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Journalism under Siege: An Investigation into How Journalists in Macedonia Understand Professionalism and Their Role in the Development of Democracy

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Katerina Spasovska entitled "Journalism under Siege: An Investigation into How Journalists in Macedonia Understand Professionalism and Their Role in the Development of Democracy." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communication and Information.

Peter Gross, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Catherine A. Luther, Benjamin J. Bates, and Anthony J. Nownes

Accepted for the Council:

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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Carolyn R. Hodges
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

Journalism under Siege:
**An Investigation into How Journalists in Macedonia Understand Professionalism and
Their Role in the Development of Democracy**

A Dissertation
Presented for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Katerina Spasovska

August, 2011

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful family – my husband, Iso Rusi; my 6-year-old daughter, Sara; and my 3-year-old son, Aljosha. Your love, encouragement, patience, and support made possible the successful completion of this project. I am eternally thankful for each of you.

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willingness to devote time to me are appreciated. I hope you and other journalists and media scholars in Macedonia find this study beneficial. I would like to thank my parents Dafina and Trajan Spasovski and my sisters Svetlana and Vesna for encouraging me to pursue my dreams and believing in me all the way. I would also want to thank my colleagues and friends Allyson de Vito, Arsev Umur Aydinoglu, Lei Wu, and Charlie Gee for their support throughout my studies. Special thanks to my friends Joey Kok and Pam Strickland who patiently copy edited the numerous drafts of this manuscript.

Abstract

The financial decline of the traditional media; technological advances and 24/7 news cycles; and the rise of new media are transforming journalism in ways that are seen as problematic and leading towards less professional practices. In Eastern Europe this transformation tops off the still ongoing systemic transformation from communist systems, ongoing since the late 1980s.

This study examines how journalists in Macedonia perceive their profession today, what they consider professional journalism, and how they define their role in Macedonian society and democracy. Macedonian media system is fragmented and financially fragile, providing an opening for political and business influence. Foreign capital in the media market is limited and only present in the print media. The ethnic diversity of the country is reflected in the mass media, thus there are number of media working in languages other than Macedonian.

The research takes a humanistic approach, employing grounded theory. The researcher discovered five themes in the analysis of interviews with 32 participants: (1) Ideal vs. reality, or when journalists do not behave according to professional standards, even as they define them; (2) Self-censorship, as a rule; (3) The blame game, with older journalists blaming younger journalists, and vice versa, for the problems experienced in journalism; (4) Education, the acknowledged and ignored problem; and (5) Agents of change that cannot change anything, another exhibit of the tensions between the ideal and desired journalistic roles, and reality. These themes constitute the theoretical framework of journalism in transformation.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades journalism and the media business have been undergoing profound changes. The financial decline of the traditional media, technological changes, the rise of new media, and deregulation and introduction of new communication laws are transforming journalism (PEW 2010 State of the Media Report). Some of the effects of that transformation are still unstudied. The newer studies show that in changing newsrooms journalists are faced with economic pressures to produce more content with fewer people (Beam, Weaver, Brownlee, 2009) and researchers are talking about a process of de-professionalization of journalists in various countries (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes & Wilhoit, 2007; Witschge & Nygren, 2009; Volek, 2010). Political and ideological (professional and cultural ideology) influences on journalists and the media are noted in a large body of literature as impacting both news content and journalistic performance (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; McQuail, 2000; Deuze, 2008; Hanitzsch et al., 2010).

The transformation¹ of the post-socialist countries was so multi-layered and complex that is hard to pin-point one specific model applicable to all. Jakubowicz and Sukosd (2008) write that there were three or four transformations in post-communist societies in the context of the

¹ In Macedonia, the term transition and transformation is used interchangeably. However, Jakubowicz (2007) and other scholars studying the process of change in Eastern Europe make a distinction between transition and transformation. Transition marks the brief period immediately preceding and following the collapse of the communist system. Transformation follows after transition and refers to the systemic social transformation of the post-communist societies. The researcher adopts this definition, because this term is more holistic, addressing society as a whole and not just the changes in the media and journalism.

socio-political system change that occurred in 1989.² Concurrently, these countries had to keep up with the pace of ongoing processes of modernization, globalization, and international integration (particularly regarding European Union membership).³ With the independence won in 1991, Macedonia changed the political, economic and social system but also had to deal with state and nation-building processes for which the country was not prepared, as Agh (1998) and Daskalovski (2006) claimed. All these changes had and continue to have an impact on the mass media system and on journalists.

This study examines journalists in Macedonia, a country experiencing economic, political and cultural changes, a total transformation, that lead to some of the changes mentioned above (the financial crisis, new media, but above all the changes in the system) influencing the perception that journalists have on professionalism and on their role in Macedonian society. Their perception and understanding of journalism is essential to the final news product produced, because ultimately “the news is what newsmen make it to be” (Johnston, Edward, Slawski & Bowman, 1976, p. 17). In addition, their understanding of journalism and of their role is important to the examination of the nature of democracy in Macedonia.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the media were the harbingers of political changes (Sopar, 2002), i.e. the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, the declaration of Macedonian independence, and the start of a democratic evolution. The 1990s were marked by the growth of new private media in Macedonia, the privatization of the old media; there was little regulation of any media, and at the same time an increase in the numbers of journalists. With the start of the

² Jakubowicz and Sukosd list a number of sources that point to the transformation of political, economic, and social structures (triple); in some cases this transformation includes the process of democratization and development of market economy, but also that of state and nation building, the latter is still ongoing in Macedonia.

³ Jakubowicz and Sukosk, 2008, pp. 9-37.

new century, the number of media and journalists stabilized, however the country experienced a small yet significant ethnic conflict and public exhibitions of hate speech and intolerance to “others.”⁴ Legal regulations increased as did political and ownership pressures, and influence on journalists and their final product, the news.⁵ In addition to societal and media changes, globalization, the global economic crisis, and technological developments impacted the media, the journalists and their work (Belicanec, 2009). The 2005-2010 period was marked by several episodes of media wars, with journalists verbally attacking each other in defense of the media owners or the political opinions of these owners (Trpevska, 2009). In this same time period there were several media outlets and journalists who were accused of working (being paid) by the Greek government (Vecer, Dec. 18, 2009). This story was also broadcast on several television stations and prompted a wave of reactions from the media and the journalists who were identified to be in the pay of the Greek government, and from the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (Dec. 19, 2009). These cumulative developments seem to have an impact on the journalists’ understanding of their profession and their role in society.

The data collection for this study was conducted in December 2009. Since then, journalists in Macedonia formed the first Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM⁶). Towards the end of 2010, the largest professional organization, the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, elected a new leadership as part of the reform process. Additionally, after the investigation of Macedonia’s Public Revenue Office (PRO), the owner of the strongest

⁴ Compared with the conflict in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, the ethnic conflict in Macedonia was limited only to a particular geographic region of the country (the northwestern region of the country) and had a smaller number of casualties.

⁵ These changes were noted by the journalists participating in the research, as well as by experts who talked with the researcher.

⁶ The organization’s abbreviation is the same in English as in Macedonian.

private national station A1 TV and of three dailies (*Vreme*, *Spic*, and *Koha e re*), Velija Ramkovski was arrested and charged with tax evasion and fraud. This created a myriad of additional problems, leading journalists and managers of A1 TV to close the studio and start broadcasting their main newscast from in front of the government building for several months, from January to May 2011. Although they continue to work, it is not clear how they do so, because the bank accounts for Ramkovski's holdings are frozen, meaning that the journalists and other employees cannot get paid. This situation was used by the main opposition party and several other smaller parties, as a reason for leaving parliament, thus igniting a parliamentary crisis. The domestic non-governmental organizations and the international community called the pressure on A1 and other media an attack on democracy and freedom of the media. This political crisis caused an early election in June 2011. In the mean time A1 published several stories⁷ in which they claimed that the ruling VMRO-DPMNE is pressuring people working in the public administration (the national government and other state institutions, schools, and local municipalities controlled by VMRO-DPMNE) to bring lists of people who say they will vote for them in the elections, thus bringing into question the fairness of the upcoming elections (Cvetkovska & Stojanovska, May 8, 2011).

Media freedom in general is an indicator of democratic evolution, and Macedonia is consistently being criticized by the European Union for political pressures that are brought to bear on the media (Bozinovska, Nov. 25, 2010). Other state and international organizations also note that political and other pressures on media are problematic (U.S. Department of State

⁷ The stories were broadcasted on A1 TV and published on its web site on May 8 and 9, 2011 as a part of A1's investigation in which they reported talking with individuals' who admitted that they did the lists under orders from people higher up the hierarchy in VMRO-DPMNE.

Human Right reports, 2010 and 2009; Freedom House Report 2009). Ultimately, studying the understandings and perceptions of journalists of their work and their role in society is relevant and may be used as an indicator of the country's democratic development or its absence.

Journalism and professionalization are broad topics that have been of interest to media scholars and the industry for the past century. This study reviews only part of the larger literature that examines journalism, professionalization, media systems, transformation from one to another political system, and the building of new media systems. During political transformations, journalists and media have an important role (Jakubowicz & Sukosd, 2008). The literature authored by Eastern European scholars describes how media in Eastern Europe changed from the heroes of the revolution to the villains of the incipient democracies (Coman, 2010). There is no agreement among Western scholars regarding what constitutes professionalism in journalism or whether journalism is a profession, a craft, or a hybrid. The literature review identifies education, newsroom routines and organization, ethical norms and standards, journalistic autonomy (internal and external), professional roles, and ideology as concepts essential for examining journalism as a profession.

Scholars proposed several models of influences on news content and on journalists. Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) hierarchical model identifies five levels of influences on news content. The first level is the journalists and their personal background, beliefs, upbringing, and political affiliations. The second and third levels are the professional standards and the established routines of how the stories are written, the organization of the newsroom, divisions of labor, the hierarchy within the newsroom, and the established practices. The other two levels in their model, the extramedia and ideological levels, constitute the influences of external factors on

media content, including owners, interest groups, political parties, governments, and the overarching culture of the society in which a particular media enterprise operates.

A newer model, which analyzes a survey of 1,700 journalists from 17 countries about perceived influences on news work, identifies five elements (political, economic, organizational, professional and procedural influences), of which the last three are perceived to be more powerful limits to the journalists' work than political and economic influences. However, the data showed that countries undergoing democratic transformation and economic development experience higher levels of political and economic pressures (Hanitzch et al., 2010). Jakubowicz (2007) asserted that the post-communist transformation in Eastern and Central Europe is so different from country to country that it is impossible to develop one model (p. xi).

When Witschge and Nygren (2009) found that technological changes and economic pressure are disrupting the established professional roles, routines and journalistic autonomy, they named the process de-professionalization. Their study focused on journalists working in England and Denmark. Similarly, researchers in the United States are warning of similar trends among American journalists who feel they have problems upholding professional values, especially the public service role, and are less able to cover important news. They feel that the media are less autonomous in deciding what and how to cover issues and events (Beam, Brownlee, Weaver and DiCicco, 2009; Weaver, 2009; Beam, Weaver and Brownlee, 2009).

The trends among journalists in Eastern Europe are slightly different than those in the United States and in Western European democracies. The economic pressures and shrinking newsrooms are substantially increasing the political and interest group pressures (Volek, 2010;

Metykova & Cisarova, 2009). Scholars in Eastern Europe studying changes in journalism since the fall of communism note a process of “abandoning the professional standards” (Volek, 2010, p. 189) and “proleterization” wherein large numbers of young and unprepared journalists enter the profession (Metykova & Cisarova, 2009). Coman (2010, 2009) describes journalists in Romania as constituting two classes: the media bourgeoisie and the media proletariat. The media bourgeoisie or media moguls are part of the management and shareholders in the companies, whereas the majority of journalists are powerless, unprotected, and underpaid (Coman 2010, p.5).

Macedonia allows for an interesting case study for several reasons. The state was formed in 1991 when the former Yugoslavia was partitioned. After 20 years of existence, it is still in transition/ transformation. The political and economic system formally changed, yet there are many remnants of the socialist system, such as the perception and treatment of the media and journalists as being socio-political workers. Because of a political dispute with its southern neighbor Greece over the name of the country, Macedonian membership in NATO and the European Union is on hold. This will continue to impact the state of the country and how journalism and its role is defined, as well as the perception of the journalists and of their own work. Former special EU representative in Macedonia, Soren Jessen-Petersen, and political analyst Daniel Serwer, warned that without resolution of this issue, “Macedonia faces a long purgatory” and could descend into internecine warfare (Op-ed *New York Times*, November 10, 2010).

The country is ethnically very diverse and this diversity is mirrored in the mass media. Over 140 electronic media produce programs, some in different languages. There are a large

number of print media in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Serbian, and Romani. In 2001 Macedonia saw a small ethnic conflict between the two largest ethnic groups, Macedonians and Albanians, which deepened ethnic divisions (Trajkovska & Dimitrovski, March 21, 2010). According to the *Gallup Balkan Monitor 2010*, Macedonians together with the Serbs are the most pessimistic people in the Balkans. Although the fear of war has declined significantly throughout the region in the past 10 years, 28% of Macedonians still think that there is a possibility of another war in the next five years (p.31). The findings of the daily *Dnevnik* in March 2010 showed similar results (Kokalanov, March 20, 2010). Both studies showed a trend of diminishing trust in national institutions. The *Gallup Balkan Monitor* reports that the least trusted institutions are the national government, the judiciary, and the mass media. This is the case amongst both main ethnic groups, Macedonians, and Albanians. Trust in the media has dropped considerably in both groups since 2008. In 2010, only 31% of Albanians and 46 percent of Macedonians said that they trusted the media “a lot” or “some.” This is down from 59 percent and 62% in 2008 (*Gallup Balkan Monitor*, 2010, p. 34). The UNDP’s *Early Warning Report*, undertaken in 2005, also showed high levels of distrust in the media, especially in their coverage of interethnic issues. In the UNDP study, 23.8% of respondents said they believe the media are generally objective and accurate, and less than 25% of all respondents indicated that they believe that the media in Macedonia report objectively and accurately on political issues. The two largest ethnicities were equally skeptical of the media: 74% of ethnic Albanians and 68% of ethnic Macedonians indicated they distrust the media when they report on inter-ethnic issues (UNDP 2005).

The highly fragmented mass media system with a weak media market is open to influences by the state, political parties, and various interest groups. Journalists are underpaid and perceived as unprofessional (Media Sustainability Index⁸ [MSI] 2009). Advertising in the media is scarce, and the industry's financial weakness has given way to a situation where media "outlets conform to their owners' political and economic interests" (Freedom House Press Freedom Country Report, 2009). Freedom House, as well as other international government and non-government monitoring bodies, has identified the Macedonian government as a major advertiser that favors media outlets it perceives as loyal to its policies. Producing content that will continue to attract government support in the form of advertising is only one of the multitude of problems facing the Macedonian media industry and its journalists.

Internet and other technological advancements have brought some positive changes. Many journalists in Macedonia recognize the Internet as a place where they can publish their work and not be censored or feel censored, and some are avid bloggers. Facebook is becoming a platform for public discussion and is used for open dispute among various groups of journalists. In these and similar online platforms, one can easily see the divisions among journalists along political and economic lines. In such an environment, the work of journalists, their perception of their work, and their role in society can be crucial for the development of a democratic society in Macedonia.

⁸ MSI is developed as a measurement tool by the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that had media development programs in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republic.

Outline of the Research and Expectations

This study examines how journalists in Macedonia--both Macedonian and Albanian--understand professionalism. The researcher is seeking to ascertain whether journalists hold different views of professionalism and of their role in society, and whether their years of experience, the type of media they work for, and the positions they hold within the media⁹ influences their views.

The researcher hopes that the findings will contribute to our understanding of Macedonian journalism specifically, and the evolution of media systems in general regarding developing democracies. The study will contribute to our overall knowledge of journalism, professionalization of journalism, and influences that affect news content in a society in transition.

This project employs grounded theory and there are several reasons for doing so. First, the literature on journalistic professionalism is immense and uses different theoretical and methodological approaches. There is also no clear cut agreement among media scholars on what is considered professionalism in journalism and what elements make it a profession or not (Chapter 2). The goal of the study is to discover how journalists in Macedonia understand what is professionalism, and how that understanding is reflected in the practice. Second, as Jakubowicz and Sukosd (2008) point out, the process of transformation from one socio-political

⁹ The researcher in this study by media refers to traditional media – broadcast and print. This study does not examine the new media, cable, and satellite broadcasting organizations.

system to another is very complex.¹⁰ There are similarities among the countries, but also different characteristics to each country that makes it impossible for researchers to come up with one model or theory, which would define the process of transformation of the media systems usable as a starting base for studying Macedonian media system and journalists. And, lastly, Macedonia as a society could be perceived as a fast changing environment. The political and economic situation is so fragile that any type of crisis has an impact on the nature and work of the mass media. Moreover, the description of the Macedonian media system (Chapter 3) that is derived from existing literature on the topic shows that journalists are rarely topics of interest to scholars. Macedonian researchers often examine the media system in general and the legislation pertaining to it or study the ownership structure and political influences on the work of journalists. In these studies journalists are mentioned, yet they are not the focus of interest. In such a situation, grounded theory would allow the researcher to develop a potential theory derived from the data and one that is able and relevant to explain the behavior of the group that is being studied (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Following the grounded theory method, this study examines journalists' inner-world, that is, their understanding of their work. The researcher explores what it means for journalists to practice journalism, the journalists' perceptions of their work, their views of their society, and their understanding of their role in Macedonian society. The theory of a post-communist

¹⁰ Jakubowicz and Sukosd, based on the different studies in their book *Finding the Right Place on the Map*, outlined 12 concepts of media system evolution and democratization in post-communist societies as an illustration of the complexity of the transformation that is still going on in these societies.

journalism model that emerges from this study is developed on the basis of the themes that are derived from the data identified in the process of the analysis¹¹.

The central research question in the study is: “How do journalists in Macedonia understand professionalism? (What do they include and exclude when they define professional journalism or journalist?) Journalism and news production is a complex process (Johnson, Slawski and Bowman, 1976; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996) with different layers and players that have impact on the journalists producing that news content. Studies that examine the work of journalists in Eastern Europe point to the influence of political and economic groups on the journalists’ work (Hanitzsch et al., 2010; Volek, 2010; Metykova & Cesarova, 2009). Thus, another question in this study is, “How do political and business influences impact journalists and their understanding of professionalism?”

Given the connection between the mass media and the process of democratization, the researcher will seek to discover how journalists understand their role and the role of the media in Macedonian society.

Background

An analysis of Macedonia and its media system needs to take into account the specifics of the transformation of the country, the internal processes of the media industry itself, and, in addition, global influences. Technological advancements and globalization, for instance, have a profound influence on media systems, which makes studying these processes a challenge (Jakubowicz, 2007). Scholars point out that the transformation in Eastern Europe was very

¹¹ Grounded theory implies that the coding is part of the analysis of the data, which is explained in detail in the Analysis section in Chapter 4: Theoretical and methodological framework.

complex, because the change in the political system and in the media took place at the same time,¹² meaning that countries had to introduce a new political system and market economy principles along with experiencing changes in all other institutions. Some countries had to recreate a nation, some split up, peacefully like Czech and Slovakia, others violently like Yugoslavia, and some declared independence before they were ready, such as many of the Soviet republics. The Macedonian transformation is also very complex. Although Macedonia was not directly involved in the wars that followed the break-up of Yugoslavia, the threat of war was always present. It was ill prepared for independence and even surprised by it (Agh, 1998), and it is still dealing with the process of creating the nation and with the consequences of this act.

Macedonia became a republic within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1945, and it marked the codification of the Macedonian language and the start of development of the Macedonian media. Although the media system in the former Yugoslavia was not run as dictatorially and censored as heavily as the media systems in other communist countries, it was owned by and served as a mouthpiece of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav press in the 1970s was described as one that combined freedom of expression with the Leninist theory of social responsibility, which meant no tolerance for criticism toward the party and the people (Robinson, 1977), and as Malovic & Selnow (2001) defined as “soft communism” with Stalinist characteristics (p. 15). Under this political system, a small group of party members had unlimited control and absolute authority over everything:

¹² Kleinstauber, 2010 and Jakubowicz, 2007 provide excellent explanations on the transformation as process as well as different normative and practical explanations of this process.

“The people were informed of every rule and regulation of the official party register, and they were instructed in obedience to each of the party’s demands and expectations.

Nobody abused the party line in public, for that it would have been foolish, but in private most citizens continued with their cultural, social and religious practices. For the average person, double morals and parallel life tracks became a common way of living”¹³

(Malovic & Selnow, 2001, p. 49).

