the consumers, rather than the producers, of media content.

The questions this chapter will focus on is firstly, how accessible the Polish media are for the public, and secondly, to what extent the media represent and respond to the people. The first issue, the extent of accessibility, can be assessed by looking at the distribution of the media, and the range of socio-economic inequalities.

The other issue is whether journalists are able to represent the interests of the people. Under communism, there were the two distinct kinds of journalism which I have discussed. The underground press filled the communication gap left by the official media. In Poland today, it is questionable whether print journalists are in touch with their readers, as this chapter will show.

Since this essay aims to understand the present by comparing it with the past, the first point to note is that the overall daily newspaper circulation has definitely decreased since the 1980s, when the total print run was over 9 million copies. The total circulation for dailies in Poland today is 3.3 million copies (Ubysz 1999). This is a considerably lower figure, which can be interpreted in at least three different
ways. The first explanation is that people have less money to spend on the press; the second is that people are not interested in what the print media have to offer; the third is that television has become more popular as a source of news and entertainment. These suggestions will be dealt with below.

9.1 ACCESSIBILITY

Firstly, the difference in newspaper readership between communist and postcommunist Poland can be explained in terms of accessibility. Theoretically, the official media were widely available in communist Poland. Firstly, the distribution network was well organised. Newspapers and magazines were sold at a country-wide network of tiny kiosks, over which the state had a monopoly. Also, the system of postal delivery based on subscriptions ensured distribution.

However, in practice, the kiosks' range of titles could be limited by the Communist Party, which controlled the system of distribution. During the Solidarity era of 1980-2, when the growth of the underground press began to affect the official press, the less propagandistic titles such as Polityka and Gazeta Krakowska were difficult to acquire; the queues in front of kiosks equalled those before butchers' shops (Garton Ash 1983:137).

Communist Poland was not isolated from the rest of the world. Its borders were not impenetrable, and if Poles were sceptical about their official Communist Party dominated television, radio and newspapers, they could turn to other sources. People wanted access to information, above all truthful information. The
availability of television and radio from the west, a benefit of technology, enabled them to choose these as an alternative. Western media were certainly popular, so much so that “[e]ven the poor peasant farmer in his shack tuned in nightly to hear the news from Radio Free Europe and perhaps a BBC commentary” (Garton Ash 1983:137). It is doubtful, however, that all areas of Poland were actually able to receive foreign broadcasts.

The unavoidable infiltration of alternative media, both non-government, underground, and foreign, into the public sphere revealed the falsehood of the official press; it added to the public atmosphere of distrust. News did indeed, as McNair said, ‘get out’. Although the Party tried to maintain total control of the media, some undesirable comments or information were able to slip through. In 1979, the official Polish media were discredited when a book of censorship instructions was leaked to the western media. The western media then revealed to their Polish audience the extent of censorship in Poland (Goban-Klas 1994:161).

Another way of accessing information was available to printers. Employees of print works were able to read the first uncensored proofs of their local Party paper (Garton Ash 1983:130). It is estimated that 40 –50 000 print workers in Poland were members of Solidarity. On 18 August 1981, they organised a protest called the “Days Without Papers”. For two days, printers brought about a strange reversal of government censorship by refusing to print the official papers from their works (Garton Ash 1983:203).

As the example of the printers shows, Solidarity supporters were not content with the existing media system. Solidarity members demanded access to the media, which
they saw as a form of public control over politics. They also called for "fair distribution of newsprint", legalisation of underground publications, "legal liberalization of censorship", and journalists to be protected from dismissal for political reasons. The end of state control was marked by the Round Table talks between the government and Solidarity which began on 6th February 1989. (Goban-Klas 1994:208).

In April 1989, a document signed by all groups outlined a new political system based on political pluralism, freedom of speech, and independent courts. Solidarity was granted some time on television and radio. On 8th May, the first edition of Gazeta Wyborcza was published, aiming to promote Solidarity candidates for Poland's first free elections. This independent publication was given permission to be published during the Round Table Talks. The Communist Party could no longer claim total control of the media; nor could it claim that this was necessary. Legalisation could only confirm the existing situation.

In spite of all the discussions about upholding democratic values, the democratisation of Poland has not provided equal opportunities for everyone. Firstly, there is a large discrepancy between the highest and lowest incomes, and secondly, there is an even greater gap in terms of assets. While the "richest 100" list of 1991 still mentioned the old communist nomenklatura, by 1993 a new elite had come to replace them - the business elite (Juchler 1994:242).

The differences in income between socio-economic groups have increased dramatically, as national statistics show. In 1987, managers and professionals had incomes of 45% above the average, while the incomes of farmers were 12% below
average. By 1993, managers' incomes had risen to 217% the average. Farmers had incomes of 43% less than the average, and unskilled labourers' incomes were 37% less (Juchler 1994:246).

These differences show a clear division between those who gained from the new economic situation in postcommunist Poland and those who did not. The extent of the latter group's discontent is indicated by the increasing numbers of strikes. In 1989 there were a total of 894 strikes, compared to 5,916 in 1992. In the first half of 1993, there were 7,341 strikes. During one of the strikes, in the summer of 1992, a copper miner told television journalists that "we now have democracy, but no money!" (Juchler 1994:247)

A further problem of inequality is that of the difference between regions. Joachim Weidemann has observed uneven development in the Polish media between what he calls "Poland A and Poland B". This refers to the obvious differences between the urban and rural regions of Poland (Weidemann 1999:51). The rural communities in some areas of Poland have limited access to the mass media. It is not only satellite and cable television that they lack, but even the regular broadcasts are weak in reception in some areas.

Even more basic technology is often denied people in these regions, such as telephone cables. A recent television advertisement shows a farmer at a public phone booth in a small and primitive rural village, giving words of encouragement over the phone to his wife, who is having a baby in a distant hospital. The man shouts out the joyful news that "it's a boy!", and there is a loud cheer from the entire peasant community, who have been standing behind him. The commercial is
praising the Polish telecommunications company Telekomunikacja Polska for actually bothering to make one telephone available to a whole village in such a remote area.

Telecommunications networks may be more widespread in the cities, but there is still a long wait to have individual telephones installed. Due to this deficit, the mobile phone market has expanded rapidly. As Csapo-Sweet and Kaposi observe in Hungary, “the competitive prices and services of the mobile phone companies make this medium of communication attractive to Hungarian customers who in Socialist times had to wait years for installation of home or business phone lines. Mobile phones have also rapidly become a symbol of new social status and wealth” (Csapo-Sweet and Kaposi 1999:7). This growth is reflected in the numbers of advertisements for mobile phones in the media.

Although it is mainly in the area of television that some rural areas of Poland are neglected, the print media, which have an important function of providing local news, are often available but in danger of being bought up or pushed out of the market by larger national or foreign publishing companies - the Polish Agora-Gazeta and the German Passauer Neue Presse.117

Without these notable social and regional inequalities, Poland’s media system could be described as open in terms of accessibility. Illiteracy is not a problem in Poland; the national literacy rate is 99% (1992 figures).118 Ethnic minorities make up only 1% of the population, and amongst these the largest group are Germans

117 see chapter 7.2.1
(estimated to be 300 000 to 500 000 people) living in the western region of Opole. They are represented by their own political party and have their own newspapers.

9.2 RECIPROCITY

Even if the media were accessible to every Polish citizen, there is still the problem of whether these media actually reflect a broad range of interests, or only selected viewpoints. Under communism, as mentioned above, people did not trust the official media. Jacek Kuron, one of the intellectual leaders of the opposition movement, summed up public opinion of the government and its media by saying that “if there were to be an announcement that the government had laid a golden egg, people would say: first of all, not golden, secondly, not an egg, and thirdly, it didn’t lay it but stole it” (Garton Ash 1983:283). This interview was published in Sztandar Młodych, the official youth paper, in October 1981. The editor was sacked for publishing it.

However, although there were not many opportunities for Polish journalists in the 1980s to have any kind of interaction with the public whatsoever, there is some evidence to suggest that they did. Most of the journalists interviewed by Jane Curry said that their readers, not the elite, were their source of topics (Curry 1990:114). Journalists said that they received many letters from their readers, and some used readers’ letters in intervention cases. That is, the journalist would act as an

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119 Literacy refers to the number of adults over 15 who are able to read, write and understand short basic texts. (Fischer World Almanac 1998, Fischer, Frankfurt 1997)
117 Fischer World Almanac 1998
120 see chapter 4
intermediary in a dispute. The journalists who took on this role carefully chose institutions and issues which would be likely to respond to intervention, and avoided insoluble bigger problems (Curry 1990:196-7).

Some journalists did respond to public requests, although this was difficult, as it meant resisting the official system. During August 1980, as the Solidarity movement was gathering strength, workers at the Gdansk shipyards and their intellectual supporters called for the official mass media to publish their demands. The Party publications would not, and authorities cut telephone lines and dropped leaflets of anti-strike propaganda.

Following the blackout, some journalists sent a resolution to the SDP complaining about the system of false reporting guidelines and censorship. The newspaper for youth, *Sztandar Młodych*, boldly published the strikers' demands. This encouraged other journalists to become more critical of the Party (Goban-Klas 1994:167). In spite of this, the majority of official publications were still hesitant to report on strikes or the activities of the opposition.

Journalists also encouraged their readers to comment on government policy, and sent these criticisms to the regional or central Party offices, or even state officials (without revealing the identity of the writer). Sometimes these letters brought about change; Curry cites the examples of alimony law and regionalisation of schools which were revised due to journalists' efforts (Curry 1990:179-80).

Another way in which journalists were actively involved with their readers was by actually organising projects for the community and motivating the public to
participate. These usually focussed on regional or local issues, and were carried out by local or regional newspapers. Journalists' action took the form of meetings with locals, or organising a campaign or fundraising project. The action was discussed by the paper's editorial board and the paper staff were all expected to take part (Curry 1990:200).

Intervention initiated by some journalists in the official press enabled public participation and made the government aware that the public would not tolerate every inequality. Official journalists were still viewed as political, out for personal gain (Curry 1990:94). There was no trust in the media; the evening television news was so obviously fabricated that it "did not have to be seen to be disbelieved" (Garton Ash 1983:139).

As noted above, the official newspapers that were more critical, like Polityka and Gazeta Krakowska, sold out quickly, and people queued at kiosks for them as they did for food (Garton Ash 1983:137). But most critical of all were the underground newspapers, which best fulfilled the feedback function.

In the 1970s and 80s, there was a great increase in publications that were not officially registered, and therefore not censored. These were amateur productions, often not more than one or two pages, crudely reproduced by typewriter or mimeograph, and distributed by hand. It was estimated that between August 1980 and December 1981, at the peak of the underground movement, there were about 3200 underground titles in circulation (Giorgi 1995:76).
Robotnik (The Worker), established in 1976, may have been the first of the underground publications. It was a two-page bulletin produced by KOR, the Committee for the Defense of Workers, whose “fundamental task was to convey the truth, since the official press did not fulfil this role” (Goban-Klas 1994:156). Robotnik was not only a source of information, but also a forum for activists calling for political change and democratic values. In 1979, it published a Charter of Workers’ Rights signed by 80 people in 22 cities (Albright 1983:19).

Initially, “Solidarity was a movement of the spoken word”, communicating to workers at strikes, Professor Goban-Klas observed. Solidarity leaders tried to reach larger audiences by using any methods that they were able to access, such as publicising the negotiations with authorities over a shipyard PA system, attaching posters to noticeboards at factories, and broadcasting on foreign radio stations (Goban-Klas 1994:172).

Solidarity repeatedly demanded access to the mass media, which was repeatedly denied by the government. One of Solidarity’s main criticisms was that “the propaganda language, which damages our desired way of expressing thoughts and feelings, is a dangerous pack of lies. Solidarity will seek to give back to society the Polish language that makes it possible for people truly to understand each other” (Goban-Klas 1994:176). Solidarity rejected the language of the official media as un-Polish, which is interesting considering that the official media took pride in its use of language.

Solidarity Press used many letters for the basis of its reports during the 1980s. Curry claims that this “reinforced the image that they had power and authority”
(Curry 1990:198); but more likely, I think, is that this showed that journalists were in touch with the public.

The underground press was concerned with issues that affected its readers, which were not covered by the official media: food shortages, inflation, strikes, and calls for unions. In July 1980, for example, there were strikes in several cities as a reaction against increased food prices. There was no mention of the strikes in the official media for ten days, but KOR publicised the news and foreign media took it up (Goban-Klas 166-7).