Robinson (1977) wrote that more professional journalism (similar to the practice in the Western Europe and United States) started developing in the Yugoslavian media system in the 1970s following the changes in the Yugoslav constitution in 1974. The media subsequently became more critical and started presenting opposing views, both on the federation and the politics within the different republics. Since the governments of the various republics still tightly controlled their own media industries, these media tended to be more critical toward the governments of other republics and the federal policy than of their own government and policies. Media control on the level of the republics was tighter during this time than it was on the federal level (Robinson, 1977). Content selection during this time was strongly based on ethnic priorities (Robinson, 1977). The kind of journalism practiced in Yugoslavia during this time has been described as more developed and professional than the journalism practiced in the other communist countries; its standards have also been compared to those upheld in the West (Malovic & Selnow, 2001).

¹³ Malovic & Selnow (2001) and Robinson (1977) give a superb description of the political system in the former Yugoslavia, how it changed, and what that meant for the media.

However, the press was far from free. A survey undertaken during the late 1980s indicated that more than 80% of Yugoslavian journalists were members of the League of Communists. Membership of the league was below 10% of the population as a whole (S. P. Ramet quoted in Thompson, 1994). Although the media were slightly more critical, they were in essence still the mouthpieces of the government:

“The role of the media in that system was not to provide honest, accurate, and impartial information but to inform the public about the party’s view of events. The media’s sense for news and the journalist’s values and objectives were not the same as they are for the Western reporters. The market had no influence on the media, real life had no relevance, and real events were covered only if the party commissar instructed an editor to cover them. It was the duty of journalists to explain the party line, to pass along party directives, to point out how policies, actions, and events would influence public life. Period.” (Malovic & Selnow, 2001, p. 52)

Although there is no specific research on the Macedonian media system during the time of the Yugoslav federation, the Croatian media system is a close comparison. Under Croatia’s strictly hierarchal newsroom management system, editors were members of the party who were there to ensure that the party’s policies and views were represented clearly and correctly. What was not favorable to the party in the republic was not fit to print (Malovic & Selnow, 2001).

Macedonia gained its independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991, the only Yugoslav republic to do so without bloodshed. Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia all gained independence following a period of violence. For the first 10 years of its independence,

Macedonia was described as an “oasis of peace” by the first Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov and, later, by the international community. But the “oasis” had and continues to have many problems. Following independence, the country was economically and politically dependent on the other former Yugoslav republics. It was the least developed part of the old Yugoslavia, with the exception of Kosovo. For this reason, Macedonia was not as eager as Slovenia and Croatia to declare independence (Agh, 1998; Daskalovski, 2006). As part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Macedonia received large capital transfers from the more developed republics such as Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia. It was also supportive of the Serbian government and its policy toward Albanians in Kosovo during the 1980s, when Slobodan Milosevic practically destroyed their autonomous status and started a policy of repression toward the majority Albanian population (Agh, 1998; Philips, 2004). Daskalovski (2006) analyzes the democratization process in Slovenia and Macedonia in the late 1980s and 1990s when both declared independence and concludes that how they responded before and during the Yugoslav crisis and dissolution had a big impact on their paths to democratic consolidation.

“While the Slovenian elites would be able to concentrate on the issues of democratic restructuring and economic consolidation only, the Macedonian elites would face additional problems of international recognition, economic sanction, and minority dilemmas” (p.15).

And not much has changed since. Macedonia is still struggling with international recognition, a fragile economy that is further exacerbated by the global economic crisis, and multiethnic issues that remain sensitive and brittle as some newer studies discussed in the Introduction show.

When Macedonia proclaimed independence in 1991, Greece objected and enforced economic sanctions that remained on and off for the first 10 years of the independence. Greece prevented the state from being recognized by the European Commission (EU now) and the United Nations. Macedonia was accepted in the UN in 1993 under the provisional name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Macedonia and Greece continue to negotiate to resolve the name issue. In 2011, the name issue is still not resolved and Macedonian aspiration for membership to NATO and EU will not be met until there is an acceptable solution for both Greece and Macedonia. The other neighbors also have problems with Macedonian statehood. The majority of Bulgarians do not view Macedonian as a language and consider that Macedonia was “the most romantic part of Bulgarian history” (Bajic, May 18, 2000). In addition, the Serbian Orthodox Church, among the strongest Orthodox churches in the Eastern Europe, dismisses the independence of the much smaller Macedonian Orthodox Church. [Although negotiation for the acceptance of the Macedonian church in the family of Orthodox churches is an issue of the religious institutions it is treated as a nation-building problem.] Kosovo and Albania are always sensitive to the Albanian question and the state treatment of the large ethnic Albanian community in Macedonia.

The fragile economic situation is dogged by complicated political issues. The Macedonian economy has one of the lowest levels of foreign investments in the region, according to the 2007 assessment of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The global economic crisis further exacerbated the already fragile economy. According to the World Bank Country Brief 2009, in 2008 the Macedonian deficit was 12.7% of the country’s GDP. The unemployment rate at the end of 2010 was 30.9% (State Statistical Office).

As an ethnically and religiously diverse state, the country's local politics are equally complex. Macedonia's population stands at a little over 2 million, of which 64.2 % are ethnic Macedonians, 25.2% are Albanians, 3.9% are Turks, 2.7% are Roma (Gypsies) and 1.8% are Serbian (Census 2002). The large Albanian population has been demanding greater rights since the independence of Macedonia. Although every government elected since 1991 has been a coalition of ethnic Macedonian and Albanian political parties, tensions between the two ethnic groups remain, this was especially true before and during the conflict that flared up in 2001. Thanks to fast international reaction from the European Union, the United States and the United Nations, the conflict never erupted into a full-scale war and concluded after only seven months. The internationally brokered Ohrid Framework Agreement, which ended the conflict, provides guidelines for broad political and cultural pluralism, diversity and respect for minorities (Philips, 2004). The agreement paved the way for changes to the Macedonian Constitution; the country became defined as a multi-ethnic state, and Albanian became the second official language since it is spoken by a third of the population. However, the Macedonian population remains ethnically, religiously, and politically divided, and parts of the Ohrid Agreement are still not implemented and remain points for political disputes leading to crisis and international criticism.

In terms of the country's internal structures and processes, Macedonia's legal, political, economic, and societal structures are well established and functioning. Subsequently, according to Rozumilowicz's (2002) stages of transition to a democratic society, Macedonia is between the secondary and the late mature stage, which is characterized, among other things, by a "fine-tuning of the media legislative framework" (p.23). However, it seems Macedonia is facing a situation Rozumilowicz (2002, p. 21) defines as, "institutional revision – [where] the reforming

regime attempts to implement the newly instituted media legislative framework in a manner most advantageous to their interests.” The government interference is not overt, instead it happens in subtle ways, duping the media industry and society into thinking that it has always been this way, or as Duvnjak (2006, p.5) describes it, “a style of living.” According to the Price, Rozumilowicz & Verhulst (2002) typology of democracies in transition, Macedonia is placed under the *unstable states/divided states* rubric given that strong ethnic/clan divisions and loyalties impede nation-building and divide citizens at the local level (p. 6).

Public opinion continues to be divided along ethnic lines, as is evident in the results from a March 2010 poll by the daily *Dnevnik* (Kokalanov, March 20, 2010). Almost half of the Albanians and one-third of Macedonians polled said there is a chance for renewed ethnic conflict. Almost all the Albanians (92%) said they do not feel equal to the Macedonians and do not approve of the politics of the present government. The politicians and experts quoted in *Dnevnik* compared political views and opinions held in current-day Macedonia to those held by the society before the 2001 conflict (Trajkovska & Dimitrovski, March 22, 2010).

Political scientist Karl Deutsch (1967, p. 59) who studied nationalism said that societies which are divided by language, religion, or ethnicity are segmented and compartmentalized with more or less complete set of parallel institutions and subcultures and their own “complementarity of communications” or as he wrote, “the ability to communicate more effectively and over a wider range of subjects with your own members, than with outsiders.”

Such parallelism is present throughout Macedonia, with Macedonian and Albanian divisions within all government ministries, municipalities, and schools. The Albanian minister in

the government does not consider the prime minister his boss, instead he sees his boss as being the leader of his party in the government. And if the prime minister is unhappy with an Albanian's performance, he/she cannot be replaced without serious negotiation with the Albanian party in the coalition. In the media, Trpevska (2003) defined this reality as parallel media systems that at times (especially during a crisis) would offer a very different set of information on the events. During the 2001 conflict, Slatina (2003, p. 31) argued that the "first combatants ... were the media, both Macedonian and Albanian. It was only later that other parties joined in the killing." Several monitoring projects that have been undertaken in the country have noted that the various media tend to report on sensitive events, such as interethnic relations and elections, in contradictory terms (Reljic, 1998; OSI/EU, 2005; EU Progress Report, 2009; State Department Human Right Report, 2009).

Trpevska (2009) highlights fragmentation of the market, ownership concentration, and low-quality content as characteristics of the Macedonian media system.¹⁴ She also asserted that the shortage of skilled labor in the media industry has given way to a drop in professional standards. The 2009 data from the Macedonian Broadcasting Council shows that there are currently 22 commercial electronic media (TV and radio stations) that broadcast only in the Albanian language. Four media broadcast in Romany and Macedonian languages, and one is exclusively in Bosnian. In addition, there are several radio stations that broadcast programs in three languages depending on the ethnic structure of their municipalities. Traditionally, the public radio and TV broadcaster offers Albanian, Turkish, Romany, Bosnian, Serbian, and Vlah language programs. One-hundred-twenty-four broadcasting organizations have programs only in

¹⁴ The characteristics of the Macedonian media system are discussed in details in Chapter 3.

Macedonian. This media reach does not necessarily mean that Macedonian citizens receive good and objective information. As Graber, McQuail, and Norris (2008) write, proliferation of media outlets does not necessarily guarantee a diversity of media content and news. Often there is little difference between the products disseminated by different media groups within one country: “separate news entities frequently operate like clones” (Graber et al., 2008, p.2).

Rationale for the Study

In Macedonia, globalization and advancements in technology have some influence on the media, but the bigger impact is still caused by the transformation of the state and the socio-political system. The societal and cultural changes from one system to another are reflected in the media and the work of journalists. It is important to study how these influences impact journalism and on how in these conditions journalists understand their work and their role in society.

“Journalism matters because it has a uniquely *privileged* cultural status, placing it (and journalists) at the centre of public life and political debate ever since journalists first began to irritate kings, queens and popes in early modern Europe” (McNair, 2005, p.26).

McNair connects journalism and the media to public life, culture, and the political system of a society. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001, p. 17- 23) describe journalism’s purpose as providing “citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing;” this definition suggests that journalism aids in forming community by providing citizens with a sense of belonging. Seaton and Curran (2010, p. 357) add to this definition by listing the media functions that are

important in any free country: “To inform, to discuss, to mirror, to bind, to campaign, to challenge, to entertain, and to judge.”

Carey (1989, p. 9) takes a cultural approach to media seeing it not just as instruments for disseminating news and knowledge (the transmission view of communication), but also as a ritual “that reproduces in miniature the contradictions in our thought, action, and social relations.” As Carey (1989, p. 23) states, news consumption is not just sending and receiving information, but a symbolic process in which reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed. For him all models of communication have a dual aspect – an of aspect that tells what the process is; and an aspect where the model produces a behavior prescribed previously.

“If one tries to examine society as a form of communication, one sees it as a process whereby reality is created, shared, modified, and preserved. When this process becomes opaque, when we lack models of communication we are unable to connect with others, we encounter problems of communication in their most potent form” (Carey, 1989, p.33).

Carey’s approach is important, because it does not examine media only from the perspective of the political order and power or through the prism of economic power and control. However, it does connect it to the role of media and journalists in democracy and their place in society.

An independent and free media system has always been an essential element of democracy. Democratic development and freedom in a country is often measured by the freedom of its media. Indeed, journalism is seen as so integral to a democratic society that it is often taken for granted (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng & White, 2009). Equally, a strong media industry will ensure better governance through informing the citizenry about public affairs

and encouraging participation (Schudson, 2001; Altschull, 1984; Lippmann, 2008 (1920)). Stronback (2005) & Schudson (2008) describe the relationship between democracy on the one hand and media and journalism on the other side as a social contract in which media and journalism require democracy, because it is the only system that “respects freedom of speech, expression and information” (Stronback, p. 332). Curran (2010) writes that the media are a vehicle through which different social groups connect to each other, and join in the shared conversations of society (p.370).

The seminal *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1963) published at the height of the Cold War described different types of journalism, each defined by the political system in which each functioned. Their models of authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and Soviet-totalitarian media systems were used for a long time (if not still) as a basis for analyzing media systems around the world. It was also used as a starting point for many other models of media systems.¹⁵ Some scholars argue that the *Four Theories of the Press* was an Anglo-American view of the world that does not take into consideration the cultures and traditions of the countries and regions in the world (Curran & Park, 2000; McQuail, 2005; Yin, 2008).

A number of other scholars developed different version of media systems using Siebert, Peterson and Schramm’s points of analysis. In the latest versions of mass media models, Hallin and Mancini (2004) examined the relations between media system and political system in North America and Western Europe. Their liberal model that prevails in Britain, Ireland and America is characterized by a dominance of market mechanisms and commercial media; the democratic

¹⁵ For an overview of the different models see McQuail (2005), Christians et al. (2009), and Jakubowicz (2010).

corporatist model is present in Germany and Scandinavian countries that have commercial media but also stronger state control and regulation of media, and emphasize the public service and responsibility; and the third, polarized pluralist model, that prevails in Southern Europe (Italy, France, Spain, and Greece) where commercial media are less developed, the role of the state is strong, and there is an integration of media into party politics. The critics of these models (Sparks, 2008; Gross, 2008; Jakubowicz, 2010) say that it is a good starting point, but it is not applicable to all countries without considerable alternations.

Jakubowicz and Sukosd (2008, p. 18) used the term “mimetic” to describe media policy orientation that many countries in the post-communist countries accepted in the 1990s in their transformations of the media system. This orientation included the full liberalization of the print media, adoption of a dual system in broadcasting (public and commercial broadcasting), adoption of the social responsibility press theory, and the service and democratic surveillance functions for journalists. This was predominantly initiated by the various countries’ desires to join the European Union and is part of the harmonization process with EU legislation. However, as the authors said, it was soon clear that such a strategy will not work, given that the idealized picture of free and democratic media did not exist in many EU countries (especially in the Mediterranean region), as Jakubowicz and Sukosd argued.

Yin (2008), using the *Four Theories of the Press* as a starting point and considering the Freedom House’s between “free” and “not free” countries, proposes four types of media or media systems measuring them for their freedom and responsibility and adding specific cultural values and philosophical dimensions that are present in the West and the East, thus making the models more inclusive. In her typology:

1. Free and responsible press is found in the public broadcasting system in United Kingdom and United States; the civic and public journalism in United States, and finds it in community and development journalism in India and Pakistan.
2. Free and not responsible are the media in Eastern Europe, Indonesia, but also many media outlets in China where the media are profit oriented, with high level of tabloidization and where media are used as political tools.
3. Responsible but not free media system is characteristic for more traditional societies where religion and cultural traditions have big impact on the society. It is found in many in many Arab countries, but also in many countries with strong Confucian tradition.
4. Not free and not responsible and here the prime examples would be the system in North Korea and Turkmenistan where there is very little information and plenty of glorification of the state and the leaders.

Christians et al. (2009) developed their typology of media systems by separating three levels of analysis: philosophical (normative) traditions (corporatist, libertarian, social responsibility and citizen participation); political – looking at models of democracy (administrative, pluralist, civic and direct); and finally examining media and specifically roles that media have in democracy (monitorial, facilitative, radical, and collaborative). In each of the three levels they focus on the normative traditions of public communication, models of democracy and media roles, but do not force them into one specific system as Siebert, Peterson and Schramm did. Jakubowicz (2010) writes that this model of analysis provides a number of “building blocks” that go into making of media operation in different contexts and is more

beneficial than trying to pigeonhole a country's media system into the already defined "system" (p. 13). It also makes it more relevant in studying media systems and journalism in developing democracies, such as Macedonia.

The last segment of Christians et al. (2009) normative theories, the roles of media, is especially important for studying journalists in Macedonia because it connects the journalistic practice with the larger purpose and obligation of journalists and media in building and maintaining a democratic society, something that Macedonia is striving for. The main components of the media roles in society are contained in five practical tasks that journalists provide to the public and are specifically part of the Macedonian journalists Code of Ethics. These tasks are: to provide *information* about events and their context; to *comment*; to provide a *forum* (a dialog) for diverse views and political advocacy; to be a two-way *channel* between the citizens and government; and to be a *critic* or a watchdog that will hold the government and its institutions accountable (p.30).

The monitorial role refers to the first and second tasks – providing information, putting it in context, but also providing comments, advice, warning, etc. The facilitative role refers to the practice where media provide space for dialog, forum for diverse groups and opinions, while at the same time preserve their integrity, credibility, and independence. The radical role, as Christians et al. (2009) explained, is when the media takes the critical stand toward the authority and give support to drastic changes and reforms. This is not to say that the criticism toward the establishment in the radical role is based on evidence and expert analysis (following the professional journalistic standards), but on alternative vision of what is right and good. As they argue, without this role participatory democracy would not be possible, but in normal liberal democratic societies this role is mainly carried out by small media representing movements or

groups (p. 126). And finally, the collaborative role is opposite of the radical role, when media collaborate with the state and its institutions, usual in new democracies where resources are scarce and political institutions are fragile. In this case the authorities control the supply of news and impinge on the media independence. As the authors claim, this role is rarely present in the literature of media roles, because it “goes against the libertarian and professional journalistic grain and expresses some truths that many would rather leave unsaid” (p.127). Furthermore Christians et al., placed each role in context of community and characteristics of a specific society; they address the dimension of power and the dimension of media legitimation and accountability. Concluding their work, Christians et al. acknowledge that media roles are under challenge caused by the changes that are happening in the media and discussed at the beginning of the chapter. They argue, “the conditions the media operate in are becoming more and more restrictive and oppressive” and “Those at the heart of power do not have to answer to the media, and the media are usually reluctant to press the issue for fear of consequences or because they have a close ties to the established order” (Christians et al., 2009, p.240).

This is a key point for this study. The quote above describes very much how media in Macedonia function. Examining how journalists in Macedonia understand professionalism and their role in society measured against how they practice journalism every day in their newsroom and in the content they provide, is what this study seeks to do. When examining how journalists understand their role in a society, one has to look at the system overall. The normative theories that Christians et al. propose are a good starting point, but one has to ask how democratic is the system that is examined, in this case the Macedonian system, to begin with.

Jakubowicz and Sukosd (2008) provide a good description of what exists in the majority of post-communist societies:

“What really emerged in post-communist countries after transition was not civil society but a political society, “partitocratic” systems of political and public life dominated, indeed “colonized” by political parties”.... In this model journalists are expected to be “cooperative” i.e. guided by a sense of responsibility for the process of transformation and assist the government as the leader of the process, rather than exercise an independent, impartial and critical watchdog role” (p.19).

The description is applicable to the system in Macedonia. Economic and ethnic fragility increases with the political divisions and instabilities. This is reflected in the media where the influence of the political structures, owners and various other business influences have a major impact on the media performance and the work of journalists. Examining how journalists in such conditions define professionalism, how they see their work as well as their role in the society would provide a base for development of a model of journalism in countries in transformation. This transformation is not only caused by the economic decline of the media, the 24/7 news cycle, technological advances and development of new media, but also changes within the whole society from a repressive system toward a more democratic and free social system.

CHAPTER II:

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The scope of the existing literature on professionalism is wide. The literature uses many different theoretical approaches. This literature review attempts to cover the main theories on professionalism and professionalization. Since journalists are media professionals, the review also includes literature on journalism and the theories and comparative studies of news content and its influences. The researcher addresses four additional areas of importance: journalism education, journalism standards and ethics, role perceptions and journalistic autonomy, and the development of journalistic ideology.

Journalism

Before we can enter into a discussion of journalism as a profession or the professionalization of journalism, the term “journalism” needs to be defined. A simple definition holds that journalism is the practice of news gathering and presentation (Anderson & Ward, 2007, p. 8), but this definition can be broken down even further: “The interesting questions about any form of journalism relates to issues concerning the *types* of news gathering, the *range* of events and issues covered and the *manner* in which news is presented in terms of its *interpretation, analysis and context.*” Zelizer (2007, p. 16), in attempting to address and find an answer to the question, “What to do about journalism?,” writes, “as a set of practice, as a collective of individuals, as profession, and as an institution, journalism has an important role in helping people make sense of their daily lives and of the ways they connect to the society at large.”

This role of making sense of people's daily lives and society-at-large is connected to the self-perception of journalists and how they see their role in society. Scholars identify several roles that journalists consider important. First is the role of disseminator, which is connected to the notion of providing information to the public and objectivity as a core professional value (Lipmann 1920; Cohen, 1963; Johnston et al., 1976; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). In this context, Weaver (1998, p. 478) analyzing results from a study that looked at the journalists as a corps in 21 countries, concluded that the single professional role most journalists agree on is the need to inform the public in a timely fashion. The second role is the role of interpreter in which journalists are interpreting and analyzing complex questions and providing context for the news. This is also connected to the investigative or watchdog role also known as the adversarial role of journalists (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996; Weaver et al., 2007). This supports the idea that the media should look out for the interest of the audience and the adversarial mode is quite different from the partisan advocacy of a particular point of view¹⁶. McQuail (2005, p. 287) argues that the role conceptions are strongly related to the political culture and the degree of democracy in a particular country, and that in countries where democracy is weaker there is less emphasis on the watchdog role. Studies show that journalists in Eastern European countries show they are engaged in active political roles and that political forces have strong influences on the news they report (Wu et al., 1996; Weaver, 1998; Pasti, 2005; Hanitzsch et al., 2010; Volek, 2010).

Professionalism and Professionalization

The concepts of "professionalism" and "professionalization" in journalism have been the subject of industry debates both in Europe and in the United States. The debates center on the

¹⁶ See more further down in this chapter part *G. Role Perceptions*

distinction between journalism as an occupation or craft and journalism as a profession¹⁷. Many view journalism as a semi-profession. Schudson and Tiftt (2005, p. 18), studying the history of the American press, see commercialization and professionalization as distinctive marks and they define professionalization as a “differentiation of journalists as a distinct occupational group with distinctive norms and traditions, and depending on the time and place, some degree of autonomy from political parties and publishers.” Media scholars view the process of professionalization of journalists by addressing the issue of journalism education and training (Lippmann, 1920; Beam, 1990; De Beer & Merrill, 2003; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Lauk, 1996), assume professional roles (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Wu, Weaver, & Johnson, 1996; Pasti, 2005), practice according to set standards and ethical norms, and display journalistic independence or autonomy (Deuze, 2008) and existence of professional journalistic organizations and unions (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Jakubowicz, 2007, Weaver et al., 2007).

Professionalism and its definition are usually associated with the classic liberal professions, including medicine and law. Wilensky (1964), after analyzing several historic professions, identified five stages in which an occupational group moves through toward establishment and acceptance as a profession: education, full-time employment, a professional association, an interest group to lobby for job protection and, finally, a code of ethics. . Following Wilensky’s criteria, Macedonia does have formal journalism education. Moreover, a large body of journalists working in the media are employed full-time; there are professional organizations such as the Association of Journalists of Macedonia and the newly formed

¹⁷ The journalistic functions (Seaton and Curran, 2010) or roles (Christians et al., 2009) are part of the professionalization process, and one can argue that journalism qualifies as a profession because of its connection to democracy.

Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers, both of which are at least in principle trying to lobby for job protection, and there is an existing code of ethics developed in 2001).

Friedson (2001) provides more contemporary definitions of profession. He says that professionals have: a) knowledge monopoly (that is, no one outside the profession has the knowledge and the ability to do the work of the profession); b) a clear division of labor, and the power to keep others outside the profession; c) a strong professional education and research experience; d) a strong professional organization with ethical rules and standards; and e) an ideology that asserts greater commitment to doing good and quality work rather than to economic gains and efficiency of work. McQuail (2005) summarizes the main requirements for professional status of journalism in a similar way as Friedson: controlled entry to the occupation; a core of skills for which training is required; codes of ethics and standards of practice that are enforced; having a significant social role to play, and autonomy in the exercise of skills (p. 289).

By McQuail's and Friedson's requirements for professional status of journalism one can argue that journalism does not always qualify as a profession. A degree in journalism is not a pre-requisite for working as a journalist (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Anderson, & Ward, 2007, and many others). Many professionals consider practical training in the newsroom as a superior education to formal academic qualifications. Journalism education is also in its early stages in many countries around the world. In Macedonia it started only 30 years ago. The curricula for a journalism education, and even more importantly the values that are imparted through it, are not standardized, as is the case in the field of medicine.

In addition, very few countries insist on membership in professional organizations and licenses, and those that do require licensure, such as Italy, do not necessarily have higher standards of professionalism in their media industries (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Moreover, membership in the journalistic professional association and unions has diminished in the United States (Weaver et al., 2002; Borden, 2007), while journalists in Eastern Europe formed many new professional organizations that, however, have little power (Coman, 2009; Volek, 2010). The concept of self-regulation is also not really enforced through such professional organizations and is becoming a serious problem, particularly in the South East Europe (Lani, 2011).

The division of labor is often not clear, especially in Europe where journalists often hold more than one position at one time. For instance, some journalists will work as reporters as well as commentators (Kepplinger & Kocher, 1990) and often reporters do not treat every source or issue equally. This is one of the reasons why Kepplinger and Kocher argue that journalists cannot be counted among professionals in Macedonia, because they behave selectively with those they have to deal with and professionals should treat everyone equally. In Macedonian newsrooms journalists are both reporters and commentators. This practice is established in the newspapers where the reporters covering the stories of the day also write an editorial on the same issue, often in the same day.¹⁸ This mixing of the positions reflects in how stories are written. The Macedonian non-government organization NVO Infocenter has continuously monitored the print and broadcast media since 2004 and notes in many of their reports the tendency of mixing

¹⁸ This practice was also discussed by participants in the study.

facts and comments in the stories. This approach leads to partial reporting, and the distortion of the events and their interpretation to fit the political orientation of the media¹⁹.

A code of ethics was identified above as one of the prerequisites of professionalization and such ethical standards also ensure the development of a journalistic culture. Borden (2007) argues that moral commitments such as public service, community leadership, and love of knowledge form part of the motivation. To satisfy the requirements of civic professionalism, professionals must accept higher responsibilities, curtail self-interest motives, and cultivate expertise that is of use to all; by doing so, professionals are morally accountable. This motivation will ensure the creation of a group identity among journalists and a basis for development of journalistic ideology or culture (Borden, 2007, p.112). Ethical standards, or the purpose and principles of producing accurate information on behalf of a country's citizens remain essential for the survival and further development of journalism as a profession (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). However, standards and ethics are understood and implemented differently in different societies. And even within one society, there tends to be a plurality of journalistic identities (Pasti, 2005; Metykova & Cisarova, 2009; Volek, 2010), a situation which is perhaps even more pronounced in societies with a variety of ethnicities, such as is the case in Macedonia, and leading to different understandings of norms, ethics, and professional codes of conduct. In addition, the established work routines could have an impact on the implementation of the ethical code.

¹⁹ These findings are present in the Media Mirror report from January, 2006; Media mirror report from July – August 2009; Analysis of the Media Coverage on Tobacco Farmers and Tobacco Purchase Case from March 2011.

Deuze (2008, p. 16) looked beyond the characteristics of professional journalists to the concept of professionalization in the field, which has occupied much of 20th century journalism history. Professionalization, he argues, has given way to the building of a consensual occupational ideology among journalists in different parts of the world: “Journalism’s ideology serves to continuously refine and reproduce a consensus about who counts as a ‘real’ journalist, and what (parts of) news media at any time can be considered to be examples of ‘real’ journalism.” Deuze defines occupational ideology as a “sum of ideas and views of a particular group about itself,” but also as a process by which other ideas and views are excluded or marginalized. These values give legitimacy and credibility to what journalists do. Journalists talk about these values every time they articulate, defend, or criticize the decisions they and their peers make, or when they are faced with criticism from their audience, news sources, advertisers, or management.

In terms of the professionalization of journalism in particular, the work of Hallin and Mancini (2004) merits a closer look. They measure professionalism by looking at three key aspects: journalistic autonomy, distinct professional norms, and public service orientation. *Journalistic autonomy*, which they define as the autonomy of journalists within the news organization, represents the core of journalism as a whole, they argue. The control of the work process in journalism is largely collegial in the sense that authority over journalists is exercised primarily by fellow journalists. *Distinct professional norms* include ethical principles such as the obligation to protect confidential sources, and a separation between advertising and editorial content, as well as practical routines (such as the common standards of “newsworthiness,” for example), criteria for judging excellence in professional practice and allocating professional

prestige. They further argue that the political system determines the nature of external pressure (i.e. that which is exercised by political parties, government, business etc.) to establish professional norms. Finally, Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue that professional journalists typically display an *orientation towards public service*, which is key to the Siebert et al. social responsibility theory (1963). Following the Hutchins Commission report, Siebert et al. (1963, p. 5) developed the social responsibility theory, which argues that the media have tremendous power and a subsequent “social responsibility” to ensure that “all sides are fairly presented and that the public has enough information to decide.” An orientation towards public service can be seen in the existence of mechanisms for journalistic self-regulation, which include journalistic associations or formal press councils. These councils are characteristic of many European countries. Hallin & Giles (2005, p. 6) further argued that professionalization can be centered in formal institutions such as professional associations, or it can be embedded in the traditions, norms, and routines of news organization. In the liberal model (in Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Hallin & Giles, 2005), professionalism is centered around the “objectivity norm” whereby journalists should be politically neutral and not connected to political parties or to other societal groups. Hallin and Giles (2005, p. 9) write that in more competitive media markets media differentiate themselves by appealing to particular political orientations, which is the case in many European countries, in Britain, and since the emergence of Fox News, a characteristic of the U.S. cable television market. This is characteristic of the media in Macedonia as well, but for different reasons. The Macedonian media system is closer to Hallin and Mancini’s (2004, p. 12) polarized pluralist model²⁰ in which commercial media developed late, state intervention is high (either through state ownership, subsidies, or legal control) there is a high level of political

²⁰ Described in Chapter 1.

parallelism, and the three elements that define professionalism are not fully developed.

Journalism in this model is still defined as “journalism of ideas” rather than as in their liberal model “journalism of information.”

Volek (2010) applied Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) definition of professionalism and concluded that Czech journalists only partly meet the criteria for professionalization. Volek found Czech journalists to be young, inadequately educated and trained, hard-pressed by the political system and media owners, stressed, and underpaid. In addition, he found a dearth of professional media associations and unions. He views these characteristics as indicators of an “anti-professionalization process” that developed as a consequence of the transformation of the Czech media system. Volek claims that the transformation of the Czech media system caused two processes that lowered the fragile professionalism of Czech journalists: de-professionalization and proletarianization. He (2010, p. 189) defines de-professionalization as a process of “abandoning elementary professional standards” directly connected to the journalistic unions’ decreased authority, low professional standards, and criteria for admission into the journalistic community. Proletarianization, which took place mainly during the 1990s, has resulted in a “new generation of professionally untutored and easily manipulated journalists.” As a result, Volek (2010, p. 190) found that these untrained journalists generally adopt a “naïve interpretation of the liberal professional approach – anything goes.” They also seemed to view their role in society as one of changing the world rather than doing a public service.

Some scholars argue that journalism cannot be bound to strict rules and regulations that will limit freedom of expression, and that there will always be many ways to gain access to a career in journalism, making it difficult or even impossible to identify one exclusive professional

track (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; McQuail, 2000). This is confirmed by practices in many countries. In the end, journalism's emphasis on practical skills renders it a craft rather than a profession (Tumber and Prentoulis, 2005).

“There is a deficiency in respect of any exclusive core skill, and the same applies to the issue of autonomy and self-regulation. Evidence of public esteem is often missing. However, journalists can claim to have important social role and have moved in the direction of adopting ethical criteria. At best, however, it can only be said that journalism in an incomplete profession and faces obstacles in ever being completed” (McQuail, 2005, p. 289).

The debate of whether journalism is a profession, a craft occupation, or something in between will continue. However, the standards of objectivity, fairness, balance, use of multiple sources, protection of sources, and other ethical guidelines can be found not just in the academic papers, but in every journalistic code of ethics in countries around the world. The existence of formal journalism education and professional organizations are important parts to be considered in studying how journalists in Macedonia perceive their work.

Journalistic Autonomy and Influences on News Content

One of the criteria for the professionalization of journalism, as discussed above, is journalistic independence or autonomy, two concepts that will be further explored in this section of the literature review. In addition, this section will provide an overview of literature dealing with the influences on news content.

Typically, an autonomous industry will regulate itself through the existence of strong and effective professional organizations and their standards and ethics. Due to the collegial nature of journalism, this kind of regulation naturally takes place when journalists and their work are watched over by their peers in the industry (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). But autonomy also operates on another level that has been termed the “internal” level, and concerns journalists’ independence within the newsroom. A study by Weaver et al. (2007) shows that the level of this internal autonomy manifests itself in the freedom journalists experience in choosing what stories to follow and in deciding story angles, among other things. Internal autonomy is influenced by a number of factors. Nowak (2009) connects the autonomy with the responsibility or the consequences of one’s work on the audience and the society at large. But she considers journalists to be autonomous when they act according to journalistic ethics, and are independent from the media companies, political parties, economic pressures, and religious or other interest groups. Such independence is particularly hard to find in societies that hinder free speech and pluralism.

Independent or autonomous journalists answer only to themselves, which implies that the objectivity of their work should not be compromised. Objectivity, it has been argued, is stronger in newsrooms that have a strict division of labor. In a comparative study of newsrooms in Germany and the United States, Kepplinger and Kocher (1990), for instance, found that objectivity seemed to be more achievable in American newsrooms with their strict divisions of labor than in the German ones, where journalists acted as both news writers and opinion-editorial writers and columnists, sometimes covering the same story on both fronts. Kepplinger and

Kocher argue that objectivity is compromised where there is no strict division of labor since it is harder to separate fact from opinion in these cases.

Although De Berr (2004, p. 189) noted that the “list of possible variables is almost endless” when it comes to possible influences on news content and autonomy, there have been numerous attempts by media scholars to classify and prioritize the kinds of influences journalists face while plying their trade.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) developed a theory on the “hierarchy of influence” of media content and identify five levels of influence: individual, media routines, organizational, external and ideological. The biggest influence on media content, they argue, is media routines, followed by organizational influences.²¹ Professional organizations shape shared professional values and ethical standards of their members. The hierarchy of influence theory also holds that the various influences experienced by journalists are often at odds with one another (Hanitzch, 2007; Beam et al., 2009). Ornebring (2008) argues that the professional or occupational standards and the organizational level of influences represent two types of professionalism. He sees journalism as a continuous negotiation process between these two types of professionalism organizational demands (the employer’s standards, routines, and goals) and occupational professionalism (values, norms, and individual journalistic identity).

Similarly, Donsbach (2010) identifies four sets of variables that play a role in news decision-making: the social system, the media organization, the occupational group, and the individual journalist. The social system comprises history, culture, norms, and political and

²¹ See Deuze, 2008, and Borden, 2007, for more on shared routines, knowledge, and values that older members of the group pass to the new journalists through the process of socialization.

economic structures. On this level, journalists are affected by the degree of media freedom, their own perceptions of their role, and the relationship between media and politics in their societies. Influences that can be categorized under the media-organization set are the economic foundations, the law, hierarchies within the workplace, and autonomy. Here, the journalists' behavior is shaped by the editorial control, the bias of the medium, and commercial goals, among other things. The third set of variables refers to journalists as a group, the "occupational group," and includes their professional motives, relationships with sources, news factors, occupational socialization, and education. Finally, the psychological-physiological characteristics of the journalist contribute to influences on the individual level. The individual factors influencing journalistic performance include subjective beliefs, the need for social validation, and individual job motivation.

Following a survey of newsrooms in 14 different countries, Hanitzch et al. (2010) developed their own integrated model of influences. According to their theory, journalists on duty are influenced on three basic levels: the individual or micro level (personal backgrounds and characteristics); the organizational (newsrooms), or meso level (the medium's particular characteristics, routines, and the process of socialization); and the system or macro level (nations). The cross-country comparison showed that the significance of political interference and economic imperatives depends on the national context. Newsrooms in countries that are still in the process of democratic transformation and economic development tend to experience higher levels of political interference and economic imperatives.

Changes in technology and economic constraints have also been identified as factors that could influence content. Beam, Weaver and Brownlee (2009) argue that these factors reshape the

way journalists do their work and influence their perceptions of their professional roles, and has an impact on their journalistic autonomy (Beam, Weaver & Brownlee, 2009, p. 291). Gans (2003, p. 24) came to a similar conclusion: “Profit pressures and budget reductions in the news media have also affected journalists’ control over the news and their professional autonomy in shaping it.” Deuze (2008) argues that technological advancements influence news, but could be instrumental in bringing our current form of journalism to an end because new media have allowed everyone, not just journalists, to air their voices in public communication.

Journalism Education

The sociological approach to professionalism holds that first and foremost, a profession is “based on systematic knowledge or doctrine acquired through ... prescribed training” (Wilensky, 1964, p. 138). Lippmann (2008) argues that journalism education is a key step in the professionalization process. Frohlich and Holtz-Bacha (2003, p. 307) state that although journalism education is considered important it is under-researched, and very little has been done to study the impact of journalism training on the work of journalists. Hallin and Mancini (2004) listed journalism education as one of the prerequisites for professionalism. In their study of European journalists, they found that despite the fact that Italian journalists are required to sit for an exam and obtain a license before being admitted to the field, their level of professionalism is very low.

As has been noted before, journalists are not required to have any educational background to be admitted to the field. Increasingly, however, media companies seem to be demanding some qualifications before considering candidates for journalistic positions.

International studies have shown that the majority of journalists working in newsrooms today hold journalism qualifications (Weaver, 2007; Weaver, 1998).

Journalism education, in the United States at least, has a long history. Winfield (2008) claims that 1908 was the turning point in the field, because that was the year when “journalism professionalism became officially established by formal university instruction and organization” (p. 1). Hiebert and Gross (2003) said that the earliest record of formal journalism education in Eastern Europe dates back to 1928 in Prague. As they note, “these early days of attempted professionalization” consisted mainly of expressing opinions, discussing and analyzing issues of the day and engaging in political and cultural combat with their pen (p.257). The communist era married formal journalism education with political education, preparing journalists for their positions as “social-political workers” (општествено-политички работници – a term specific for Yugoslavian socialism of workers self-governance.) Robinson (1977) discussed journalism education in the former Yugoslavia and the on-the-job training in the news agency Tanjug, and noted that Tanjug implemented some Western style journalism practices in their coverage of international news and to some degree reporting on the federal government. However, the reporting on local issues and issues of concern to individual republics was strictly controlled by the communist party as noted by Malovic and Selnow (2001). Journalism programs in the former Yugoslavia were mainly part of the political science colleges. The programs in Belgrade and Zagreb were considered the most prestigious (Robinson, 1977). Hiebert and Gross (2003) gave a short description of the journalism program in Ljubljana, Slovenia, that resembled the programs in Zagreb and Belgrade in the old system, e.g. students receive general knowledge,

communication, language skills, and practical skill courses and internships providing practical experience.

Formal education is not a prerequisite for a career in journalism in Macedonia, although today there are a number of institutions offering journalism and communication education. The country's first college-level journalism department was established in the 1980s, under the Law College at the state Saint Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. In the beginning, the program offered some practical training by providing internships for students at the national television and the only publishing company at the time, NIP Nova Makedonija. By the 1990s, the program was outdated and offered no practical training. In addition, the program had no full-time professors or instructors to lead the journalism program (IREX Promedia finding in 2002²²). In the past six years several private universities tried to establish journalism programs with little success. In 2008, the Macedonian Institute for Media started the School of Journalism and Public Relations, which is a blend between an academic and a practical program. Editors, journalists, and professional organizations consider the quality of these programs to be one of the problems in Macedonian journalism (MSI, 2010; MSI 2009; MSI, 2008). One can connect this opinion with Frohlick and Holtz-Bacha (2003) who conclude:

“...in Eastern Europe the most important obstacle to media and journalism is the fact that the new generation of journalists is poorly educated. Journalism education today is much worse than it used to be during the communist era” (p. 314).

²² The researcher worked with IREX on a project for reform of the journalism program at the College and worked closely with the IREX consultant Dr. Robert Daly on his review of the journalism program in Macedonia in 2002.

There is no analysis of the journalism programs in Macedonia. The curriculum of the program at St. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje remains interdisciplinary with very few journalism courses and few opportunities for practical application of the theoretical knowledge. The program at the Macedonian Institute for Media School of Journalism and Public Relations is more practical and provides internship opportunities. There is also no data on how many of Macedonian journalists have a degree in journalism. This study will not provide that data, but will seek to report and analyze the participants' perceptions on how they value their education and on-the-job training in their everyday work.

Journalistic Standards and Ethics

Professional standards generally have two functions: (1) to regulate the behavior of the professional group according to generally accepted principles and (2) to protect the professional group from outside forces. Lippmann argues that objective, fact-based journalism is the first step toward professional journalism. Objectivity is a yardstick that journalists use in evaluating the professionalism of their colleagues (see, for instance, Beam, 1988). It is a norm that was developed in the United States. (Schudson, 2001). While some argue that objectivity distinguishes American journalism from its continental European counterpart (Schudson, 2001), others point out that although objectivity is accepted as a norm in journalistic practice, it is interpreted differently in different situations, because of economic, cultural (Donbach and Klett, 1993), and historical (Weaver, 2005) differences.

Professional norms such as objectivity, impartiality, fairness, and the ability to recognize the newsworthiness of an event are influential guidelines and the established news routine when

news stories are reported are accepted standards in journalism practice anywhere. Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) argue that these professional values provide safeguards to a democratic media system, but at another level the routinized application of such values can have distorting consequences. Instead of promoting the so-called marketplace of ideas in which all viewpoints are given adequate attention, these professional news values could privilege dominant mainstream positions.