One of the KOR publications, Solidarnosc (Solidarity) started out as a strike information bulletin with a circulation of 20,000, and soon became more argumentative and satirical; Solidarity was later the name for the whole movement. What Solidarity achieved was opposition on a mass scale. Solidarity publicised and promoted itself by establishing regional offices and libraries, and its own press and radio. Although Solidarity publications were critical of the government, their demands were usually very cautious.

There was some disagreement amongst Solidarity journalists as to whether they should criticise their own leaders or not, and as to how radical their demands should be. Paradoxically, although committed to truth and democracy, Solidarity was forced to "censor its own members" (Garton Ash 1983:88). This meant preventing Solidarity journalists from becoming too radical in their criticism of both the communists, with whom its leaders wanted to co-operate, and the Solidarity leaders themselves.
However, the workers were opposed to what they saw as "linguistic compromise", and wanted freedom to express opinions. The Solidarity Programme condemned the language of propaganda, and proclaimed that the union would use plain Polish for communication between people, not brainwashing. A Solidarity satire of Communist Party propaganda, the "TV Dictionary", was a guide to understanding official euphemisms: "2 Poles = an illegal gathering; 3 Poles = an illegal demonstration; 10 million Poles = a handful of extremists" (cited in Garton Ash 1983:270).

Solidarity media, unlike the official media, had a social base. The Solidarity movement used the language of nationalism to appeal to everyone; as Polish sociologist Marcin Kula observed, "[n]ational categories were the only common language for the masses" (Kula 1993:192). The communist propaganda of "united workers" had been revealed as false. Instead, Solidarity united people on the basis of their citizenship of the Polish nation. This nationalistic language also had the approval of the Church, and in a nation as deeply religious as Poland, allying with the Church guaranteed support.

As Colin Sparks and Anna Reading (1995:31) point out, Solidarity and other opponents of communism focused on the rather ambiguous goal of "civil society". Karol Jakubowicz observed that this meant the development of an independent media that was representative of the people: "The ideologues of the new information order in Poland ... see communication as empowerment, as the exercise of a right, and satisfaction of a need, to communicate by 'speaking with one's own
voice’, without the need for spokesmen and intermediaries” (cited in Sparks and Reading 1995:38).

Solidarity’s demands at the Round Table Talks reflected such views, as they called for one television and one television channel to be made available to social groups. However, the changes to the mass media did not take the course that opposition leaders had planned. Instead, the television and radio board continued to consist of political appointments (Sparks and Reading 1995:41), and the press, as we have seen, was simply privatised. Therefore, the goal of a more representative, ‘socially responsible’ media has been difficult to realise.

9.3 1990s Poland and the Media

To return to the issue of the decline in newspaper readership, we will now examine social changes in postcommunist Poland. Analysing these changes can help us to understand the changing patterns of media use.

As Ryszard Filas points out, it is difficult to analyse the readership of the Polish press. Publishers usually provide statistics that are a little optimistic, to attract advertising. “Circulation” may be quite a high figure, but this simply refers to the number of copies produced, and does not account for the copies that were not sold (Filas 1999:215). Therefore, the surveys made by the Press Research Centre (OBP) in Krakow and the official polling agency, CBOS, are a more reliable source of information.
Filas divides readership trends in the 1990s into four phases, possibly five (1996, the year the study was completed, may have marked the beginning of a new phase, but this could not be assessed at the time).

- The first phase (1989-90) was characterised by suspicion of new publications, but readership of previously established daily newspapers, especially regional papers, remained stable. The number of people who never read the press at all almost doubled, going from 9% to 17%.

- During the second phase (1990), readership of national dailies increased. There was a much larger choice of publications available.

- The third press readership phase, lasting until 1993, was one of fewer regular readers, with people reading more weekly and monthly publications, but not consistently. Fewer dailies were read regularly. However, more people read "older" publications (those that had been established in communist times) - many of which were being re-styled. There was also an increase in the number of non-readers.

- This continued into the fourth phase (until 1995), but more people read national newspapers than local and regional papers. The beginning of what may be a fifth phase (1996) is characterised by even more non-readers (16.8%) and more readers of scandal-and-gossip magazines; the gap between the top three newspapers and the others remains large (Filas 1999:214-31).
• OBOP polls conducted in July 1997 found that people are tending to stick with one daily newspaper or weekly journal, and are not interested in trying new ones (Drab 1998). This makes it very hard for new titles to succeed - unless they are women's weekly or monthly magazines. The numbers of these continue to increase. Eight of the top ten magazines are women's, the remaining two are television guides.

As the chart below (Figure 3) illustrates, Gazeta Wyborcza quickly attained a leading position amongst national dailies, which reached its peak in 1992, when the paper had 25% of the market share. It has retained its leading position, but its two distinctive rivals, Super Express and Rzeczpospolita, are gaining. The tabloid Express Wieczorny and Przeglad Sportowy (the oldest sports paper, established in 1921, and now partly owned by Marquard) are also catching up. Other popular titles are Dziennik Zachodni (Eastern Daily), Trybuna Slaska, Gazeta Pomorska and Glos Wielkopolski, which are all regional newspapers.

A distinctive development is the drop in readership of older titles that had very high circulations under communism, such as Gromada Rolnik-Polski (Group of Polish Farmers), Sztandar Mlodych (Banner of the Youth), and Trybuna (previously Trybuna Ludu). Trybuna had a much higher circulation than any other newspaper in the 1980s (over a million in 1980).

However, any figures from the communist era need to be regarded with suspicion. Newspapers were purchased almost exclusively through subscriptions, and the state-run kiosks did not always have all newspapers on offer. Trybuna was the official mouthpiece of the Communist Party, so it was made widely available and
printed in large quantities. Therefore *Trybuna* should not be seen as a "popular" newspaper, just one that the greatest number of people had access to.

The statistics above require some further interpretation. The first thing to note is, as mentioned above, that the difference between rich and poor has become more distinct in Poland since the disintegration of communism. However, these changes are not confined to small groups at either end of the spectrum. It is significant that for the majority of people, living standards declined in the 1990s – real wages fell and perceptions of economic development became more negative (Juchler 1994:269-77). With less money to spend overall, people also have less to spend on daily newspapers, or those who bought more than one magazine buy only one. This may also account for the growing group of non-readers.