Macedonian journalists refer to code of ethics, drawn up in 2001, as a general guideline that specifies objective and fair reporting, but they admit that the implementation is far from ideal (The South Eastern European Network for Professionalization of Media/SEENPM), 2005). The journalists interviewed said they embrace the code's provisions, however its implementation depends on the situation and the specific stories being covered. There has also been at least one instance when the Macedonian code of ethics has been challenged: The Macedonian journalists' association and its self-regulatory body, the Council of Honor, judged a report from an editor at Sitel TV broadcasted before the NATO Summit in 2008, when they voted whether Macedonia would become a NATO member as unethical by the standards set out in the code of ethics. The editor retaliated by suing the association and council for defamation. The Court dismissed the charges in 2009. The incident is an indication that the self-regulation of Macedonian journalists is not something that can be easily enforced.

Role Perceptions

Several studies observe that the opinions of journalists regarding the importance of various media roles and news values can be considered indicators of their professional values. As Borden (2007, p. 12) explains: “From an ethical standpoint journalism has to have a distinct identity if journalists are to clearly understand what they are and what they are not ... Without a clear articulation of their collective purpose no one will have any kind of yardstick by which to judge journalistic performance.”

The journalists’ perceptions of the roles they play in society depend to an extent on their attitudes, values, and beliefs, but even more on wider media routines and the organizational level of the particular medium (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Robinson, 1977). Journalists’ perceptions of their professional roles determine what they think is worth transmitting to their audiences and how they think their stories should be developed (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 103). Thus, we cannot talk about the professional roles without getting back to the argument made in the rationale of this study. The roles of journalists are connected to the form of democratic system which not only describes journalistic tasks and practices, but it also leads to another dimension that refers to their larger purpose and obligation of media (Christians et al., 2009, p. 29).

Various groups of scholars have identified possible roles journalists can play, and two main ones dominate the theories: a “neutral” role and a “participant” role (Weaver et al., 2007; Altschull, 1984; Johnston, Slawski & Bowman, 1976). When playing a neutral or “disseminator” (Weaver et al., 2007; Altschull, 1984) role, the journalists transmit information impartially and objectively as it is observed and verified. In their neutral roles, journalists are passive and

detached from the information they are imparting. Neutral journalists see their jobs as getting information to the public quickly, avoiding stories that have anonymous sources, concentrating on the widest audience (covering events that have the biggest impact), and entertaining the public. The “participant” or interpretive journalist, on the other hand, plays an active and creative role in the development of the news items. These participant journalists feel responsible for contextualizing information, and their relationship with their sources is more engaging. They typically investigate official claims, provide analysis and interpret complex problems, discussing national issues, and developing intellectual and cultural interests.

Weaver et al. (2007) identify a third journalistic role that is not as common as the other two, yet can still be found in journalistic practice today. This third role, they argue, is most often assumed by print journalists and it is that of the adversary. Journalists assuming the role of adversaries oppose state officials or business concerns. The social responsibility theory, as discussed by Altschull (1984), holds that the adversary role falls into a bigger category that also includes the roles of watchdog and agenda-setter. However, Gross (2002 p. 114-115) argues that most East European journalists or news media take an adversarial stance vis-à-vis politician, political party, or government if and when they are in agreement with or even represent another political party or politician which is somewhat different from what Weaver found among American journalists and what Altschull said.

Of all the roles they can play, American journalists seem to value their role as interpreters the most, followed by their role as disseminators, and then by their role as adversaries (Weaver et al., 2007). In their study of how American journalists perceive their roles, Weaver et al. (2007) also identified a new role not mentioned in previous studies, that of populist mobilizer. This role

developed as a result of the increase in public journalism, Weaver et al. (2007) posit, and they speculate that the phenomenon of new or electronic media will lead to the further development of this particular journalistic role. Their study (Weaver et al, 2007, p. 146) also brought to light that journalists do not exclusively occupy any one role at a time: “Journalists have their priorities in terms of role conceptions, but these priorities are not exclusive.” And unlike the case during the last two decades of the 20th century, when salaries and media ownership were strong predictors of journalistic roles, Weaver et al. (2007) found that newsroom size and medium predicted roles in the new millennium; in the survey conducted during the 1990s, journalists working in larger newsrooms seemed to embrace the interpretative role, for instance, while the new smaller organizations embraced the role of populist mobilizers.

In a study conducted in 1996, Wu, Weaver and Johnson compared Russian journalists’ perception of professional roles with those held by their U.S. counterparts. The disseminator role held the highest ranking in both countries, but Russian journalists identified the setting of the political agenda as the second-most important role they fulfill, while this role was almost nonexistent among the Americans. From this study it emerged that journalistic roles in Russia were also medium-dependent: the Russian TV journalists rated their role as adversary of government officials and business as extremely important, while their print counterparts rated the role of interpreter as extremely important. Besides the medium for which they work, Wu et al. (1996, p. 544) found that a number of other factors influence the roles journalists play in society: “Journalists’ perceptions of professional roles differ with different social and political systems and media organizations.”

Almost a decade after the comparative study conducted by Wu et al., Pasti (2005) examined Russian journalists' understanding of professional roles. Two types of professional roles emerged in Pasti's study. These two roles represent two types of professional subcultures: the old generation (practitioners from the Soviet era) and the new generation who joined the profession after 1990. Whereas the old generation continues to view its journalistic role as being politically collaborative, the new generation is orientated towards the role of providing entertainment. New-generation Russian journalists see their role as being one of public relations and feel that what they produce should benefit influential groups in both business and politics. Despite their differences, both generations of journalists seem to be accepting of the role they are fulfilling in the larger propaganda machine: "Journalists (old and young) consider themselves as influential players in the political life of society and are developing professionalism more in line with the idea of statism²³ than democracy" (Pasti, 2005, p. 104). The media roles that Christians et al. (2009) propose are more or less similar to the roles of disseminators, interpreters, and adversaries. . Monitorial role refers to all aspects of collecting, processing, and disseminating information about current and past events; it provides some interpretations and comments from the editorial positions. Depending on the media position in the society, they can be passive transmitters of information or provide a watchdog role on behalf of citizens. The facilitative role draws elements from the social responsibility theory and the press as a fourth estate in democratic societies that supports debate and people's decision making. The radical role is when the media are actively participating and advocating radical change in society. And, finally, there is the collaborative role when media collaborate with the institutions. This collaboration sometimes is advocated by the state in times of crisis, war, and terrorism, but in some societies

²³ Concentration of economic control and planning are in the hands of a highly centralized government.

this could be seen as voluntary collaboration that meets the need of both parties. Media are essential for disseminating news to the wider public though the authorities often control the supply of the news (Christians et al., 2009, p.125 – 127). However, as they note, all these roles are present and interchangeable.

“Roles apply in particular instance and at particular times. On any given day, most news media play multiple roles. Even in context of a single project or a story, the media can shift postures and play more than one role, depending on what practitioners want to achieve and how they want to achieve it. No role precludes another” (p.217).

In the opinion of Christians and his colleagues, although the media are changing and the new media are presenting new challenges, these four above-mentioned roles remain in practice.

Journalism and Media Transformation in Eastern Europe

Media transformation, journalism, and journalists were discussed in many of the previous parts of this literature review. It is clear that these changes are profound and that the process of transformation is still going on. Jakubowicz in his book *Rude Awakening* gives an excellent overview of the theories that could explain post-communist transformation or transition.

Although the conditions and the path of transformation were different from country to country Jakubowicz (2010; 2007), Coman (2010), O’Neal (1997), and Gross (1996) point out that although media played an important role in the fall of the previous system in all of the Eastern Europe they were also a prime example of how past institutional configurations influenced the process of their transformation, which has an impact on the present struggles in this area. Thus Lani (2011, p. 49) writes,

“Although there is as yet no comprehensive theory on post-communist transition, it has already become clear that the original vision of this transition was too optimistic. It would appear that the ‘exit from communism’ was more difficult and protracted than was initially expected.”

Still most of these countries have many common problems: an unclear transformation of the state broadcasting into public broadcasting system; a proliferation of private media; non-transparent media ownership structures; an influx of young journalists who have little or no journalism education and were primarily trained on the job. Another similarity is the tendency to imitate or copy the Western style of journalism, but in an adapted form, leading to, as Sparks (2008) comments, reverse results from the desired western liberal style journalism. He cites the situation among Russian journalists as an example for which professional autonomy meant that they “autonomously took a range of decisions to align themselves with various economic forces without any external coercion” (Sparks, 2008, p. 51). Kovatsa (1998) states that right after the changes of the political system the liberal model of journalism became an ideal though it was filled with contradictions. The Westerners, who came to provide training, thought that the old journalists should resign because they had compromised in the previous system, serving the party instead of purely serving a journalistic cause.. The journalists were supposed to start to learn impartial, objective journalism based on facts, not opinion and comments. This did not happen as they thought it would. “These efforts and the arrival of the commercial press and media system were not met with unanimous zeal on the part of the journalists” (p. 274). As O’Neal (1997, p.5) said the media in Eastern Europe were examples of how past institutional configuration influenced the process of media transition, shaping the contours of the present struggle in this

area. And although one might consider that communism across Eastern Europe had similar institutions how media systems functioned in each country was different for each state reflecting the particular conditions in that state.

Indeed, professionalism might be something Eastern European journalists strive for, but the research shows that they have a long way to get there. Jakubowicz (2007), for instance, argues that although Eastern European journalists see professionalization as an important element for transformation of the media, the kind of journalism they practice under the new, supposedly professional system, does not differ much from that practiced under the old system. Journalists are still promoting their own views or those of the political parties they support. They also practice self-censorship, and generally lack accountability.

“They [journalists] may perform a role approximating that of watchdogs, but not on behalf of society and the public interest, but on behalf of, and in ways dictated by, their masters, primarily reflecting power struggles and current (and changing) interests and alliances of particular power oligarchs” (Jakubowicz, 2007, p. 326).

Gross (2002, p. 99) argued that, “The lack of stability [in Central and Eastern Europe] does not allow members of the media elite to acquire professionalism, nor to serve as educators, models and professional leaders for their journalists, old and new.” Both Jakubowicz and Gross write that in order for journalism in Eastern Europe to become a profession, it needs to undergo institutional change and change in the journalistic culture. Political processes should give way to these changes, as should membership in the European Union that should lead to their alignment with liberal democracies. However, this process is going very slow among the new members of

the EU such as Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria, with many setbacks such as the recent passage of a restrictive media law in Hungary. The International Press Institute (IPI) and the South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO) reacted with a press release to Hungary's new media law that vests broad powers in the politically homogeneous Media Authority and Media Council, thus enabling it to control content of all media. The legislation regulates broadcast, print and online media content based on identical principles. It requires all media to be registered with the Media Authority and it punishes violations with high fines. But it glaringly fails to guarantee the political independence of public service media (IPI/SEEMO March 11, 2011).

Coman's (2010, p. 6) studies of journalists in Romania noted the formation of two social classes among journalists: the editors or as he called them 'media moguls' who are close to media owners and politicians and who refuse to practice the established Western model of professional journalism, because it would undermine their relationship with the powers-that-be. The other group is the 'proletariat' or majority of journalists who "failed to negotiate access to the system, salaries, working conditions, all aspects relating to daily journalism, ethical problems, and issues related to professional conscience." This situation creates an acute crisis of identity and makes journalists more vulnerable to influences of the media moguls and politicians.

"The battle for the control of the profession was the salient element in the post communist media evolution; a large group that fought to enter and stay in the system and a small group that wished to create and legitimize instruments of control waged the battle, which continues to date. Both groups promote a missionary ideology and support the open, non-institutionalized character of the profession. One group exercises discretionary control over the system, and the other discovered that after 20 years of

“transition” it was dispossessed of the instruments of control and also of any measure of auto-protection” (Coman, 2010, p.6).

Thus he saw visible discrepancies between the journalists’ declared values and their professional practices. This leads to configuration of a system that he describes as “journalists without journalism” (Coman 2004, p. 48).

Journalists from the select few Eastern European countries who do boast a professional media industry report, however, that the transition to professionalism has not necessarily brought about much change in how they produce content. Metykova and Cisarova (2009) studied how journalists in some of the new EU member states, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, perceived changes in their profession and practice at the start of 2000. Their findings show that in their move towards professionalism, journalists in these countries relied heavily on the Anglo-American model of journalism, and although the standards of this model have technically been preserved, in practice political intervention in the media, legislative battles, and concentration of media ownership continue to influence the professional conduct of journalists. Market pressures are perceived to limit journalistic freedom and have the potential to jeopardize the quality of work (Metykova & Cisarova, 2009, p.733).

Although communism was characteristic across Eastern Europe, no two countries in the region had or have similar media institutions and processes of transformation. Each country’s media system is different, reflecting the particular conditions in that state. For this reason, literature on the Macedonian media system receives particular attention in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER III:

THE MEDIA SYSTEM IN MACEDONIA

The media in any given country are part of the overall political, economic, and social landscape and the country's culture and history. Prior to 1991 the Macedonian media system was centralized, state-owned, and subordinate to the priorities of the party-state system. During this time the country's media system, which was initiated and developed under a communist regime, featured hierarchically structured newsrooms that primarily served the ruling communist party and its policies. These features influenced media development in the post-1991 system. It is important to note that Macedonia did not exist as a country prior the formation of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) when Macedonia became one of its six republics. Accordingly, Macedonia did not have a tradition of a critical press, like in Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia, which had stronger traditions of newspaper publishing and journalism dating back to the pre-World War II period. Also, unlike in former Eastern Bloc countries, such as Poland, Macedonia had no underground press on which they could base their post-independence media industry.

The process of decentralization, liberalization, and privatization of the Macedonian media started soon after the proclamation of independence. In the media sphere that implied complete deregulation and the unprecedented growth of electronic media in the country, while the print media developed at a slower pace.

As is the situation in most other countries in Eastern Europe, the Macedonian constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the press; Article 16 states explicitly:

“The freedom of personal conviction, conscience, thought and public expression of thought is guaranteed. The freedom of speech, public address, public information and the establishment of institutions for public information is guaranteed. Free access to information and the freedom of reception and transmission of information are guaranteed. The right of reply via the mass media is guaranteed. The right to a correction in the mass media is guaranteed. The right to protect a source of information in the mass media is guaranteed. Censorship is prohibited.”

Until 1997, the Macedonian media were solely regulated by this one article in the constitution. Parliament enacted the first Law on Broadcasting in 1997, and in 2005 passed the new Broadcasting Law, which was drawn up by the Macedonian government in conjunction with nongovernmental organizations that work with media and media development. However, the implementation of this legislation is far from ideal.

As is the case for most countries in the region, the print media in Macedonia is still unregulated despite several attempts by the government to introduce legislation to do so.

In 2006, Macedonia passed the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character, which gives journalists, and for that matter the public, freedom to access and publish or broadcast information about public figures, including politicians. In practice, however, the law is of little use to the media. Journalists complain that procedural limits within the law make this piece of legislation ineffective (MSI, 2009). For example, Alfa TV’s attempts to obtain information on the cost of government media campaigns using the provisions of the law were futile. Subsequently, Macedonian journalists became discouraged about the utility of the law and continued to rely heavily on anonymous sources (MSI, 2009). Similar experiences are noted by the Macedonian

Young Lawyers' Association and the Foundation Open Society Institute – Macedonia; both organizations are implementing monitoring projects of this law.

In March 2010, the amended criminal code went into effect, decriminalizing slander based on the reporting of statements by third parties. However, libel and slander laws suits against journalists and the media are popular strategies used by the political and business elites. According to the Association of Macedonian Journalists, there were more than 160 ongoing defamation, libel, and slander suits contested in Macedonian courts during 2009. Journalists were ordered to pay more than 250,000 Euros (approximately \$358,000 American dollars) for cases they lost in 2007 and 2008. When libel was decriminalized, the ruling political party in Macedonia, VMRO-DPMNE, commuted criminal charges against 12 journalists from slander to civil charges in December 2008.

Media Fragmentation and Ownership Concentration

One of the characteristics of the Macedonian media system identified by Trpevska (2005) is fragmentation, i.e. there are too many media outlets operating on the national level or in local markets, in different languages, and often with a political affiliation. At the same time there is a concentration of ownership, with one person or company owning several media outlets.

Trpevska (2005) listed four reasons for media fragmentation, mainly addressing the phenomenon in the broadcast industry. The broadcast media were historically not perceived as a business, but rather as a means to exerting political or economic pressure, and this perception persists to this day. Secondly, the economic forces in the Macedonian media industry in general are not functioning according to free market principles. The political inclination of commercial

advertisers continues to influence advertising sales in the media. Trpevska (2005) also listed financial interventions from the state or foreign donor organization as a third reason for media market fragmentation. Here she includes grants donations of technical equipment by foreign non-government organization or state organizations with media development component, like Foundations Open Society Institute (FOSI), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Press Now, Dutch NGO, and on the other side the budget subventions and tax funds that are intended to stimulate the production of programs of public interest. The last two have changed somewhat in the last seven years. Foreign donors, since 2005, started decreasing or completely closing media programs²⁴. Media subsidies from the state budget also stopped or decreased. The subsidies for the print media stopped in 2004 after pressures from the Association of Print Media of Macedonia (APEM) and the international media donor community. Budget support for broadcast media is still present, however the money are decreased and mainly goes to the private program production companies for production of programs of public interests. Previous, these funds (10% from the collected broadcasting fee) were used by many broadcast organizations as a way to pay for their broadcasting fees and survive (MSI 2003). Due to financial constraints, Trpevska (2009) claims that the majority of Macedonian media, particularly the small local media, offer low-quality programming and are often dependent on political parties and the business community for additional subsidies.

Media ownership is also problematic. Despite provisions in the 2005 broadcasting law that prohibit politicians, public service officials, and their immediate families from owning

²⁴ USAID and their NGO contractor IREX closed the media development program in 2005; Press Now is present with funds distributed through the informal network called International Media Fund (IMF) together with FOSI and donors from Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden.

media outlets, research conducted by ABG Nielsen during September 2009 revealed that majority shares in three of the five national television stations were owned by political leaders and people with obvious political aspirations. This is similar to the situation before the 2005 Broadcasting Law.²⁵

Broadcasting System

The absence of media regulation during the first six years of Macedonia's independence influences the contemporary Macedonian media landscape: "The fact that pluralism in the media was created before any regulations significantly influenced the later development of the broadcasting industry and the specific traits of the Macedonian media market" (Trpevska, 2005, p. 61). Trpevska described how in the early post-independence year it was easy to launch a radio station given a little extra money and space, and to turn a video rental store into a television station with the main studio in the living room. One could register the business the same way you would a trading company. Given the ease with which a media company could be registered, Sopar (2002) estimated that there were 250 broadcast stations in Macedonia by 1996. Since regulations were put into effect in the late 1990s, this number has dwindled. According to the Broadcasting Council, in addition to the public broadcasting service Macedonian Radio and Television (MRT), there are 147 commercial broadcasters and three non-profit broadcasters in 2009. The Public Broadcasting Service, Macedonian Radio and Television, broadcasts three television program services (MTV1, MTV2, and the Parliamentary Channel) via terrestrial transmitters and MKTV SAT via satellite. In total, 77 legal entities have television broadcasting licenses, five broadcast nationally using terrestrial transmitters, 16 broadcast nationally via

²⁵ See Trpevska (2003).

satellite, 10 legal entities broadcast on regional levels, and 47 on local levels. The five national commercial terrestrial broadcasters are: A1 TV, Kanal 5 TV, Sitel TV, Telma TV, and Alsat-M TV.

There are 71 radio stations in Macedonia, which broadcast 77 radio program services; Macedonian Radio and Television alone offers six radio program services. Out of 68 commercial radio stations, three broadcast nationwide (Antenna 5, Kanal77, and Metropolis), 16 radio stations broadcast on regional levels and 49 on local levels. There are also three nonprofit radio stations that broadcast on the local level, and an estimated 60 cable operators broadcasting programs from regional and international media.