Two other variables that affect newspaper readership are education and age. As Dorota Ubysz (1999) observes, “The main factor stimulating press readership in Poland is the education of society. Dailies are especially popular among readers with a college education. High income and the young and middle-aged sectors of society also have more contact with the press.” The percentage of Poles with university degrees in 1990-1 was only 12.9%. By 1997-8, 29.2 percent of Poles had a degree (Ubysz 1999). According to this analysis, daily readership should increase.

Along with socio-economic changes, changes in values are also of interest for a more detailed analysis of media use in Poland. Examining these changes together with political transformations and media consumer trends provides us with a more comprehensive picture of Polish society.
Sociologist Marek Ziolkowski argues that a “new normative order” has emerged in Poland in the 1990s. This consists of both values and interests, and the accepted means of their realisation. Ziolkowski describes values as subjective ideals of morally just behaviour, desirable for a functioning social order at the macro level and decent life at the micro level. Interests, on the other hand, are strategies which enable one group or individual to achieve their goals (Ziolkowski 1995:165).

In 1989, a Pole’s interests and values depended on his or her experience of the old system, but with time these changed in response to different social conditions, Ziolkowski believes. Under what is known as the “transformation honeymoon” beginning in 1990, the values of independence, democracy, freedom, and overcoming the old regime, were shared by Polish society. It was a “time of social mobilization, optimism, hope, and revolutionary enthusiasm” (Ziolkowski 1995:167).

During this time, the government was able to implement more wide-ranging reforms than were possible later, due to the high level of trust, Ziolkowski points out. It was in this context that the fastest steps were taken to transform the media, as the liquidation process began and new media laws were passed. This corresponds to Filas’ second phase, during which newspaper readership increased. It is likely that people bought newspapers during this time because they were interested in finding out about the political and economic changes that were taking place in Poland.

However, once the “honeymoon” was over, “everyday drudgery” set in. Living standards fell as the cost of living rose. The enthusiasm wore off, and values and
interests began to divide. This coincides with Juchler's observation that politics had become more factionalised - minor political parties splintered off from the original groupings, and new parties (like the Party of Laughter, the Survival Party and the Beer Party) registered (Juchler 1994:248).

Voter turnout for the second free elections in 1991 was only 43%. After these elections, 29 parties were represented in parliament. Unlike the communist era, when the world could be divided into communist and non-communist, the post-communist world was fragmented, without identifiable "goodies" and "baddies". From this period, four different systems of values and interests can be identified according to Ziolkowski.

Ziolkowski's four "systems of normative order" do not characterise society as a whole, but are competing, coexisting systems which are manifest in a variety of ways, with different groups exhibiting these interests and values at different times. We can identify them in electoral choices, consumer trends, and importantly for this study, in the "social communicative space" (Ziolkowski 1995:169).

1. "Classical" dilemmas, discussions about the socio-cultural and political order are seen as important; these are regarded in terms of values.

2. There is an economic focus, where material concerns take priority. People question the shape of the economic system and their place in it. Although their goals are pragmatic, people lack sufficient pragmatism to realise them.

3. There is concern with the fiscal system, and questions of the extent of state intervention, with the realisation of the collective economy.
4. Non-material values are the main concern, such as the protection of the environment, minority rights, and sexual equality.

The first system, Ziolkowski says, characterised many of the debates held in the social communicative space. The debate over the political order (before the extreme fragmentation of politics) was divided into two polarities, authority (law and order”) and democracy. The Catholic church also discussed Christian values in this style. The position and interests of Poland in the world were debated by politicians, intellectuals, and the media, whether Poland should take a national or international focus. This system was dominant in political rhetoric, public debate and mass media content before the second elections in 1993 (Ziolkowski 1995:172).

The decline in the first system was marked by an increase in the fourth: representatives of various social movements emerged and the subjects of debate shifted to these “post-materialist, alternative” concerns. However, this system did not guide all activities, especially not in the political sphere. In fact, seen from a statistical point of view, the numbers of people actually participating in these new social movements were very limited.

At the time Ziolkowski made these observations, in 1995, the second and third systems predominated in the social consciousness. Most people were interested in problems of an economic nature, and feel that the construction of a new society has lost its axiological and ideological dimensions. At first, the development of a capitalist economy was just one aspect of the democratisation process, with the values of freedom, pluralism and equality just as important. However, these values are no longer seen “as values in their own right but merely as instruments” -
according to a 1992 survey, 46% of Poles said that democracy was only worthwhile if it led to prosperity, and only 18% saw it as an important part of the political system (Ziolkowski 1995:174).

This theory is supported by another sociologist, Witold Morawski, who found that democratic values have become less important as political aims. In a 1980 survey asking people what they thought were the most important political aims, 22% of Poles replied “to give people more say in the decisions of government, and 17% said “to protect freedom of speech”; in 1993, these figures were 15.8% and 4.6%, with most people answering that maintaining order in the city and fighting rising prices were most important (Morawski 1994:26).

Ziolkowski suggests that economic and welfare goals are often defined in discussion, but not the means to achieving them; they are often seen in emotional or irrational terms. He conjectures that people are likely to be receptive to imported mass culture with its materialistic values (Ziolkowski 1995:177). This trend can be seen as corresponding with Filas' fourth phase - people are interested in gossip about the rich and famous, and envy their material possessions and lifestyle. This affects teenagers too, who prefer the trendiness of imported magazines to the Polish equivalents.

Three years later, Ziolkowski observed that consumption had grown in significance. The greater choice of goods available only gave people a sense of deprivation and “something lacking” if they could not afford these things. New divisions in society have emerged as a result of consumerism: the “consumer class”, for whom buying gives a sense of belonging, the “consumer underclass”, who
cannot afford to belong, and the “consumer elite”, who can afford luxury goods (Ziolkowski 1998:36).

As Ziolkowski points out, the mass media have encouraged, even determined consumer needs, as their content is increasingly dominated by advertisements, quizzes, competitions, and give-aways. The media are interested either in the consumer class or the consumer elite - because advertisers are. Advertising has increased noticeably in the Polish mass media in the past decade.121

Advertisers, Ralph Negrine noted, are interested in readers with buying power, so they will favour the ‘quality’ press even though the space will cost them more.