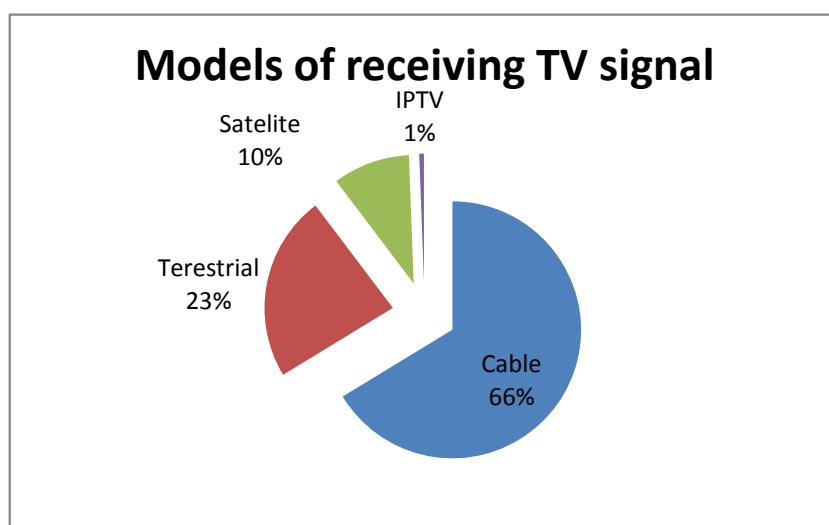


Figure 1: Broadcasting Council, 2009

The strongest on the broadcasting market is A1 TV. Since its creation in 1993 it consistently has the highest viewership ratings, and, thus, the highest percentage of advertising sales. ABG Nielsen data from September 2009 shows that A1 had an almost 21% share of the market; the second most watched station, Sitel TV, had a 13% share. In terms of viewership of

the main news show in the same period, A1TV dominated with 27.43% share, while Sitel's news earned a 17% share. The other national stations had shares way below 10%. A1 TV is considered the strongest opinion making machine and a powerful tool for the owner. Ramkovski has admitted to participating in creating the editorial policy of A1TV, and for the other media in his ownership, to promote his interests. That was obvious during the 2006 elections when his party, the Party for Economic Recovery (PER), participated in the general elections. PER did not gain any seats, but became a strong supporter of the current prime minister, Nikola Gruevski. In 2008, Gruevski broke with Ramkovski and in the summer of 2010, on the celebration of the 20th anniversary of VMRO- DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity), Gruevski accused A1TV of bias and urged his supporters not to trust its reporting. Ramkovski maintained that VMRO DPMNE party and Gruevski were looking for excuses to shut down the station and jail him because his media outlets had started attacking government policies in the past two years. In November 2010 Ramkovski acknowledged that Gruevski “had offered him money from the state budget to air advertisements for VMRO DPMNE during the 2006 and 2008 elections (Dimovski, Dec. 24, 2010). When he was arrested in late December 2010, the media reported that he was suspected of tax evasion (4 million Euros or about \$5.25 million American dollars) since 2005 (Routers, Dec. 24, 2010).

Ramkovski also owns the A2 satellite version of A1TV and is the informal owner of three daily newspapers, *Vreme*, *Spic*, and *Koha e re*.²⁶ Until March 2010 he was a strategic

²⁶ He is not listed as a formal owner in his newspapers, but does not hide the affiliation in public.

partner in the Albanian-language daily newspaper *Koha* and its weekly edition, *Epoha*²⁷, a partnership acknowledged by the editor in chief and one of the partners in *Koha*, Lirim Dulovi. When this partnership abruptly ended, Ramkovski established a new Albanian-language daily, *Koha e re*, in March 2010.

The other national television stations that broadcast in the Macedonian language, Sitel TV and Kanal 5, have even more direct political links. The managers in both stations are sons of political leaders, members of the parliament, or coalition partners in the government. The fourth largest national broadcaster in the country, Telma TV, is owned by Makpetrol, a big oil company. The only bilingual (Albanian and Macedonian) national station, Al Sat M, has no political or business ties. From the time it was formed in 2007 until 2009, its market share grew to 3.39%. The public broadcasting system, MRTV, is in complete disarray and exhibits problems that are unlikely to be overcome in the near future. In 2009, it saw a 42% loss in revenue due to the economic crisis and a decrease of public payment of the broadcasting fee. The audience ratings of the three program services of Macedonian Television (MTV1, MTV2, and Parliamentary channel) have decreased from 11.6 % in 2008 to a 9.8 % market share in 2009 (Broadcast Council, 2009). In the same report Broadcasting Council noted that out of the 77 television stations in Macedonia, only 34 operated in the black. The others, including Macedonian Television, worked with losses.

The Broadcasting Council in its “Analysis of the market for the broadcasting companies in 2009” reported that the gross income from advertising in the television industry was 472 million Euros, which was 21.36% higher when compared to 2008; the net income from

²⁷ This stopped publishing soon after Ramkovski established *Koha e re*

advertising was only 25.6 million Euros, a drop of 6.24% from the previous year. During 2009, the gross income from advertising was 18.4 times higher than the net income, and the council explained this discrepancy as a result of the discounts that the television stations give to their clients that sometimes can range event to 90% from the official price (p. 100). In a news article on the financial revision of the political campaigns reveals that the biggest donors are the electronic media. The ruling VMRO-DPMNE party apparently received 97% discount from the national Kanal 5 TV station during the 2008 elections as reported by the Macedonia State Audit Office. Kanal 5 was the only station from the national televisions to provide such information (Cangova & Unkovska, Sep. 16, 2009).

The Broadcasting Council (2009) said that for 2008 and 2009 the Government of Macedonia, is among five biggest advertisers in the television industry. Belicanec (2009) projected that it could even have been the biggest advertiser in 2009 if income from all government branches (central, local, public services, and government agencies) was taken into account. He argued that the government's contribution to media advertising revenues in the country ensured that the industry was relatively sheltered from the global financial crisis in 2008 and 2009. The industry used this revenue to cover day-to-day running costs and to buy programs, mostly sport shows, series, and licensed entertainment such as reality and quiz shows. According to sources interviewed by Belicanec, the Macedonian government hoped to receive increased media coverage of its activity in exchange for its advertisement purchases. By late 2009 when the government spending on advertising dwindled, the financial crisis started to have a big impact on broadcasters' financial solvency. Notably, Belicanec commented that at that time the media suddenly started to be more critical in its coverage of political matters.

Print Media

Over 100 publications are regularly disseminated throughout the country. Because no licensing process is required for print media, no centralized or consolidated and updated overview exists for print media outlets. One can only guess the number of publications, which fluctuates depending on the economic and political situation.

Currently 13 daily newspapers, several news magazines, and a large number of entertainment (teen, women, and sports) titles are circulated on a weekly and monthly basis. Since 2003, the three largest daily newspapers, *Dnevnik*, *Utrinski Vesnik*, and *Vest*, are owned by one owner, MPM, which is the Macedonian representative of the German *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (WAZ), the only foreign media owner in the country.

The print media, unlike that of the other countries in the region, developed at a slower pace than the broadcast media.²⁸ Trpevska (2003) argues that this is due to the fact that the Macedonia printing and distribution system was essentially a monopoly before independence and it remained as such until 1996. *Nova Makedonija Publishing* owned the only printing press in the country and printed the four daily newspapers, two in Macedonian, one in Albanian and one in Turkish. *Nova Makedonija Publishing* had a developed distribution network and retail outlets. For some time following independence, this printing and distribution monopoly continued with the start of the independent weekly *Fokus* in 1993. The real competition started with the launch of daily *Dnevnik* in 1996. In the three years following, four more dailies started. Daily *Dnevnik*,

²⁸ Bulgaria and Albania, for example, had a much bigger print media, but fewer broadcasting media, because of tighter legislation and costs.

was printed at the first private printing house Evropa 92, and managed to develop their own distribution network of street sales, a practice that was later adopted by the other dailies.

Like the situation experienced by print media across the world, the Macedonian print-media face hard economic times. Circulation figures issued by the state statistics office are notoriously unreliable however the daily *Vreme* reported in February 21, 2010 issue that the circulation of the three WAZ papers had dwindled dangerously low and that the company faced a serious financial crisis. The three WAZ dailies have a combined circulation of fewer than 40,000 per day. Meanwhile, *Vreme* alone has a circulation of 42,000, and the free tabloid *Spic* has 50,000. According to the Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute (SMMRI) report from September 2009, which conducts audience research for print media, the sales and advertising income of all publications in Macedonia dropped significantly during 2009²⁹.

The traditional print media are facing growing competition from new media, especially among younger readers. Macedonia is one of the few countries in the world that is completely wireless. Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development, Internet access became easy and affordable in 2005. As of June 2010, there were an estimated 1,057,000 Internet users in the country, constituting approximately 50% of the population (2010 Country Report on Human Rights practices from U.S. State Department). The data from the State Statistics Bureau for 2007 showed that 33.2% of households in Macedonia reported that they had at least one personal computer, and 16.5% had access to the Internet at home. The youth were identified as the fastest-growing population of Internet users. Belicanec (2009) wrote that 400,000 Macedonians have Facebook profiles. Growing Internet usage poses a threat to the traditional

²⁹ Interview with SMMRI general manager Georgi Mitrevski and data from print circulation from several years.

print media: “The culture of internet use is strong in Macedonia and it poses a threat to the sustainability of the older media” (Belicanec, 2009). Most of the media especially the ones on the national level (print and broadcast) have web sites, and some, notably the A1 and publications of WAZ, even have small staff dedicated to the web editions only.

Journalists and the State of the Profession

Although the traditional print media’s future might be uncertain, the rise of electronic media increased the number of journalists. However, as Gross (2002) points out in regard to the media in the region as a whole, this boom does not mean that these media are appropriate for the process of democratization or that they have a professional journalistic culture. In fact, Macedonia’s Media Sustainability Index³⁰ (MSI) score for 2009 dropped significantly from 2.28 in 2008 to 1.71 in 2009, which has regressed into an “unsustainable, mixed system” (Media Sustainability Index report, 2009, p. 65).

The International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) MSI report for 2009 trend of falling scores for Macedonia is driven: “by the huge fines and enormous number of current lawsuits in front of the courts, further fragmentation of the market, and financial dependency of key media on the government advertising that resulted in pro-governmental coverage” (p. 2).

Political interference in the media has been noted also by the European Commission in its 2009

³⁰ The Media Sustainability Index defines five objectives of a successful media system and assesses media industries according to these objectives: 1) Legal and social norms should be protected, and free speech and access to public information should be promoted; 2) Journalism should meet professional standards; 3) Through multiple news sources citizens should be provided with reliable and objective news; 4) Independent media should be well-managed businesses and should allow editorial independence; and 5) Supporting institutions should function in the professional interests of independent media.

progress report as a source of concern given its tendency to lead to self-censorship and limit freedom of expression (p.17).

Journalists have also noted the pressures and influences of politics, as well as business pressures, on their work. Findings from a 2005 study conducted by the South Eastern European Network for Professionalization of Media (SEENPM) show that Macedonian journalists feel that outside influences lead to increasing self-censorship, the publishing of unconfirmed information, the excessive use of anonymous sources, a disregard for human rights and presumptions of innocence, and the development of close ties with political parties (SEENPM, 2005). In an analysis of the media in South East Europe, Udovicic (2005, p. 17) describes the Balkan media as stumbling in transition and facing stringent economic and political pressure that often cause censorship and self-censorship, which, in turn, lead to the extinction of fundamental professional standards.

The IREX Media Sustainability Index (MSI) has noted a continuous drop in professionalism among Macedonian journalists over the last five years.³¹ One reason for this, according to MSI panelists, is a general lack of experience. Reporting in all of the media but especially in broadcast is left to young and inexperienced journalists (MSI 2009; 2008). Many of them are not regularly employed and have a low salary thus often transfer to different media when they get a chance for a better salary. The participants in the MSI 2009 report indicated that since media outlets are politically biased, this is reflected on their everyday work; that they are

³¹ Journalism meets professional standards of quality is the second objective of the MSI index. IREX lists eight indicators for measuring the objective: reporting is fair, objective, and balanced; journalists follow accepted ethical standards; journalists and editors don't practice self-censorship; they cover key issues and events; pay level is sufficient to discourage corruption; entertainment programs don't eclipse news and information programs; there is existence of modern technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news; and, finally, there is a quality niche reporting (investigative, business, local, and political reporting).

exposed to the pressures in a multitude of forms—financial, professional, and political; and feel as they are under constant threat of losing their jobs and are pressured by the owners to report according to the political interests of the outlet. In the MSI report in 2008 the former president of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, Robert Popovski, stated that self-censorship is “ingrained” in the media and is practiced by journalists and editors not so much out of fear, but in the interest of career advancement. He was alluding to the practice when journalists who were covering a beat would take a job as a PR representative for the same office they were covering. The influence of politics on the media only increased with the arrest of Ramkovski and attempts from the government to close his media outlets (Gorgevski, Feb. 23, 2011).

Very little investigative reporting is undertaken, and daily events and issues are covered superficially (MSI 2009). Participants in the MSI reports from 2007, 2008, and 2009 point that their main sources insist on remaining anonymous; that issues are generally covered only once and not followed up; and rarely is a story broken by one medium picked up and covered by other media in the country so there is no increased pressure for accountability on the protagonists in these stories.

Professional media organizations are few in number and with little power. However, in the past two years growth in the number of such organizations and in their membership might bring some positive results. The newest organization is the Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers, launched in December 2010, with around 100 members. In its statute the Union pledged to help its members secure better working conditions and benefits, negotiating and signing collective agreements with employers on a national level and on the level of particular media outlet(s); establishing cooperation with the State Labor Inspectorate for the purpose of

protecting the rights of media workers in order to eliminating illegal work and providing adequate protection of employees; provide free legal assistance to members for protection of their individual and collective rights; establishing a close cooperation with domestic and international organizations who work in media sphere and media development issues. The Union in March 2011 was involved with the union representatives in the dailies owned by WAZ, *Dnevnik*, *Utrinski Vesnik*, and *Vest*, in starting negotiation for collective agreement which are ongoing. It remains to be seen how successful the organization will be.

The oldest and the largest journalistic organization, the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) was formed in 1946 as part of the communist system when every journalist regularly employed in the state media had to be member of the organization. With the change of the system in 1991, AJM kept the property it was given in the previous system, however it did not manage to undertake a deeper reform that would cause it to lose its reputation and to be perceived as a political organization rather than professional one. In 2001 with support from IREX ProMedia the organization changed the statute that decentralized the organization and opened regional offices, thus increasing the participation of journalists in the work of the organization from throughout the country. During the same period, AJM members drafted the new Code of Ethics, until then they had the old code from the former Yugoslavia. Despite these changes, the organization did not managed to improve its reputation among journalists, especially among the younger journalists who had started working in the private media. The AJM mainly comes under fire for its inability to protect journalistic freedom and is also criticized for its organizational failure (Lange, Jovanovska, & Nanevska, 2009). In December 2010, AJM changed the statute again allowing for a wider participation of journalists and other

media workers, and elected a new leadership from the younger generation. Since then, AJM has increased cooperation with the new Union and Macedonian Institute for Media, and taken an active role and reacting when politicians use media in their political quarrels³². In their reaction regarding the freezing of the accounts of A1 TV and the three dailies, AJM called on the government, ruling VMRO-DPMNE and on opposition leader Branko Crvenkovski “to stop with the political labeling of journalists, an often used practice by the political elites in the country”(AJM, Nov.28, 2011). The Association’s main organ for self-regulation is the Council of Honor that in the past few years has been more active instead of just observing and reacting on the breaking of the AJM Code of Ethics. The Council of Honor policed more than 30 breach-of-code cases during 2009 (MSI 2009), the highest number since 2001. Several journalists sued the Council for damaging their reputations.³³ Despite these actions, journalists do not respect the self-regulation process as a tool for improving the profession.

The Macedonian Institute for Media (MIM) is a nonprofit foundation whose main goal is to enhance the professional skills of journalists and media professionals, and to further professionalize the media system in Macedonia. Since its establishment in 2001, MIM has organized over 100 training sessions, workshops, seminars, and conferences. It has hosted more than 1,000 domestic and foreign media professionals (MIM brochure, 2010). In May 2008, the organization founded the School for Journalism and Public Relations.

³² AJM reacted on several occasions when the main political parties VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM named media and journalists to be working as spokespersons of the parties. This increased with political support that A1 TV, *Vreme*, *Spic*, and *Koha e Re* received from the opposition party SDSM.

³³ According to the IREX MSI 2009 report and a personal interview with then president of the council, Tamara Causidis.

The Association of Private Electronic Media of Macedonia (APEMM) that was formed in the 1990s when the first broadcasting law was enacted collapsed in 2009. The organization, which was very visible and relatively successful in government negotiations on legal matters and licensing, expired, “because of an inability to reconcile competing interests of the major media owners” (MSI 2009). Before the demise of APEMM, the Association of Print Media also collapsed.

The Macedonian media system is complex, with a slew of problems and experiencing much turmoil that makes the working conditions for journalists unstable. Political pressures, including hostility towards media that criticize the government and economic insolvency, have put many of Macedonian media and their journalists in a vulnerable situation. It seems Goss’s description of the journalism in Eastern Europe towards the end of the 20th century is still relevant in describing the contemporary situation in Macedonia. He writes that journalists during this time “disseminated a plethora of opinions, rumors, incomplete and biased information, and sensationalized accounts of everything from crime to politics” (Goss, 2002, p. 25). This is still a good description of journalism in Macedonia in 2011.

CHAPTER IV:

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Qualitative research best addresses the research question in this study: How do journalists in Macedonia understand professionalism in journalism and what is their perception of their role in Macedonian society?

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as:

“...a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretative naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p.3).

Simply put, qualitative researchers believe in a world of multiple realities. They understand that not everyone interprets and experiences the world in the same way. Qualitative methods are appropriate when the researcher’s purpose is to explore attitudes and perceptions of a certain group in an effort to gain a more comprehensive understanding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), as is the purpose of this study. As McCracken (1988) stated, in qualitative research the goal is not to generalize, not to discover how many and what kind of characteristic people share, but to “gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions according to which one culture

construes the world. How many and what kinds of people hold these categories and assumptions is not, in fact, the compelling issue” (p. 17).

Doing a qualitative study is appropriate, because, as Donbasch (2004) wrote, most of the work journalists do is about perceptions, conclusions, and judgments. How they see and evaluate reality is reflected in their products (p.135).

Theory

This study uses grounded theory and method as the most appropriate approach, considering the specifics of Macedonian society. As Jakubowicz (2007) stated, the transformation in post-communists countries is specific to the culture, traditions, and conditions of the transformation from one system to another.

The creators of grounded theory (GT), Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 30), in their seminal book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* wrote that GT carries the same benefits as testing theory and has one additional benefit: it is a theory that “fits or works,” since it is derived from data, not deduced from logical assumptions. They suggest that “generation of grounded theory through constant comparative analysis both subsumes and assumes verifications and accurate descriptions, but *only* to the extent that the latter are in the service of generation” (p.28). Their strategy of using comparative analysis for generating theory “puts a high emphasis on *theory as process*; that is theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product” (p. 32).

Charmaz (2005, p. 507) wrote that the term “grounded theory” refers both to a method of inquiry and to the product of inquiry. She stated that the GT methods “are a set of flexible

analytical guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle-range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development” (p. 507). The core of GT is “using constant comparative method *and* your engagement” (Charmaz, 2006, p.178). It encourages the researchers to remain close to the studied world and develop an integrated set of theoretical concepts *from* their empirical materials that not only synthesizes and interprets them, but also shows relationships within and in the process. She defines process as a temporal sequence that may have identifiable markers with clear beginnings and endings and benchmarks in-between (Charmaz, 2005, p. 508).

Charmaz (2006) claimed that after its creation in 1967 the term grounded theory has been packed with multiple meanings, and she criticized both Glaser and Strauss for abandoning their own stands on GT while adopting a more positivistic approach.

She summarizes her constructivist grounded theory as a research process which is fluid, interactive and open-ended; and the research problem leads to the initial methodological choices for data collection. Researchers, she claims, are part of what they study, not separate from it; grounded theory analysis shapes the conceptual content and direction of the study; the emerging analysis may lead to adopting multiple methods of data collection and pursuing inquiry in several sites; successive levels of abstraction through comparative analysis constitute the core of grounded theory analysis; and analytical directions arise from how researchers interact with and interpret their comparisons and emerging analysis rather than from external prescriptions. The theory developed represents an interpretative view of the studied world; it is a construction of reality, not an exact picture of it.

“We can view grounded theories as products of emergent processes that occur through interaction. Researchers construct their respective products from the fabric of the interactions, both witnessed and lived” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 178).

Grounded theory involves taking comparisons from the data and reaching up to construct abstractions, and simultaneously reaching down to tie these abstractions to the data. It means learning about the specific and the general, and seeing what is new in them and then exploring their links to larger issues or creating larger unrecognized issues in their entirety. An imaginative interpretation sparks new views and leads other scholars to new vistas. Grounded theory methods can provide a route to see beyond the obvious and a path to reach imaginative interpretations (Charmaz, 2006). But Charmaz’s approach to grounded theory is not without criticism. Glaser (2002) stated that [she] does not use GT, but instead remodels it to qualitative data analysis (QDA). “Her understanding of abstractions involved in theoretical coding, substantive coding, delimiting, theoretical sampling etc, etc, are missed, neglected or quashed in favor of QDA methods and descriptive capture,” (Glaser, 2002, pr. 9).

Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 32) wrote, “objectivity in qualitative research is a myth,” underlining the importance of the researcher as a tool in the study. In GT the researcher is part of the study because she/he is immersed in it, bringing to the research her/his own world view, training, and knowledge that influences how she/he frames the research question, how the data collection is conducted, how the data is analyzed, and finally how it is interpreted. But there are ways through which a researcher can acknowledge those biases and opinion through self-reflections and personal memos, thus separating her/his own views from those of the participants. Nevertheless, as Corbin (2008) admits, GT and the use of constant comparative analysis is an “extremely complicated process” in which “the analytic process, like any thinking

process... should be driven by insight gained through interaction with data rather than being overly structured and based on procedures” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12). The Corbin and Strauss (2008) and Charmaz (2006) guidelines in conducting the GT research and the analysis of the data were most suitable for this study.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) coined the term "theoretical sensitivity" to denote the researcher's ability to make a connection between the researcher's theoretical knowledge in the area of his/her expertise and connecting it with the data that emerges in generating a new theory.

“If the researcher is building upon a program of research or wants to develop a middle-range theory, a previous identified theoretical framework can provide insight, direction and a useful list of initial concepts” (p. 40).

The review of the literature points to various elements important to defining professionalism in journalism; and how journalists might perceive their role in society. It also included theories of influences on news content because journalists do not just construct the content as they see it. Journalists make decisions regarding the final products not just helped by their individual characteristics and background, but also by the accepted standards, values, and ethics of the journalists as a social group; the editorial policy and the newsroom organization of the particular medium; the position of that medium on the market; owners and the agendas of various interest groups; and, finally, the existence or not of professional ideology and the overall ideology in the society, the accepted norms and standards. Previous studies on Eastern European journalists (Coman, 2010; Volek, 2010; Metykova and Cisarova, 2009; and Pasti, 2005) were used as a base for the outline of the project and defining the central research question: “How do journalists in

Macedonia understand professionalism and their role in society and is that different from what they practice? In the description of the Macedonian media system in Chapter 3 it is clear that political and business affiliations of the owners influenced journalists and their work.

Additionally, the researcher asked “How did political and business influences impact journalists in Macedonia?” The research also addressed the issue of how years of experience, different positions within the newsroom, type of media, and the language of the media impacted journalists and their work.

Method

The data collection for the study of Macedonian journalists and their perception and understanding of professionalism and their role in society was conducted during December 2009. The researcher used the long in-depth interview as a method for data collection. This approach provides a wide range of information and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied. The researcher conducted 34 interviews with reporters and editors working in the media outlets that had the highest viewership/readership among the Macedonian and Albanian communities throughout the country, and have the largest number of employees, with the exception of the public broadcasting system, MRTV. These are all private, commercial media launched after 1991. The reason the researcher concentrated on these media is because they are perceived to have influence on public opinion. Such a perception held by the journalists might have an influence on their understanding of the profession, as well as on their understanding of their function and role in society.

Sampling

The respondents in this study were selected on the grounds that they are people “who have responsibility for the preparation and/or transmission of news stories or other timely information” (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes & Wilhoit, 2007, p. 256). For the purposes of this study, this definition encompasses journalists who cover political, economic, social, cultural and city or urban issues. In selecting the participants the researcher considered the need to draw from both print and television outlets, include both Macedonian and Albanian journalists, journalist with limited and extended years of experience, and include editorial writers as well as reporters. The goal of choosing a diverse group of participants was to collect as a broad range of perceptions, insights, and opinions for comparative analysis as possible, and for the development of a theoretical framework using grounded theory.

The researcher interviewed journalists working in Macedonian and Albanian language media because these ethnic communities are the most numerous and the division between these ethnicities is the widest. Various studies cited in the Introduction and in Chapter 3 show that even 10 years after the conflict of 2001 there is a wide divide between the two ethnicities and the media reflect this division, especially when covering sensitive political and social issues. This study does not include journalists from other ethnic groups or those working in the media producing content in other languages. The researcher expected to find differences among Macedonian and Albanian journalist regarding their educational, social, and political backgrounds that might have an influence on their understanding of professionalism and of their role in the society.

According to AGB Nielsen Media Research (September 2009) data, television stations with the biggest audience share are A1TV (19.18%) and Sitel TV(14.26%). Both are broadcasting in Macedonian only. According to the SSMRI readership research for the same period (September 2009) among the most read dailies, *Vest* has the highest ranking with 7.6 % of readers; and the difference between the second and fourth place newspapers is minimal: *Vreme* has 6.5 % of readers, *Spic* 6.3 %, and *Dnevnik* 6.2 %. *Vest* and *Dnevnik* are part of the WAZ group, with the distinction that *Vest* is more tabloid and sensationalistic, and *Dnevnik* is considered more analytical, serious, and more influential in creating public opinion. *Vreme* and *Spic* appeared on the market in 2004 and 2006, respectively, and both have changed managing editors several times since. Both papers have the same owner as A1TV. The researcher interviewed journalists working at A1TV, Sitel TV, *Dnevnik*, and *Vreme*. These are all Macedonian language media.

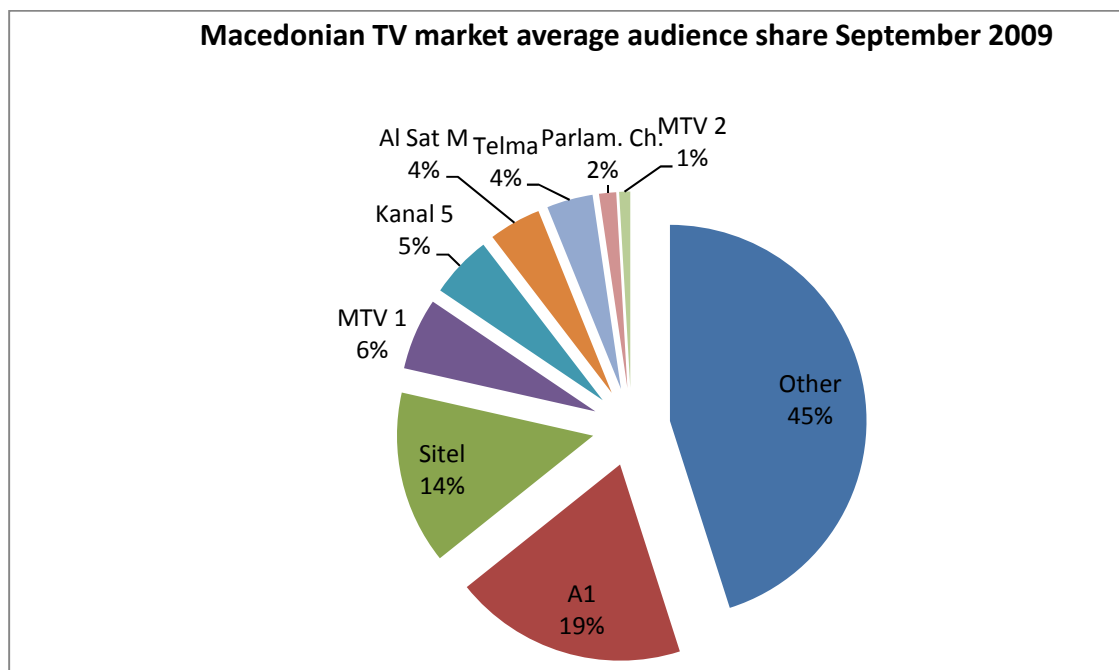


Figure 2: AGB Nielsen Media Research

Among the Albanian language media, the most watched station is the bilingual national television station Al Sat M (4.3% market share). The local Era (1.6 % market share) has programs only in Albanian, but has a very small journalistic staff. Al Sat M is an interesting station to study because it is an example of successful bilingual experiment, especially in light of the fact that all previous attempts at bilingual media failed. The newsroom has a mix of Albanian and Macedonian journalists producing news in their mother tongue and then the news is translated into Macedonian or Albanian language. The station has two newscasts; one in each language. The information that each audience hears is exactly the same. This is much different than the public television station, which has broadcasts in both languages, but has very different, and sometimes misleading, stories once translations are made. The most popular Albanian language dailies are *Koha* with 2.6 % and *Lajm* 1.8 % of the total market. But during December 2009, *Lajm* was going through financial problems and publishing irregularly, so the researcher was unable to find any participants from *Lajm*. In the Albanian language media the researcher conducted interviews with journalists working in Al Sat M (Albanians and Macedonians) and *Koha*.

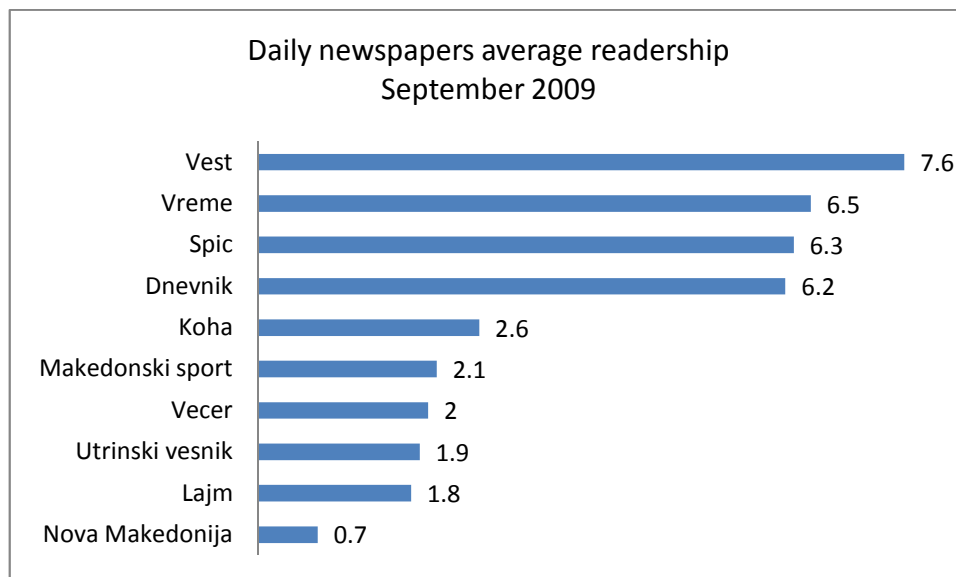


Figure 3: SMMRI³⁴

With regards to the years of experience, the researcher initially targeted two groups: journalists with 10 years or more of experience and journalists with less than 10 years, but no less than one year of experience. This distinction was made to see if there is a difference in their understanding of professionalism and their role connected to their experience and the position that they hold within the newsroom (reporter or editor). Also the difference in years spent in media would provide a comparison between journalists from the previous, communist system and those who embarked in journalism after that era. Although unanticipated, the research showed that effectively there are three groups of journalists: (1) the older generation, who started careers in the communist system, had successful careers in that system, and continued to advance in the new private, post-communist media; (2) the middle group of journalists (editors and reporters) who started their careers in the 90s as the private, non-communist media developed; they now have between 10 to 15 years of experience and work as editors (top tier positions) or

³⁴ SMMRI data shows average issue readership is 21.8% total readers 10-70 (1.630.000).

senior reporters who could make comparisons in different stages of media development in the past 20 years of Macedonian independence; and (3) The youngest group consisting of journalists with four and ten years of experience.

The researcher first contacted participants and made arrangements with older and middle group of journalists, whom she previously knew during her work as a journalist in Macedonia. They referred her to the younger journalists in their own media, but also people they worked with and that transferred to other media. Participants from *Vreme*, *Dnevnik*, and A1 TV suggested that journalists who were not presently working for them, but with whom they had talked about their work, could also be potential subjects in this research. The researcher had more difficulty in finding younger journalists willing to participate in the study; this was particularly true of the Albanians among them. The younger journalists said that they did not know what to talk about in regard to their journalism and how they work. Most often they also said they do not have the time to participate in the study.

For seven participants (P3, P13, P15, P16, P17, P19 and P24) the researcher used referral sampling.³⁵ P3 was one of the founders of *Dnevnik* and *Vreme*, and at the time this data was collected, he was editor in chief in *Nova Makedonija*. Each time he transferred to a different media, he was followed by a large number of journalists from the media outlet where he used to work (when he started to work at *Vreme*, almost half of the younger journalists that worked in *Dnevnik* moved with him and something similar happened when he left *Vreme* in 2009). In 2009 similarly large profile transfers happened from A1 TV to Kanal 5 TV. P13 and P17 were

³⁵ Singleton and Straits (2005, p. 137) said that this sampling technique is used when participants initially contacted are asked to supply names and contacts of members of the targeted group.

representing the older generation and could make a comparison between the journalism practiced in the previous system and the new system. P15 and P24 were younger journalists with five years experience; and P16 and P17 have unique experience with the lawsuits. P16 is the only journalists in Macedonia facing prison time if convicted for publishing state secrets while working on an investigative story.

The researcher conducted a total of 34 interviews. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed in Macedonian. Two interviews were not included in the analysis because of the bad quality of the recording (one interview was with an editor of a print publication in Macedonian and the second with a senior reporter in an Albanian language media outlet). Of the 32 interviewed, 24 are journalists from the initially targeted media (A1TV, Sitel TV, Al Sat M TV, *Dnevnik*, *Vreme*, and *Koha*) and 10 interviews with journalists that were working in other print and broadcast media. The analysis is based on 32 interviews – seven Albanian journalists and 25 Macedonian journalists. The imbalance between the number of interviews with Macedonian and Albanian journalists is due to the fact that there were more Macedonian-language media initially targeted, and the addition of journalists from Kanal 5 TV and *Nova Makedonija* increased the number of Macedonian-language media to six. Additionally, Macedonian-language media have larger newsrooms and it was easier to set up the interviews. Arranging interviews with journalists from Albanian-speaking media was more difficult. Three young journalists from *Koha* and Al Sat M said that they would not know what to say; two felt uncomfortable and were not willing to participate and were not included in the study. Despite the large sample of Macedonian journalists vis-à-vis the small sample of Albanian journalist, the analysis showed little difference between the ethnic groups in their understanding of professionalism and role in

society. The overall sample had 20 participants from print media and 12 from television. Seven participants have more than 20 years of experience; 14 are in the middle group with 10 to 19 years of experience; and 11 have less than 10 years of experience. Nineteen participants are editors, eight are senior journalists and five junior journalists. Among the editors P2, P22, P30 and P31 got their editorial positions when they had less than ten years of experience³⁶.

The researcher obtained a total of 2,257 minutes of interview recordings, with an average of 70 minutes per interview. Theoretical saturation was reached at about the 17th interview, but because all interviews were already scheduled, the researcher continued with them. The researcher invested more than 300 hours in collecting and analyzing data. Except for four interviews, all with editors in print publications, the other 28 interviews were conducted in restaurants and bars, which was a preferred venue for participants.

Long Interview

The researcher used the long interview as a method for data collection. It is a method that allows the researcher to investigate participants' understanding of journalism and how they define their role in the society. Interviews, like all qualitative methods, "can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11).

As a qualitative method, the long interview "is a focused intensive process that seeks to diminish the indeterminacy and redundancy that attends more unstructured research processes"

³⁶ Appendix 2 provides a detailed description of the participants' backgrounds.

(McCracken, 1988, p. 7). It allows the researcher to enter the everyday worlds of the participants and discover complex social connections that provide insight into these worlds (Morrison, Haley, Sheehan, & Taylor, 2002). By using long interviews with open ended questions the researcher hoped to understand the world as seen by the respondents (Patton, 1990) and put them in a fuller social and cultural context (McCracken, 1988).

Long interviews allow the researcher to become the instrument throughout the investigation. McCracken (1988) defines this as “self as instrument,” and it is mostly used in sorting the data and searching for patterns, concepts and themes. He writes that in this process the researcher matches her/his experience with the ideas and actions described by the respondents in the interview. This sort of matching can help to “fill in and flesh out what the respondents meant to say” (p.19).

Concurrently, the researcher has to acknowledge her own knowledge and perceptions of the phenomenon she is investigating. Her 14-year experience as a journalist allowed easier access to the participants, who trusted her enough to talk openly about their work and experiences. Participants who knew the researcher before the study, referred to events commonly witnessed, thus accepting the researcher as part of the same community. On the other hand, the researcher’s journalistic experiences heightened her awareness of her role as a researcher and forced her to acknowledge both her experiences and biases.

The researcher used a discussion guide in moderating the interviews. The purpose of discussion guides, as Patton suggested, is to “enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view through prior

selection of questionnaire categories” (Patton, 1990, p. 22); and McCracken (1998) averred that discussion guides are indispensable to the long interview method. Although McCracken states that a guide ensures that the material is covered in the same way with each participant, this was not possible in this study. With some of the participants certain questions prompted a line of additional questions to elicit further explanations. In these instances, the researcher asked for examples or additional explanations. For example in cases when their story was not published the researcher asked how they felt, what they did, how that influenced them when they were thinking of topics to write about or report on.

In the middle of the data collection period (Dec. 18, 2009) a new list identifying some journalists as “traitors” was published. This list was followed a similar list that was published in *Nova Makedonija* in November 2009 in which the paper listed the name of the people who got paid by the president’s office to participate in the debates President Branko Crvenkovski³⁷ organized during 2008 and 2009 that were criticized by the government and the media close to it (Jordanonovska, Nov.6, 2009). Both list received big reactions and the researcher decided to include an additional question to the interview guide: *How do you feel when you see these list of names of journalists and media published and labeled as traitors?* Inclusion of this question was important because it was an opportunity for reflecting on the present situation with journalism and its professionalism.

³⁷ President Branko Crvenkovski and the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, and his government had disagreements on important political issues, such as Macedonian integration in EU and NATO, and negotiation for the name with Greece so these events were perceived to be events against the government.

Coding and Analysis

Corbin and Strauss (2008) wrote that in grounded theory analysis and coding are two parts of one process. Codes denote the words of participants or description of the incidents as concepts derived from the analysis of the interviews.

“Analysis involves what is commonly termed coding, taking raw data and raising it to a conceptual level. Coding is the verb and codes are the names of the concepts derived through coding...It [coding] involves interacting with data (analysis) using techniques such as asking questions about the data, making comparison between the data, and so on, and in doing so, deriving concepts to stand for those data, then developing those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions. A researcher can think of coding as “mining” the data, digging beneath the surface to discover the hidden treasures containing within data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 66).

Coding means that we attach labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about. It is an essential link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain the data (Charmaz, 2006, p.46). Coding practices help the researcher see *her* assumptions as well as those of the research participants. Instead of raising codes to the level of objectivity, which cannot be achieved since the researcher is immersed in the study, it helps raise questions about how and why the researcher is developing certain codes (Charmaz, 2005).

Codes developed during the research denote the concepts and themes that are the foundations of the analysis in this data. The researcher initially used concepts derived from her previous knowledge and the study’s theoretical framework, but as the analysis progressed those

concepts enriched in details and changed and new concepts were discovered. Concepts emerging from the data represent the analyst's impressionistic understanding of what participants describe in their experiences, spoken words, actions, interactions, problems, and issues expressed.

The researcher using grounded theory has freedom to analyze data, interview by interview, and build upon the words of participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The analysis of the data and the coding was in Macedonian, and the researcher provided the translation of the quotes used in the analysis. In order to assure better quality of translation and to make certain that data is not lost in the translation, my partner, Iso Rusi, who is also a journalist with more than 30 years of professional experience, translated the quotes back into Macedonian.³⁸

Analyzing and coding the data in Macedonian was the most feasible strategy. Macedonian is the researcher's mother tongue, and the language in which she conducted the interviews. Additionally, if the interviews were translated entirely and analyzed in English it would have taken more time and more importantly some of the meanings would have been lost in the process Taylor, Hoy and Haley (1996) employed this strategy, when choosing to analyze the interviews conducted in French arguing that it preserves the meaning of the language and the emic or inside view and meaning of the studied phenomenon³⁹.

Charmaz (2006) proposed that coding in grounded theory consists of at least two main phases. First, is the initial coding, which involves naming each word, line or segment of data

³⁸ Translation in English and checking of the translation is an acceptable practice in research. It was employed by Taylor, Hoy and Haley (1996), and was suggested to the researcher by a committee member, Dr. Luther.

³⁹ An emic word, term, or description is used by the participants to describe the phenomenon studied, while the etic word or descriptor is used by the researcher to describe the phenomenon studied. The emic word represents the "inside view" and an etic word represents the "outside view". Utilizing the emic approach, where one becomes immersed in the data, the qualitative researcher observes, records, and interprets the phenomena from the participants' perspectives (Lindlof, 1995).

when the researcher goes through the data (interview) line-by-line. This is what Corbin and Strauss refer to as the basic or lower level concepts. And, second, is the focused and selective phase, which uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). This constitutes a higher-level of abstraction, that Corbin and Strauss (2008) define as categories, having bigger explanatory power, but less specificity. As they write, if the “conceptual pyramid” is correctly crafted, the categories will rest on concepts, which are directly connected to the data bringing with them the details and the power of description (p. 52).

The initial coding can be done word-by-word (good for documents and internet files), line-by-line, incident-by incident, or segment-by segment and each may generate a range of ideas and information. Line-by-line coding is useful in helping the researcher to fulfill two criteria for completing the grounded theory analysis: the fit and the relevance. The study fits the empirical world when the codes and the developed categories crystallize the participants’ experiences (Charmaz, 2005, p. 519). It has relevance when the researcher offers an incisive analytical framework that interprets what is happening and makes relationships between implicit processes and the visible structures.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) refer to focused coding as axial coding that connects categories to subcategories (concepts). It follows the development of a major category or theme. The purposes of the axial coding are to sort, synthesize, and organize large amounts of data and re-assemble them in new ways after the initial coding (Craswell, 1998).