“One effect of this is to force the quality press ‘up-market’ so as to serve the wealthy reader” (Negrine 1994:67). The content becomes biased; moreover advertising creates some sections such as travel, motoring, and fashion. It suits newspapers to see their readers as elites because elites have more money.122

*Gazeta Wyborcza* is a good example of this. Most of its extra supplements were created as advertisements, or as a vehicle for them. Like *Super Express* and *Express Wieczorny*, it aims at the consumer class and those who would like to be in it.

*Rzeczpospolita’s* supplements focussing on law and money are obviously aimed at the kind of people its advertising caters for - the consumer elite. It is hard to separate the growth of consumer trends from the media - it becomes a chicken and egg question of whether the media are observing and serving an existing consumer need, or whether they are in fact creating it.

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121 See chapter 7.7 above
122 Examples of advertorials aimed at the consumer elite are also discussed in chapter 7.7
An example of the press both responding to and contributing to consumer trends is its part in the gambling and lottery-playing craze. "Zdrapki", or scratch-cards (of the silver-covered match-the-symbols-and-win variety), were used by many newspapers in the early 1990s to attract readers. The Lodz daily *Express Ilustrowany*, owned by the French Hersant publishing company, was the initiator of the newspaper scratch-card competition in 1991. The newspaper's sales went up so markedly that other papers including *Super Express, Zycie Warszawy* and *Kurier Polski* thought they would try it too. The idea seemed a certain way of increasing sales, for not only were new readers attracted to the paper because of the contest and prizes, but also because many people began buying more copies to have a better chance of winning (*The Warsaw Voice*, September 27, 1998, no.39 (518)).

*Super Express* now has regular competitions which involve filling in coupons inside the paper. The competitions are advertised in large letters on the front page accompanied by pictures of prizes. *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Express Wieczorny* also offer competitions, in the form of phone-in give-aways.

The competition craze has many forms, with a variety of companies organising competitions usually based on answering questions about their product. Television phone-in quizzes are a common part of an evening's viewing on the commercial stations, as is the traditional lottery draw. Lotteries seem to be very popular, judging from the amounts that are played for. This appears to support Ziolkowski's observations about the increasingly materialistic aims of many Poles.

The number of television programme guides that are sold each week compared to serious newspapers suggests that many people are more interested in watching
television than reading newspapers, which would support the third hypothesis proposed above. Filas suggests that television is preferable because people have less free time, and television is a less demanding way of spending it than reading (Filas 1999:230). Also, in the case of news, television news programmes quickly summarise the main points in half an hour, whereas reading the details of the same information in a newspaper may take much longer.

To deal with the challenge of television, many publications have reduced the amount of information in their articles and substituted it with pictures. *Super Express* and *Express Wieczorny* are the most obvious examples of this. Also, the information is sometimes presented in boxes next to the text, bearing some resemblance to a television screen (Falkowska 1992, cited in Filas 1999:230). The weekly newsmagazines *Wprost* and *Polityka* often use this layout. Serious newspapers like *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Rzeczpospolita* deliberately avoid colour, information boxes, and short articles, as they target readers who prefer more detailed information.123

Newspapers may take these strategies with a target group of readers in mind, but are they responding to this group, or creating it? Are journalists even aware of what the public think of them? We need to answer the second question in order to consider the first. Opinion polls might not be accurate, but they still provide a rough idea of what people think. According to an opinion poll conducted by CBOS polling centre in mid-1996, public opinion of journalists seems to be quite high on

123 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998, and Interview 4, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
one hand, but disappointing on the other. On the positive side, 73% of the people surveyed saw journalists as “well-educated”, and 58% described them as “honest”.

When asked the question “what should a good journalist have?”, the most frequently given response was “impartiality”. This again supports the association of journalism with objectivity. According to the public (or the majority of people), as well as most journalists, the role of the journalist is to be objective.

However, only 39% think journalists are objective, and 36% think journalists are biased. Therefore, for many people, bias is not necessarily a sign of dishonesty. Unfortunately, people have other reasons for not trusting journalists. Only 48% believed that journalists are actually “familiar with the things they write about” (The Warsaw Voice, August 11, 1996, no.32 (407)).

It is interesting to compare these results with what journalists themselves imagine the public think of them. Andrzej Potocki and Lukasz Warzecha, of Zycie daily, felt that journalism was prestigious. Warzecha added that “the proof of it is, if I want something and I go to a shop, when I show my press card, it’s always much easier to get it.” Potocki maintained that in spite of this, people do not have a high opinion of journalists. “Above all, simple people don’t approve. This is because of the flood of lies. People think that journalists are liars in general and they don’t differentiate between lying journalists and good journalists.”

Potocki said that in fact, the public opinion of journalists was a paradox, as people could respect journalists, but did not like them. Potocki illustrated this with a

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124 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
hypothesised situation: if he should meet, for example, an old man, the man might shake his hand in awe and be excited to be meeting a journalist, but as soon as Potocki turned his back, the man would mutter something insulting about journalists.\textsuperscript{125}

Tomasz Sommer thinks that journalists are not regarded as a prestigious group, but perhaps a few of the more famous are viewed as prestigious. Maria Kruczkowska believes journalism is one of the more prestigious occupations, “less than businessman but more than teacher, university professor … People trust it, as it is one of the institutions that is most trusted after the church. Radio is trusted more than the press, but still.” But she also said that Polish people were not inclined to trust the press because of “stories about press manipulation” and could see that the press was politically biased.\textsuperscript{126}

Considering that journalists’ perceptions of their social status are so vague, we may well ask if journalists know who their readers are. There is certainly an attempt by many publications to find out. The Polish market research organisation SMG/KRC lists as its clients \textit{Super Express, Tygodnik Powszechny, Rzeczpospolita, Wprost, Zycie Warszawy}, and the publishers Marquard, Gruener + Jahr, Bauer, Springer and Orkla. The majority of journalists I interviewed had some kind of target audience in mind when writing their articles, but none of them were exactly sure who reads their publication.

\textsuperscript{125} ibid.
\textsuperscript{126} Interview 8, Warsaw, 11\textsuperscript{th} December 1998
Asked if he knew who read *Super Express*, Tomasz Sommer replied, “Yes, it’s the regular Pole,” but admitted that “none of us knows exactly who reads this paper. But rather low-income, not very well-educated people, generally not very old, about 30, 40.” Sommer said that there were about 10,000 letters from readers a day, but he does not have any contact with them, as reading letters was not his task.\(^{127}\)

*Polityka* journalists also face the problem of having too many readers to be able to identify with. Moreover, the information that they have about their readers suggests that there are two distinct groups, which could be hard to address with the same topics. “We have, according to polls, about one million readers for each edition. So it’s very hard to imagine one reader,” Artur Gorski pointed out.