Theoretical coding is the highest level of coding that comes after focused (Charmaz, 2006) or axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Theoretical codes specify possible relationship between categories developed in the previous phases of the coding. These codes are integrative, connect the categories into a logical story and move it into the area of the theoretical conception. Glaser (1978) listed 18 coding families that indicate specific analytic category, but merge conceptual distinctions. But Charmaz (2006, p. 66) warned that “these theoretical codes may land an aura of objectivity to an analysis, but the codes themselves do not stand as some objective criteria about which scholars would agree or that they could uncritically apply.” She adds that the theoretical families should serve to check whether they interpret all the data and not to force the analysis to fit the framework they give.

Reflexivity, as Corbin (2008, p. 31) pointed out is when the researcher and her feelings and emotions are “conveyed to participants, and, in turn that participants react to researchers’ responses by continually adjusting their stances as the interview or observation continues.” As it is impossible to be completely objective in any kind of research, the researcher wrote memos during the data collection and the analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2008) propose this method as part of the analysis of the data. The researcher also used this method to keep track of her own thoughts, understanding, and biases. The memos are intended as an internal dialog the researcher conducts with herself and, at the same time, analysis. (Corbin and Strauss 2008, p. 118). As Corbin and Strauss (2008) proposed, the memos differentiate between (a) the very personal, developed when the researcher was reviewing the recordings, reactions of the participants, and reflecting on what they said compared to her own experience, and the observation of the media

environment that was developing during the data collection period;⁴⁰); (b) the conceptual, developed during the review and transcription process when themes and concepts started appearing; and (c) theoretical memos, developed during the analysis of the interviews, review of the conceptual memos, during which the concepts and themes were connected and compared to the prior knowledge from the literature.

Glaser and Strauss's (1967) criteria for evaluating GT studies include fit, workability, relevance, and modifiability. The theory must fit the empirical world it analyzes, provide a workable understanding and explanation of this world, address problems and processes in it, and allow variations and change that make the whole theory useful over time. Charmaz (2005) offered her criteria for evaluation of GT: credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness. Her criteria for evaluation are closer to the Chicago tradition of interpretative qualitative research. Credibility is measured if the researcher achieved familiarity with the topic, and has sufficient data that contain sufficient range and depth to support the theory that comes out of the established categories. Originality concerns itself with the theory bringing new insights and if they challenge current and accepted ideas, concepts and practices. Resonance refers to the fullness of the studied experience, if it reveals links between larger community and the individual lives, and if the interpretation makes sense to the members of the particular community. And finally, usefulness is measured if the findings from the study can be used in people's daily lives and contribute to making a better society. The researcher believes that this study does meet these standards for evaluating the validity of the study.

⁴⁰ Referring to the list of journalists and media, appearing in some media close to the government, labeling them as traitors who worked for the Greek government to push for their solution on the name issue.

CHAPTER V:

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to discover: (1) How journalists in Macedonia define professionalism; (2) Whether or not journalists in Macedonia follow their own stated professional standards in practice; (3) What journalists in Macedonia think their role is in building a democratic society; and (4) How journalists in Macedonia view the state of democracy in Macedonia today. Despite the various types of media that participants represented, a number of themes, categories, and subcategories emerged from the data suggesting a very grim state of journalism in Macedonia.

The data revealed five major findings: (1) The Ideal vs. the reality, or when journalists do not behave according to professional standards, even as they define them; (2) Self-censorship as rule; (3) Blame game, as old journalists blame younger journalists and vice versa; (4) Education: acknowledged and ignored problem; and (5) Agents of change that cannot change anything. Consistent with the grounded theory approach, these thematic activities emerged from the data and constitute a theoretical framework that explains the phenomenon that is investigated here. These thematic activities and their interrelatedness are described in this chapter.⁴¹

All 32 interviews were initially analyzed line-by-line where various concepts were identified. As mentioned in the previous chapter the researcher, when starting the study and developing the discussion guide, used her previous knowledge of journalism in Macedonia and the study's theoretical framework, but as the analysis progressed those concepts enriched in

⁴¹ At the end of each thematic activity the researcher gives a summary of the theme. This strategy was used by Miller (2008) in his dissertation for clarity purposes.

detail and changed and new concepts were discovered. The initial first phase of analysis revealed, for example, different definitions and characteristics of professional journalist or journalism, but also participants understanding that such is an ideal not the reality in Macedonia; or how and in what cases some stories were ordered and some were killed (not published); how the ordering occurs and how participants reacted to it – agreeing “to play as he is told” with a “guilty consciousness,” “playing dumb,” or “not signing my name”. From the concepts developed in this phase the researcher developed the secondary axial coding in which the subcategories and the major themes took shape. In this phase one could see the dual reasoning of the participants between the ideal desired and the reality. The final phase was theoretical coding in which the researcher connected the themes coming out of the data with her memos written during the data collection as reflections, her previous knowledge of journalism in Macedonia, and the knowledge from the previous studies of journalists, news, and media presented in the literature review which helped develop the model of Macedonian journalism in transformation.

The following table is a list of some of the concepts that were used by participants on which the themes and the subcategories were developed.

Table 1: Concepts that the participants used to describe the subcategories and the main themes

Ideal vs. reality	Participants
<p>Professionalism defined as: “objective,” “fair,” “balanced” Journalist is : “independent,” “apolitical,” “knowledgeable”</p> <p>Cannot be a professional journalists if he/she is not ethical personally</p> <p>Credibility and integrity essential elements for journalists and protection from political labeling</p> <p>Journalism in Macedonia seen as far from professional</p> <p>Morning meetings like a factory line</p> <p>“feel free to propose any story” but not when it contradicts the interest of the owner or the editors</p> <p>It is acceptable and encouraged the same reporter to write story and comment on it “owners and editors two bodies with one head” Editors as copy editors or ghost writers Editors as a shield for the newsroom from owners, political influences Political interferences</p>	<p>All 32 participants</p> <p>P1, P27, P5, P14, P17, P24, P10, P9, P20, P6</p> <p>P5, P14, P24, P22</p> <p>All participants</p> <p>P7, P9, P10, P18, P20, P15, P16, and P21</p> <p>P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P30, P32.</p> <p>Print participants (P6, P21, P20, P27, P3, P15, P16, P32) P4, P13, P25 P15, P7, P9, P10, P16, P24, P8, P22, P27, P28 P3, P26, P6, P12</p> <p>P30, P3, P6, P26</p>
Self –censorship as a rule	Participants
<p>“rule” “part of the job” Tactics of selective issues and sources Prominence in the placement of the story Avoiding laugh from the colleagues Giving the scoop to other media with opposite editorial policy “Pawn used for somebody’s interests”</p> <p>no forbidden topic</p>	<p>P15, P18, P32, P20, P21, P24, and P29</p> <p>P15, P7</p> <p>P6, P22, P3, P12, P26 (most of the editors)</p>

everything can be published	
Self-censorship as a defense from libel suits	P15, P21, P20, P24, P28
Negative impact on investigative reporting	P7, P16, P14, P19
Blame game	Participants
Older guard defenders of professionalism Passed in the information process and replaced	P1, P3, P4, P13, P28 and P17 P17, P6, P4, P25, P23, P28, and P30
Younger are holders of microphones, Uneducated Lack of ambition Don't love the profession Unaware of their responsibility	P1, P3, P4, P13, P28, P17, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P23, P26, P30, and P31
Made deals with the politicians Betrayed their own professional standards Became activists and propagandists Open wound to journalism	P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P23, P26, P30, and P31
Advancing means taking sides	P7, P2, P15, P21, P24, P29, and P32
Education	Participants
Didn't learn much at the faculty, not useful theoretical the same starting position as the rest No back up profession, no choice	P1, P2, P8, P10, P15, P18, P19, P20, P21, P24, and P25
Good for networking Good to start thinking about journalism and the ethics Learning in the newsroom Learning by observing and by practice No good editors to learn from	P29, P19, P30 P31, P32, P21, P15 all 32 participants P15, P16, P21, P20, P24, P32, P7
Agents of change that cannot change anything	Participants
Information providers making the society better	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P20, P21, P23, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30, and P31
Mission from God	P12
Mission where the public is the highest arbiter	P27, P25, P1
Watchdog of the government and the institutions for the public good	P16, P14, P8, P7, P19, and P29

Ideal vs. Reality

All 32 participants regardless of the language in which they work or their media reports in, gave similar definitions of what they consider a professional journalist to be. As Metykova and Cisarova (2009) discussed in their study of journalists in Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, journalists in Macedonia also embraced the Western approach of defining professional journalism as “objective,” “fair,” “balanced,” “ethical,” “apolitical,” “unbiased,” “independent,” and abiding by the established professional standards.

P1: Those are the basic ethical principles that are contained as well in our Code of Ethics and the International Federation of Journalists: listen to both sides, treat them equally, be careful when writing about some categories of people, such as minors, with special needs, when covering accidents and disasters. If we respected these standards we would have better journalism. But in order to protect the interests of the owners these standards are broken daily.

P15:[A journalist is a] person who is above all independent, untouched by the political, party, business influences; somebody who has access to sources on all sides; somebody who will look at the issues and problems in-depth not just scratch the surface. I don't know...someone who has a big journalistic experience covering not only daily political issues, but is able to analyze some social issues in their core. But above all [a journalists is], someone who cannot be influenced.

P28: Professional journalism is when you present the reality as it is. Not to make some virtual picture, but to face the audience with the world as it is. You need to explain to people what are the obligations of the institutions and what are their obligations as citizens toward the state. To be objective and not take sides.

At the same time, while talking about professional journalism all of the participants said that journalism and media in Macedonia are far from that ideal. Their perception that Macedonian journalism is not professional was related to the symbiotic relationship between Macedonian politics, owners, and media, a repeating thread in all categories.

P2: Macedonian journalism is learning to be professional, but it's not there yet. We have unprofessional journalists who are now working for different interests. However, we as a group need to clean up the profession. Right now I don't see any interest in this being done.

P27: Our profession is kidnapped from us. It is under siege from propagandists and we don't do enough to save it. We have people like Latas⁴² who are not journalists. They are into public relations. He may not accept our Code of Ethics, but the International Federation of Journalists in its declaration says that people who respect professional standards can call themselves journalists. These people are not journalists. If I put on a white coat and go to the hospital that does not now make me a doctor. I cannot operate on people. Only here [in journalism] do you get promoted by not knowing what you are doing. Journalism has rules and you should know what you do and how you do it.

⁴² Dragan Pavlovic Latas is the editor in Sitel TV, station included in the study. However, despite several appointments the researcher was not able to meet with him.

However, several participants (P4, P7, P28, P27, P13, P3, P25, P16, P14, P12, P11, P2, and P8) said they personally think that they follow the professional principles listed above.

In this first theme, four main subcategories emerged. First, personal characteristics, integrity, and credibility are very important elements for a person to be considered professional (P1, P27, P5, P14, P17, P24, P10, P20, and P9). The second subcategory is the newsroom routines, in which the participants described some of the work conditions that, as they perceive it, influence the quality of their stories. There are differences from one medium to another, but across languages there are similar conditions. No established routines were connected to the third and fourth subcategories concerning the outside pressures from the political parties, the government, the owners, and the advertisers. There was also a lack of input in this category concerning the role of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia as an organization that should defend the rights of the profession. The (no) established routines were connected to the third and fourth subcategories - the outside pressures from the political parties, government, owners, and advertisers, and the role of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia as an organization that should defend the rights of the profession.

Personal Standards

The participants emphasized that professional journalism is very much dependent on the individual journalist's morals and desires to be perceived as trustworthy and credible.

P14: Ethical values come from personal predispositions and not from the profession. I am the same when I'm working as a journalist as when I'm not. To be professional it depends on the person, on your education. The values I have developed through

education, family, culture, society. To be fair in reporting and implement the ethical standards you need to be developed as a person and not be broken by pressures, frauds, and corruption. If you as journalist are not able to build credibility, then your work is worthless. Nobody will trust you if you don't have personal credibility, or if your medium is not credible. Who trusts Latas?

P10: If you want to respect some professional standards you as a person have to have a personal code of ethics, to know how far and deep you can go. The sources know that and they trust me.

P24: Personal dignity is most important for me as young reporter. If I lose that, I should not be in journalism. If I stain my integrity I will never be able to remove [that stain]. I cannot understand how some colleagues choose to work for some political party. You can like that party, but keep it for home when you are not working. You compromise and you put yourself in a role of a politician.

Personal integrity and credibility was important, as participants noted that they carry these things with them when they change jobs. These things were also seen as protection from being labeled as a supporter of a politician or political party. And labeling is apparently a very common practice in Macedonia.

P17: The moment you let one government to influence (in the newsroom) and make you the editor-in-chief in another medium you should know you are gone, lost. People who put you in that position don't respect you, and people who have you don't respect you.

You don't have identity, you become a tool in the hands of the politicians who can get rid of you in the moment they don't need you.

This was part of the explanation P17 gave in regard to some of the high profile moves of journalists from one medium to another. Those job shifts were mostly viewed as politically initiated when editors in one medium took the top-tier positions in another medium. Such was the case when the top two editors at A1 TV moved to Kanal 5 TV in 2003. Soon after that Kanal 5 TV became more favorable to the SDSM party that was in power at that time. However, participants (P31, P16, and P3) who had made such job changes said they did so as part of their attempt to find a better work environment.

Political labeling of journalists is not new, but as all of the older participants (P28) noted, this trend in the past five years is very blunt.

P27: Now, when you tell somebody that he or she is for SDSM that is not the start of the insult. That is the insult. You said everything with that."

The labeling was introduced and encouraged by the political parties and the government itself, but now journalists use labels to discredit their colleagues.

P5: It's not only the owner who labels you. He can't force you to do anything you did not agree to do. You label yourself. If I agree to work for somebody I have a contract describing what I do for the money I get. If I don't like it I can leave. ...We can protect ourselves best with our personal decisions. You are the one who provides the material used to label you, no one else.

P14: It's very hard to build some form of neutrality in journalism, especially in the Albanian media. Many of the journalists are politically connected, but even if they are not, if they write a critical text for DUI, they are labeled pro-DPA, or vice versa. My label is that I am close to DUI because I was working for three months as spokesman for the minister of economy. Funny thing is that I was kicked out of that job because people in DUI considered me to be close to DPA.

The Albanian participants claimed that such labeling originates predominantly from Macedonian audiences and less so from the Albanian ones, because politicians encourage such labeling given their elevated interest in having the Macedonian media on their side. As P14 said, somewhat ironically, the Albanian media owners want to be influenced by politicians, if that leads to more advertising and therefore financial survival. Contrary to that opinion, P27 locates the root of political labeling with the change of the system when some journalists, who are now prominent names in journalism, were “*not able to make a distinction between what is national and what is professional interest.*”

P27: We are the ones who build that feeling of patriots who defend the cause. There are older journalists who openly asked the president ‘how we can help,’ without even realizing that with that they capitulated as professionals. If this is done by people who call themselves journalists then...we need to have a serious lustration⁴³ among ourselves.

Such political involvement certainly is not new or characteristic only of the journalists and media in the former communist countries. Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) description of the journalists in the Polarized Pluralist model discussed traditions among Greek, Italian, and

⁴³ Lustration means to clean up the profession from the journalists that worked in the previous system.

Spanish journalists of political involvement. In Macedonia, as P13 explained, in the previous system one could not be a journalist without passing the ideological tests of the communist party and be judged before being judged fit to work as journalist, especially if one desired to work in television. It seems like similar checks are present today as well.

Newsroom Routines

This sub-category provided detailed descriptions of how daily work and newsroom organization influences journalists - how they work, how they decide what is a good story, and it is the area where their understanding of professionalism is adjusted to fit the daily routine and the organization's editorial positions. It was here where many of the participants said they were disillusioned by the profession and were considering a new vocation. Describing their daily work, participants revealed many problems they face and discussed how they deal with them. They touched on the practice of the regular daily planning meetings, writing stories and commentaries, use of sources, clarity of the editorial policy, and the role of the editor.

a) Planning meetings

A daily editorial planning meeting is an established practice at both the Macedonian and Albanian dailies, while such meetings at television stations depended on the editors and directors. Of the television stations, only Al Sat M had regular planning meetings similar to those at the dailies.

During these morning meetings at the newspapers, the editors and reporters discuss the topics to be covered in that day's edition, and reporters propose stories on which they will be

working. In these meetings, as seen by participants, the editorial policy is implemented and the editorial position for the biggest stories is determined. Depending on the nature of the newspaper, there is a difference in the work-load. In a bigger newsroom, the reporters work on one story per day (*Dnevnik*), whereas in a smaller newsroom, which was the case with the Albanian paper *Koha*, they work on two to three stories per day.

Participants (P7, P9, P10, P18, P20, P15, P16, and P21) described these morning planning meetings as “a factory line” (P10). They outlined their ideas for stories for that day; stories were approved without many questions being asked, particularly on issues and topics considered less important by the editors. Under these conditions, the journalists feel they have the autonomy to pick their own stories, the sources they will consult and the angle that the story will take. The only additions are made when the editors want an editorial comment on the same topic; the comments, of course, were written by the journalist writing the news story, a process that was valid for all media. Beyond the planning meetings, stories are not discussed with the editors unless requested by the journalists or if the editors consider a particular story sufficiently important to instruct the journalists on what kind of sources to seek out or what angle to include or exclude (P21). This type of discussion is usually carried out only with the younger, less experienced journalists.

P10: Journalists are left to work alone. The editor comes up at 3 p.m., asks you where you are with the story and only the next day you'll see what was left of it and how the story was published.

On the other hand, participants working for television stations said that planning meetings are more informal and carried out between the editor of the day who is preparing the news (like in A1, TV Sitel) and the younger reporters.⁴⁴

P26: When I'm editor of news tomorrow, I start working on it the day before. I wait to see what will be happening tomorrow and what can be covered. Formal editorial meetings do not take place every day. We have more free informal communication, which sometimes is good, but sometimes mistakes happen [when the journalist misses the event; or does not understand the instructions from the editor; or the story is aired unedited.]

Or as a P24, a younger reporter described the situation in his station, Kanal 5 TV.

P24: We had meetings with ... [the name of the previous editor is deleted] at night after the news. Now they moved that to the morning and it is not a problem if you miss [it]. [Now it is more] disorganized, there is lack of coordination, and on top of it nobody bothers to tell you something, to advise you how to correct mistakes.

As P26 and P28, both editors, explained when they know they will be assigned to the main news, they make a plan the night before and in the morning they either phone or meet with the reporters to tell them what they want done. Both agree that this is sometimes a chaotic and uncoordinated process. P25, a senior reporter/editor, who has been at the same television station since it started in the mid 1990s, said that in her 17-year career she had never seen a planning meeting similar to those in the print media. She sees the absence of such a practice as a “*manipulation and*

⁴⁴ TV stations don't have producers like in U.S. The production of the newscast is coordinated by the editor of the day who is also the anchor of the newscast. This is further complicated in some stations because each editor implements its own editorial policy, which in some cases is very different from one to another editor working in the same station, like in Sitel TV.

authoritarian behavior on the part of the editors.” Even with the editorial directions for the anchor the broadcast journalists considered themselves independent in reporting stories. All of the participant reporters said they feel free to propose any story, except if it is on a topic that is touching the personal interests of the owner or the editor. Many of the participants (P1, P15, P16, P12, P20, P21, P29, and P24) in the study even said that they knew what they could do and what they couldn't, and had accepted that as something that comes with the job. This attitude is connected to the second major theme of self-censorship, and is discussed in detail later in the analysis.

b) Reporting and commenting

It is not unusual for the newspapers to assign one reporter to do a story and have the same reporter do a commentary on the story, often on the same day. Many of the participants from the dailies considered this to be a good practice (P6, P21, P20, P27, P3, P10, P15, P16, and P32). Some even prefer to write the opinion piece if it is on their beat, because they know the situation and the issue better than anyone else (P10, P15). Editors, including P3, P6, P2, and P12 said that this practice is useful for the younger journalists because it teaches them the clear distinction between the news story they are asked to write, and the commentary piece for which their editors ask. P6, an editor, said if the reporters don't have the opportunity to write commentaries, it limits their freedom to say what they think.

P6: That young reporter has to learn what news is and what commentary is. Don't you think that you should give him the space to express his own opinion? If you don't, after some time they will start going around and complain that you censor them. A journalist

who is covering the name issue [negotiations with Greece] for a year-and-a-half should have his opinion on the topic and should be able to say it in a commentary. Better there than in the news story.

However, the participants were not clear if the commentaries published on the op-ed page, usually with their name and photograph, are their opinion or reflections of the paper's editorial policy. So, for example, P6 considered these commentaries to reflect editorial policy and P21 considers it her own opinion; both work at the same paper. Similar confusion existed in other dailies.