“Our readers are, firstly, very old people, who remember us from the period when we were established, and secondly, very young readers. I could say that we are the most popular youth paper in Poland. It’s funny but it’s true. There are two absolutely different audiences,” Gorski said. Therefore, he does not write with a reader in mind. “I write for myself, hoping that if it is good quality, and if it is, it will sell,” he said.\(^{128}\)

Even at the smaller journals, it is not easy for the journalists to know exactly who their readers are. Journalists themselves do not deal with readers’ letters, leaving this task to secretaries or “letters editors” who make a selection of letters suitable for publication. Tomasz Wiscicki of *Wiez* said, “I wouldn’t say we have much contact,

\(^{127}\) Interview 5, Warsaw, 9\(^{th}\) December 1998

\(^{128}\) Interview 3, Warsaw, 8\(^{th}\) December 1998
but we have some. We have letters of course, and some events which they could attend.\textsuperscript{129}

Although the journalists' ideas of their readers often seemed vague, nearly all of them felt that they were writing for a high-status group of readers - readers they saw as influential. This supposed high-status group could be the high-income consumer elite discussed above. However, the journalists' perception of their readers as an elite also reveals some of their assumptions of journalism's role.

Only \textit{Super Express} journalist Tomasz Sommer admitted to a humble audience. The "regular Pole" was described by Sommer as a member of a low socio-economic group: "rather low-income, not very well-educated people, generally not very old, about 30, 40." Sommer said that \textit{Super Express} was competing for readers with \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza}, "because they also have quite a high readership of people with a low education."\textsuperscript{130}

However, \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza}'s editors do not see their group of readers as those with a low education - on the contrary. Maria Kruczkowska asserts, "our readers are rather well-educated, from the intelligentsia, in the eastern European sense of the word, young and middle-aged, rather men than women ... and rather well-off, west-oriented, because we have a lot of foreign pages..."\textsuperscript{131}

Łukasz Warzecha and Andrzej Potocki of \textit{Zycie} also have a picture of \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza} readers as members of the intelligentsia, the same group of readers they are targeting. "Both \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza} and \textit{Zycie} are very influential in opinion-

\textsuperscript{129} Interview 2, Warsaw, 7th December 1998
making, so if they both get their message through it's to the intelligentsia.” Potocki said he targeted people who had a different point of view from his own: “It’s useless trying to convince people who have the same views as ours.”

By contrast, Tomasz Wiscicki of Wiez does not attempt to attract a wider readership, as he sees that this is no longer possible. “We are read by those people who more or less agree with us,” Wiscicki said. However, he also suggests that this is an influential audience. “I think that the majority are Catholics, but we try to retain the others, because what is particularly needed now is to maintain this dialogue between different groups in the church. Before, there were different groups, but we were united. Now there is no longer an external reason for us to unite.”

Tygodnik Powszechny is in a similar situation. Adam Szostkiewicz said that there was a niche for the weekly, but it would be unlikely that it could acquire more readers. “I think that as far as I can tell, we have between ten and fifteen percent of the new readers aged between fifteen and twenty-five. It’s not a big hope, but there are new readers coming. These are very specific readers. We are talking about a society in which not less than ten percent of the people have a tertiary education. It’s a big problem. For that ten percent of educated people, there are so many publications that compete with each other.”

130 Interview 5, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
131 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
132 Interview 7, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
133 Interview 2, Warsaw, 7th December 1998
134 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
One of these publications is *Wiez*, according to Tomasz Wiscicki. “Our monthly is not an easy one, so I am quite sure that our readers are people of high education. We made a survey - which is not true to sociological methodology - but anyway we can tell that our readers are different ages, live in different towns and even in the country, are of high education.”

Szostkiewicz sees *Tygodnik Powszechny* readers as a small, but significant group: “The bulk of our readers are 35 to 55, people who are prime targets: very active, in important positions, established, having an influence in their communities, which is also important. This is still a very influential paper - of course, within small circles, but the circles of decision-makers. ... this is a paradox: a small paper that's still a major voice - at least, within the chattering classes.”

*Rzeczpospolita* also claims that its readers are the cream of society. “Our readers are not the average, but rather the elite of society,” managing editor Robert Lutomski believes. “Our main readership consists of highly-ranked specialists in administration, industry, and so on. Compared with the nationwide education level, we have the highest average of people with high education.” The newspaper targets this group of readers by bearing in mind that “they are very critical and very well educated. They don’t need to have such easy information. The information should be in-depth, with background, and so on.”

It is clear that there are some groups who are not served by the mainstream media, and have responded by establishing titles of their own. These groups reflect what

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135 Interview 2, Warsaw, 7th December 1998
136 Interview 1, Krakow, 30th October 1998
Ziolkowski has called “the post-materialist system of values”. Environmental interest groups have published newspapers such as *Eko u nas, Ekopartner*, and *Zielony Sztandar*, which examine ecological problems. *Zielony Sztandar* (Green flag) looks at political issues from an environmentalist perspective.

_Gazeta Wyborcza*’s Maria Kruczkowska believes that “Poland is a male country in the public eye; it is also dominated by young males and their interests – spy stories, military stories.” Particularly at the foreign desk, Kruczkowska feels that such stories are preferred, as “it’s a question of what policy we have at the desk, and that policy is to cover mainly political and diplomatic stories - we don’t take social subjects, but military operations or international relations. It’s rather a masculine desk; there are not a lot of cultural, social, or economic issues.”

Kruczkowska’s opinion that *Gazeta Wyborcza* favours a male readership is supported by the SMG/KRC market research organisation’s surveys of national daily readership. According to SMG/KRC, *Gazeta Wyborcza, Super Express, Zycie, Trybuna* and *Gazeta Rolnicza* all had notable majorities of male readers. *Rzeczpospolita* and *Nasz Dziennik* had very marginal majorities of female readers (SMG/KRC 1999).

*Gazeta Wyborcza*’s new women’s colour supplement, *Wysokie Obcasy* (High heels), launched in April 1999, claims to bring women’s interests into the newspaper. This is, however, a space for advertisements rather than a feminist discursive space - it resembles a women’s magazine, featuring fashion, culture,

137 Interview 4, Warsaw, 9th December 1998
138 Interview 8, Warsaw, 11th December 1998
health and beauty, psychology and cooking. The first issue shows that it is concerned with promoting consumer products rather than women's rights: 17 of its 64 pages were advertisements.

Out of the mainstream media, there are publications concerned with women's rights: there are several feminist newsletters and *Kobiety online*, a journal of feminist issues, on the internet.

Besides publications which are more socially concerned, there are now a variety of non-mainstream e-journals, catering for anarchists, model makers, yoga practitioners, chess players, internet surfers, computer nerds, and astrologers, to name but a few.\(^{139}\)

### 9.4 Summary

Can we conclude that Polish journalists are responsive to their audiences? Journalists may state that they are writing for a target audience, but as Alan Bell has pointed out, we do not really know if the people that are targeted are actually reading, and nor do we know who is and why. Journalists themselves have difficulties in identifying with their readers.

Although letters from readers are welcomed at all of the publications surveyed, these are not dealt with by the journalists themselves. Apart from the fact that the number of letters makes it impossible for each journalist to look at each letter,

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\(^{139}\) A large selection are listed at [http://www.insidepoland.com/news](http://www.insidepoland.com/news)
journalists do not regard it as part of their task to take readers' letters into account. Letters chosen for publication generally do not reflect criticism from readers, or viewpoints that contradict the newspaper's.

Because of the large percentage of income from advertising that characterises most of the publications in Poland, the type of audience that is targeted is more likely to be chosen on the grounds of what will bring the most profitable advertising. However, as I have pointed out, Polish print media exist in a niche market, with low levels of readership overall. Therefore, newspapers and magazines have only a limited amount of room to manoeuvre, and favouring a desired group of readers could alienate existing readers. This is why some of the smaller newspapers, like Tygodnik Powszechny and Wiez, prefer to keep to the same style and content, and have not succumbed to the advertisers. By contrast, some of the larger publications, like Gazeta Wyborcza, Rzeczpospolita and Wprost, have been actively involved in creating markets for advertisers.

As this chapter has shown, press readership changes cannot be explained simply in terms of circulation. In a more open media system, media use is a reflection of social and cultural trends. In Poland, national and local daily readership has declined for the reasons mentioned above: first, because of their lack of disposable income, and second, because of their preference for television. And thirdly, people who seek an alternative to the mainstream national and regional dailies choose to read special interest magazines and journals.

In communist Poland, people believed that the role of the journalist should be simply to inform, to tell them what was really happening in Poland and the world.
However, the official media were not seen to be performing this role, which is where the underground media took over. In Poland today, the desired role for a journalist is still that of an objective reporter, although what exactly people want from the media depends on their own interests, and the extent to which they are able to choose in the first place.
10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The Polish Media System

Dennis McQuail observed in *Media Performance, Mass Communication and the Public Interest*, "Unfortunately, the attachment to the notion of “freedom from the state” and other forms of structural pressures such as owners, sources, and the like, may have diverted attention away from an equally important criterion of “freedom for” such things as diversity, and equality of access to a wide range of media content as well as communication structures" (cited in Negrine 1994:27). This point is certainly relevant to Poland, for although there is now less regulation by the state than under communism, this has been replaced by other forms of regulation which limit media content in different ways.

This research has addressed the problems of how to describe a media system, and what the journalist’s role is in that media system, using Poland as a case study. To begin with, the concept of “transition”, which has been applied to postcommunist societies, was discussed, and proved difficult to apply. The present cannot be separated from the past, nor can a predicted outcome determine the present. Terms such as “freedom” and “control” are also not applicable, as the reality is somewhere in between. The concept of a “free” media, as the second chapter pointed out, is an ideal that is based on political and economic categories. Also, this is a subjective term which implies a positive state. Instead, the terms “open” and “closed” can be used to describe media systems.
This study proposed a theory of media systems that begins with the society and its political and social institutions, the processes of change in that society, and its culture. Such a theory would include the consumers, as well as the producers, of media content. This was outlined in the third chapter.

In describing media systems as open or closed, the difference is seen in terms of orientation rather than politics or economics. A closed system is therefore characterised by an attempt to stem the flow of information, eliminate input that is external to the system and determine its entire content. An open system, by contrast, is one in which there are multiple channels of communication and potential for change.

Three factors involved in analysing media systems are accessibility, referring to the availability of the mass media to the public; reciprocity, the extent to which media represent, respond to and reflect their interests; and regulation, the patterns that determine how the mass media operate.

Poland was chosen as the case study for this research because of its particularly interesting past two decades characterised by dramatic economic changes, a famous resistance movement with an underground media, and some slight deviations from the usual communist pattern (less repressive, less politically united). In the communist era, the Polish media system could be described as an “imperfect version of the closed system”.

Not only the media system, but the social system as a whole, was closed off to any kind of external influence. Social institutions could only relate to each other in a
very simple hierarchical way. Each component of this system was delegated a function by the authoritarian government, and expected to perform it. The function of the media was to report only what the communist party wanted the public to hear. Therefore, the official communication process was one-way, largely disregarding Polish people’s interests and the outside world. However, the system weakened when it was no longer able to continue functioning in this manner.

However, the Polish media system was not completely closed, because within the system there was an oppositional culture, and an alternative media operating outside official influence. Also, Poland was not closed to the outside world. New ideas and alternative cultures from the west crossed Poland’s borders. It would be an exaggeration to say that the Polish media system broke down, because although it underwent great changes, it continued to function.

Poland’s current media system could be described as an open system, because although some restrictions exist, there is no attempt to disconnect Poland from the outside world, or imposed barriers which prevent people from accessing information. In the print media, politically diverse publications are now legally available. However, this does not mean that the Polish media system is one devoid of any problems. This description of the Polish media system - not be confused with the idea of “free” media – was based on the observations outlined in the remainder of the research.
Firstly, as the fifth chapter explained, legal changes were certainly made after the first free elections were held, but the reality failed to live up to the Constitution’s guarantee of freedom of speech. Censorship was immediately abolished, but laws on state secrets were not. Secrets laws and libel laws, which hinder political criticism, can be seen as a form of censorship. Therefore, the Polish media system is not entirely open.

Secondly, politicians are in a position to employ means other than legal to regulate the media. The fact that the media are no longer state-owned does not mean that there is less political engagement. Interaction between politicians and journalists has been a consistent practice in Poland throughout the past two decades. In communist Poland, Communist Party leaders manipulated the media by making political appointments to editorial positions on newspapers.

Connections between press and politics continue, although Poland is now politically divided. A variety of relationships between journalists and politicians exist in Poland, as discussed in the sixth chapter. The many links between politics and the press benefit both sides, but not the public, as these arrangements make for a politically biased media.

Thirdly, the print media in Poland today may no longer be owned by a single dominant political party, but this is no guarantee that they will be subject to fewer restrictions. Owners of newspapers, with different political-ideological or economic interests, have their own policies regarding newspaper management, described in the seventh chapter. In 1990s Poland, a newspaper’s success depends on its ability to survive the market, by finding a niche or attracting the advertisers.
Finally, chapter nine pointed out that the idea of “freedom of choice” does not apply to the media in Poland. The broadcast media are available in most, but not all regions of Poland. Print media would be widely accessible, due to the high level of national literacy, but the number of titles vary, according to region. Moreover, the standard of living in Poland is not luxurious enough for many people to purchase print media regularly, or to purchase more than one title.

Media content addresses urban, rather than rural, concerns. However, this is not a deliberate attempt to isolate some regions, but a result of the urban location and orientation of media organisations. There are options for the public to respond to print media content. However, criticism from the public was not published in the titles surveyed. Journalists are rarely in contact with their readers.

Overall, the Polish media should not be viewed negatively. The print media are not “free”, but neither are they “repressed”. Political criticism is possible, although still potentially problematic. Journalists have the option of defending themselves with the “freedom of the press” rhetoric, which can earn the support of their colleagues or at least more publicity.

Although political bias characterises the Polish media, there is no overall dominating bias in favour of one party over another, and there are also newspapers which are not interested in politics. Journalists are expected to adhere to their organisation’s individual guidelines rather than the universal restrictions on information that characterise a closed system.
10.2 The Role of the Journalist

The second question addressed by this research is what the role of the journalist is in the media system. To understand the role of the journalist in the media system, journalists in Poland were asked this question in interviews. However, as outlined in chapter two, the definition of a "role" depends on the perspective it is viewed from. Therefore, this research analysed the role of the journalist in the media system as it is viewed by journalists themselves, the public, and politicians.

According to journalists, their role is to "report the news" or "tell the truth", acting as a communicator of vital information. Journalists assume that their role is central to the process of media content production, shown by their belief that they had the power to contribute to or restrict press freedom, and to choose whether or not to be "objective". Moreover journalists also feel that their opinions are an important contribution to society.

Journalists believe that their role should be an objective one, as this response was given repeatedly by the journalists interviewed. The public, too, expect the role of the journalist to be that of objective reporter. However, both public and journalists recognise that the reality does not live up to the ideal. There is also a belief amongst journalists that having an opinion is either necessary or unavoidable, and even that it is very "Polish". Therefore, the role of the journalist is somewhat confused, for the expectations and the function do not, and cannot, merge.

The idea of "objectivity" is the 1990s equivalent of "professionalism" in the 1980s. It gives journalists authority, in the form of an often-used word, which in recurring
continuously reinforces their identity as professionals. Chapter eight focused on the influence of the profession of journalism in reinforcing such ideas. However, while journalists in communist Poland shared the unique and difficult situation of choosing between the interests of the public or the Party, journalists are now divided, by political interests and organisational aims. Some are more loyal to their paper than others; some are still fighting for democracy, while others have embraced capitalism.

Journalists are divided not only by their political beliefs and approaches to their work, but also by their attitudes towards journalism itself. The journalist’s position has not been made any clearer by ambiguous media laws, inconsistent standards of journalism education, and the lack of a unified journalists’ organisation – issues which have been addressed in chapters five and eight of this research.

It is clear that Polish journalists feel that “objectivity” and “truth” are under their control, and that a condition of “freedom” exists which enables them to pursue these noble ideals. However, in open media systems, there are many possibilities, not all of them beneficial to the journalist. Again, this distinguishes the concept of an open system from a “free” system.

In Poland, the role of the journalist is limited in practice. As this study has shown, the journalist is only a small part of a system that is largely beyond his or her control. To start with, the journalist is simply an employee of a media organisation, and must obey the organisation to remain employed, as chapter seven pointed out.
Moreover, that organisation is in turn regulated by internal and external forces—financial considerations, “market realities”, deadlines, staff co-operation, managerial and editorial decisions, and normative guidelines which are determined by the nature of the society, discussed in chapters five to nine. What may be perceived as “freedom” is in fact limited by legal regulations (chapter five), political influences (chapter six), ownership and organisational structures (chapter seven), and even their own profession’s ethics (chapter eight).

Also, we should add to this list outside interests other than politicians—the producers of consumer goods and their advertisers, and sources and their managers (chapter seven). These interests have a significant impact on the way media organisations, and consequently journalists, work.

All of these factors make it clear that journalists in Poland are not more “free” under capitalism than they were under communism. The Polish media system has changed, but in a more complex way than a “transition” from one state to another. It is now regulated by different conditions, because it is part of a more open society. Poland is still changing, as is Polish journalism—caught up in the communist past while catching up with the capitalist present.
11 BIBLIOGRAPHY


FIGURES

Figure 1

Foreign Investment in the Press in Poland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Investment (millions)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Passauer Neue Presse</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td>Orkla Media</td>
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</tr>
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<td>US West</td>
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<td>H. Bauer Verlag</td>
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<td>GTE International</td>
<td>26.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juerg Marquard</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnier</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Gruener + Jahr</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italtest International</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.R. Donnelley</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2

1997 Revenue of Publishing Companies in Poland

- % from press sales
- % from advertising
Figure 3

Daily Newspapers' Market Share

Percentage of market


Trybuna (Ld.)
Gazeta Wyborcza
Rzeczpospolita
Stanowi Modyn
Kurier Polski
Express Wiosenny
Sroda Slaski
Zycie Warszawy
Polska Zroda
Gazeta Wyborcza
Super Express
Nowy Swiat
Express Ilustrowany
Nov Europa
Gazeta Polska
Gazeta Wyborcza
Gazeta Polska
Gazeta Polska