P15: I was working on a story about conflict of interest and how the government deals with it in terms of its employees. This was analytical story in which I had to find examples and how the issues were resolved or not. I had only four hours to write the story and before I did it, I had to write the comment on it. It is still not clear in my mind what the story is about, and I have to comment on it. Also, a comment needs to represent the editorial policy of the paper not just my opinion.

P21: It is my opinion but sometimes I have editors who tell me what to write and I do so only if I agree with their position.

Regarding the writing and producing of stories, all the participating reporters, not surprisingly, complained about the short deadlines. And because of the deadlines, all of them said that the majority of the stories they write use the same formula: call three sources for statements, add a little background, and the story is done.

P15: We are required to do more analytical stories and we go out rarely. That bothers me a lot. You don't cover daily events and that impedes further and deeper analysis of that event. My job now is an office job. I do analysis of something that happened in the past, I call people on the phone and the time I have to finish with that analysis is very short (five hours) so you don't even have time to go out and see what is happening anywhere.

P18: There is no time to look for more information, to investigate, and confirm the information before the story is published. You have to submit the story on time, before the edition is closed.

Fifteen participants mentioned that use of anonymous sources is a regular practice and they don't mind it, because if they insist on naming the sources they will either not have the story or be less exclusive. When the source wants to be unnamed they seek documents or simply trust the sources and publish the information as it is.

P9: Well many want to go anonymous because they are afraid....They are afraid for themselves, of you, of getting sued, they are afraid for their position in their party, in their company... Many of them want to abuse you and give you false information. For me it is less of a problem, because I'm older, I already have sources I trust and I know where to check the information. But many younger journalists don't know that and they end up in court.

Younger participants know they need to check their sources, and are aware that it is wrong not to do so, but feel like they can't do much about it.

P15: The editor does not ask me who my source is and sometimes I do want him to ask. I want to talk with him about the issues I have with the story, but that rarely happens.

Several of the younger participants added that if they don't use anonymous sources they can't complete their stories. They do try to access pertinent documents and if they don't feel comfortable with the information they have they can refuse to write the story, without any consequences.

c) Editors as copy editors and ghost writers

In many of the media outlets the editors rarely work on their own stories,⁴⁵ so their deadlines come when the pages or the newscasts must be constructed, and they have to edit stories. And because of the short time they available to them, either they do not see the story until the last minute (the practice in all of the stations that were included in the research) or are left to rewrite the story on deadline

P29: Most of the time they [editors] don't see the story before it is aired. This happens, only when they have a young reporter covering something. This is a practical problem. For example the editor says he wants a minute-long story and if the reporter didn't really understand what happened during the event, he constructs a two-minute long story. The editor should be the one who edits the story, makes it shorter, to the point. That is the role of an editor.

⁴⁵ This was slightly different in the Albanian-language media where the editors still cover daily events and write stories, mainly because of the smaller newsrooms.

In the same television station, because of peculiar editorial policy, it is not unheard of for the editor to write the story and the reporter to read it on the air.⁴⁶ This was mentioned by P28 and P22, but P29 said he did not have this happen to him, nor does he know of anybody else having had such an experience.

P22: The editors give directions where they want the story to go. And although it doesn't happen often, there are cases when the editor writes the story and the reporter reads it. The journalist can say he doesn't want to do the story as he is told to do it and it will have no consequences, but if he does the same thing multiple times he will lose his job. After all we are talking about professionals and if that happens more than 10 times that is a sign that they don't want to work. They know the editorial policy of the station, and if they don't agree with it they can leave.

Ten (P1, P2, P6, P8, P11, P19, P22, P23, P27, and P28) participants in editorial positions pointed to this practice as constituting poor journalism. P8 described it as “bad service to the journalist” and, as he explained, in his television station that is done primarily because of bad writing and reporting by the journalists. The reporter usually agrees with the changes if, he is consulted, but there have been cases, and several participants mentioned that as something that happened to their friends and colleagues, in which they saw their bylines on stories they did not author.

P27: There is a practice of writing stories under the name of young reporters. This is happening, also, in some print media and I know journalists whose names were signed

⁴⁶ As P22 explained the editorial policy of Sitel TV is to support the government, but there is a difference in how that is done. “Some editors are very blunt and arrogant, while others are more professional and know how to pack the information more subtle.”

under commentaries [and news stories] they never wrote. That is shameful, but on the other hand they went along with it. And we all keep quiet about it. And when that happens to us there will be no one to defend us.

The lack of clear rules for writing, use of sources, short deadlines, and not having the clear division of labor creates a sense of freedom; P3, P6, P8, P15, P26, P30 said that there is freedom, that is, literally anybody can write and say whatever they want and that is a problem for everybody.

P15: There are no rules by which we play. Somehow the freedom that we have is so big that it creates negative impact. Right now we can comment in the news story, we can come to a conclusion, we can say “experts say” and we give our own opinion on the issue. Often I find myself incompetent to give my opinion and I need to consult experts. Who am I to say what is going on and what I should do when I don’t consult experts and don’t provide their opinion. Seldom will you see just plain information.

Only P27 mentioned freedom to say something, yet that there is the responsibility to be right and correct when putting out information.

Outside Influences

The owners’ and the political parties’ influences on the media and on their content is a big problem in Macedonian journalism. The problem was identified in Chapter 3 where the characteristics of the Macedonian media system were discussed. An owner’s interference in the editorial policy and their relationship to the political system has an impact on the conduct of journalists.

a) *Owners and their influence on the editorial policy*

In almost all cases when participants discussed editorial policy, they said it connected to the owners. Only participants from *Dnevnik* and *Al Sat M* said that the editorial policy is decided and implemented by the editorial board, with no direct or indirect interference from the owner. The owners, as the editors from these two outlets explained, were informed of the editorial policy and consulted but never interfered in editorial decisions. However, the reporters did not always know the editorial policy of their news outlet.

P10: Nobody sat with us and said, "This is the editorial policy." That is something you can guess from the air. I happened to travel together with the editor-in-chief when he shared his vision, or I should say his managerial politics, but nobody sat with us to tell us how they want us to write, what style... and I guess you write depending on the taste of the editors, some want a more informative style, some a more narrative one, and you can only guess who will read the text that day.

P24: I know the editorial policy I see it each day on the news. So, I keep my mouth shut and wait for it to pass.

P16: That is what you read, from the agenda of the stories published. More or less I know our editorial policy from that. But that is not so simple either. I know the political beliefs of my editor-in-chief and I am sure that he is not the man who is making the editorial policy on the newspaper. Who is doing that I can't comment on, from owners to.... I don't know... many factors.

P21: I don't know what our editorial policy is. ...Sometimes we write against the opposition, and the next day against the position. We are spiting on everybody... yes I think that's it... we spit on everybody. Sometimes, when we have the morning meetings some of the colleagues from the political or economic section will propose a topic and the editors start laughing and saying aaaa not now. That can be if that is a cousin, or friend of our owner or they are advertising with us. If I don't understand why they laugh I'll ask some of the older journalists, but never the editors.

Editors P26, P22, P12, P6, and P3 said that they have regular daily meetings and consultations with the owners and, in the case of P12, co-partners regarding editorial policy. These meetings, they claimed, did not change the editorial policy or at least not the general policy of the media outlet (P26). However, at the same time, they did acknowledge that the interests of the owners are present in the daily running of the media operation.

P22: The editorial policy in our station is complicated and I can say not defined. People see us as pro-government and yes we are. We are literally messengers of the government (Macedonian part). But sometimes we do that [with stories that are] nicely packed and sometimes more bluntly. It is even more complicated, because we have six editors and each day depending who is the editor of the day, you have a different policy. This might be confusing for the viewers, but if one judges by the level of viewership, they obviously like it.

P26: When I was coming to the editorial position [in A1 TV] I sort of knew the general policy and that general position is still the same: to respect the freedom and rights of all

people in Macedonia; one that sees Macedonia as a future member of EU and NATO with open borders. This policy was never negated, but there were oscillations in it. Yes, I have regular meetings with the owner and we discuss politics and editorial politics but it is still in the frame of the general politics of the station.

However, his colleague who is also an editor in A1 TV does not agree with that conclusion.

P23: The politics of my station changes daily even though I'd say it's closer to the opposition than pro-government. My colleagues at other stations have easier jobs; they know where they belong. We depend on how our owner will think on certain issue, or where his interests will be. If he thinks that it is something we need to criticize we will do that, if he thinks that is good we'll praise.

Other, older participants made similar statements. P4 even described this as being akin to having two bodies with one head or as another veteran (P25) said, the owners know they cannot serve as editors so they hire whoever agrees to play the role.

Interestingly, all the editors in higher positions in the newsroom hierarchy who participated in the study said they see themselves as a "shield" in the newsroom, protecting it from the interests and pressures of the owners and from political influences.

P3: It's up to them (editors-in-chief) how they play the game, because every owner wants to interfere and every politician will try to win you over.

But that shield role, even if well intentioned, produces many serious consequences. When the owner of the most influential private television station, A1 TV established a political party and participated in the general elections in 2006, P4 explained that he made a deal with the owner wanting to protect the newsroom and the reporters from his influence.

P4: Instead of letting him fire me or me resigning, which would have caused journalists to suffer, I made a deal with him. The half hour will be news – objective, and according to the professional standards and the recommendation of OSCE⁴⁷. We agreed that I would leave the last five minutes of the news broadcast for him. But this was still part of the news and that caused a wave of consequences. He realized the power of the medium; he realized that he could not make any further compromises with me and created a team he could completely control. It was stupid when he came out and publicly said that what he wants will be on television.

With this decision P4 contradicts his own professional standards: “*My personal credibility meant that I will not accept to be a transmitter of political and business interests*”.

But, his decision is seen as just that, agreeing to play the game as he was told to. P25 mentioned this case as an example of how editors let owners do what they want.

When older and more experienced editors and journalists bend the rules, it is hard to expect younger journalists to refuse assignments requested of them. The only way for them to protect themselves is not to sign the story or to play dumb.

⁴⁷ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

P21: Journalists don't want to write in the interests of their owners, but sometimes you have to. I was writing for example when Velija [Ramkovski] and Dnevnik were in a [media] war, but did not sign the stories. We were allowed to do that. I would not sign it ... ever.

She explains that the material was given to her and all she needed to do was to rearrange it. As she said, *“it's like putting together a story from prepared pieces. I would be ashamed to put my name under such story. And I could end up with a lawsuit and pay for it later.”* P24 had a similar experience when his editor-in-chief sent him to meet with the owner's attorney and write a story on the court case he was litigating. The editor did not say it outright but P24 was expected to defend the owners' interests in his news story. During the meeting with the attorney, the journalist heard about accusations against other people who were competitors of the owner, but he saw no documents to confirm the accusations. As he explained, he did not have to ask if he could use the owner or the owner's lawyer as sources. It was understood that neither the name of the lawyer nor that of the owner could be mentioned as sources in the news story.

P24: I was pretending that I am having a hard time understanding the case and could not wait to get out of there. When I got back I explained to the editor what it was and luckily she agreed to give the whole thing to another editor ...(name excluded) so she dealt with it. I was just trying to get out of there and save myself.

b) Political interferences

Owners communicate with their editors in setting up the editorial policy but that does not exclude the exercise of more direct, overt political influences and pressure on editors and reporters.

Many of the editors (P13, P1, P3, P27, P28, and P31) said that up until 2005-06 the editors, usually the editors-in-chief, were the ones communicating [having meetings, consultation and briefings with representatives from the government] public policy and on that basis making the editorial policy of the media outlet. Now, only the owners are involved in the meetings with the government, and then the editors get directives from the owners regarding what the editorial policy is. P30 had a top editorial position in Kanal 5 TV and directly experienced this situation, before changing job and joining a newspaper. He explained that after the 2008 elections, the owner whose political party is part of the government and the political structure in power, asked from him and the whole news team not to be so critical toward the work of the government and these requests increased daily, even calling for specific, favorable stories to be written.

P30: At the end they asked for something that I could not do. Look, these instructions were not written texts, but they were exactly that - instructions. For example the owner gets back from the meeting with the prime minister and says that the prime minister asked if we can "help him" regarding the four main stories – the [Macedonia] name issue, the [progress] report from the European Commission, the Hague cases [from the 2001 conflict], and in the relations with the coalition partner DUI. These are the four biggest political stories of the day. When he asks to help that is just a euphemism to cheer for

them; to be critical of everybody who is criticizing him; or not to do a certain story; or when we do write about those issues, to be more favorable rather than critical.

He also received phone calls with similar “instructions” from the Prime Minister’s office almost daily, but he had only a “*few meetings in his office.*” Another government practice designed to control the media and its content that was described as common by several participants (P3, P4, P6, P32, P26, P28, P29, and P30) was the use of government briefings, the equivalent of White House briefings. In the Macedonian case, these events are not always public. The government and various ministers will call journalists for briefings in their offices or send a fax to the newsroom, titled as a briefing paper, in which they say what the journalist should say in the story; usually it is understood that the source of that information cannot be mentioned. P3 saw no problem with this practice as long as the information is checked and the reporter digs for additional information. But he was amazed that some of his colleagues published everything, for example, a word-for-word report of a briefing paper, published without checking with other sources or against additional information.

P30: Each government has briefings where they try to spin something but it was never done so bluntly and vulgarly. But this government demands that you publish the news story as they want it published. Another side or approach is not allowed. If the briefing is of such a nature you cannot even use a term to identify the source such as a “source in the government.” That is not allowed. They say invent a source. Like the opinion fell from the sky, do you understand me? I was a witness in several such situations and I hear from colleagues that such practice continues. There are people from the prime minister’s cabinet who send e-mail to reporters and expect it to be disseminated as their [the

journalists'] story. That is Macedonian journalism today. Of course, the public does not know that.

P32, a younger reporter, confirmed this practice. As he explained, the unwritten rule of not identifying the government sources in the story is so normal that they don't even attempt to fight it. If they identify government sources, they will no longer receive government generated information. As he said, he knows it is not right to keep sources anonymous, but everybody does it. So his solution is to use the terminology used in the briefing paper: *"A source in the international diplomatic community said..."*

c) AJM is perceived as political organization

In elaborating on the lack of professionalism in the media today, almost all of the participants touched on the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, and problems that are related to how it functions. The AJM was criticized for serving as a political organization, similarly to how it functioned under the communist era. Instead of providing protection and security for journalists from owners and political powers, they side with them. Their commitment to reinforcing professional standards was considered insincere.

P6: I was never and will never be a member of AJM. That is a political organization not just now, but even when it was formed back in the old system.

In 2009, a group of journalists from different media outlets started an initiative for (another) reform⁴⁸ in AJM with support and financial assistance from the American and British

⁴⁸ IREX Promedia (USAID program) in 2001 helped in drafting a statute, the present Code of Ethics, and decentralize AJM, but the leadership of the organization did not changed.

Embassies. This initiative was mentioned by several of the participants, some of whom were involved in it, and had a different vision of what the role of AJM should be.

Some wanted the Association to serve as a union or to be the advisor to the government and to private companies regarding the choice of media outlets for their advertising campaigns. Only few saw it as an organization with a mandate to reinforce professional standards and codes of ethics.

P6: AJM is not doing what it is supposed to do - defending the rights of journalists. First, we need to have the basic rights - work hours, salary, vacation time, insurance, work conditions - and after that we can talk about the pressures from the prime minister and the standards. If you know that you can lose your job; that you don't have a salary; or you are not insured; if you know that your union rights are not protected you will do what you are asked.

P12: We need, through the Association, to force some rules regarding how and where the government and the bigger advertisers will put their campaigns. This advertising money needs to be spent most influential and most professional media. With that you as Association will stimulate further development of professional journalism.

P12 was especially concerned about the distribution of the state money for public advertising companies because Albanian media (an issue also mentioned by P5, P11, and P14) receive very little revenue from these government funds, and have traditionally earned less from private company advertising, which further exacerbates their financial situation.

Many of the younger participants did not know what the role of AJM is, or anything about it. P20 and P21 did not see any reason why they should be members of the organization. They did not know anything about it except that many of their colleagues who needed a visa⁴⁹. As P21 said, she has no clue what AJM stands for, but noted that many of her older colleagues don't have a high opinion of it. Despite the fact that P15 used some of AJM's services, P15 shared P21's opinion about the organization.

P15: To tell you the truth, AJM doesn't mean anything to me. I don't respect the people who are in the leadership, and I haven't seen any effect from their work, except for providing legal assistance when I lost my lawyer in the case against me. I became a member when I needed a visa to travel to Greece and after that I never renewed my membership. But even if it is reformed, I don't think it will function because journalists themselves are not ready to publicly talk about problems they have and clean up their own profession.

The participants who were involved in the work of the AJM were also critical of its work and wanted to see some changes but were also aware that the organization cannot function better under present conditions (high political and owner influence; divisions among journalists; and frequent violation of professional standards).

P17: AJM cannot be anything more than what is journalism in Macedonia. Those who are in higher positions (in the newsrooms) have no interest in developing a stronger professional organization because in that case they cannot do what they do now. And the

⁴⁹ In 2008 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs made an agreement with the EU guaranteeing that journalists who are member of AJM get on a fast-track for obtaining Schengen visas for traveling in EU countries. However, in December 2009 EU commission made a decision to allow Macedonian citizens to travel to EU without visas.

rest of our members, and by the last count we have around 1,200, feel the association is close to them only when they need some help, like with the legal assistance. They don't come to complain when they are pressured, and I understand them because we cannot protect them.

P5: There are many older journalists who accuse the younger journalists of having done little for the profession and forgetting that they are still part of it. Obviously they want to stay on the sidelines and wait for somebody else to fix the problems. They are also part of AJM.

The previous leadership of the AJM was pushing for the introduction of a media law similar to those in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bulgaria that would define the “*rights and responsibilities, but will also have the penalties*” (P17). It is not clear if the present leadership of the association is still backing that initiative but in other parts of the region these laws are usually used by the political powers to pressure media, not to reinforce their responsibilities and rights.

Summary of First Thematic Activity

Participants reported having a dual approach to their profession. They define the journalism profession as a “noble profession” (P16) that is objective, fair, balanced, impartial, and independent of political influence and that of the media owners. A journalist is a person who seeks the truth, is skeptical, confirms all information, or seeks opinions from other sources. Participants consider the journalists’ personal ethics, credibility, and integrity essential for meeting professional standards. However, the daily routines and pressures they face produce different results from what the participants described. There are no established routines and

standards for writing news stories and the use of sources, or who will write commentaries and whether these will represent the editorial policy of the media outlet or will represent the personal opinion of the reporter covering the related news story. The influences of the government and of the political parties, and the owners' strong control over the editors and editorial policy, make it difficult for journalists to follow their own personal standards. Pressure from political figures and owners causes journalists to fear being labeled a partisan, which would destroy their credibility. In the end, the nature and meaning of journalism and the journalists in Macedonia are summarized in the words of one young participant:

P32: I know I need to check the information, but that is not asked of me...I know I need to be objective and balanced, but then I write a news story being more favorable to the political party the owner and the paper are leaning towards. I want to keep my job. I like it. Not everybody can say that he is covering the story of the day and is as young as I am.

Self-Censorship as a Rule

The conflict between the participants' understanding of professional journalism and their daily practices, created a strong sense of self-censorship that developed as a second major theme in this study. The literature review, too, indicated that self-censorship is a problem in Macedonia. As noted by former president of AJM, Robert Popovski, self-censorship is ingrained in journalists in Macedonia (MSI 2008). And indeed self-censorship is so present that some of the participants considered it as something that comes with the job, that it is an unwritten rule. For example, many of the younger participants said they are autonomous in deciding which news stories to cover and their angles; they are equally aware of what will be an acceptable story to the

editors and owners. Only when they were asked to provide more details on how they work and how they decide what will be a news story did they reveal being aware of the editorial policy of the owners and the labels of their media outlet. There are two subcategories of self-censorship: 1) participants censor themselves to avoid censorship by their editors and owners, and 2) participants censor themselves to avoid libel accusations.

Self-censorship as a Way to Avoid Censorship by Editors and Owners

This subcategory surfaced when participants were talking about the editorial policy and the interests of the editors and owners. This type of censorship was present among the younger participants. Participants holding editorial positions complained that younger reporters censor themselves without even offering them the chance to hear or read the news story first. The younger participants saw such self-censorship as a practical issue. P15, P18, P32, P20, P21, P24, and P29 all pointed out that they will not propose a news story if they sensed it will not get the attention of the editors, or will be laughed at (P29, P21).

P15: They will not say don't do the story, but it will be published in the back pages, without a headline on the first page. Or for example the press conferences of the opposition are not covered, but the events of the parties in power are published. The press conferences of the smaller political parties are also not covered. And here you have that self-censorship, because you stop following what the opposition is saying when you know that in the past two years none of the stories from that were published. You just simply stop reading or following the coverage of these events. That has a very negative impact on us reporters. Also some other colleagues will come and say, this information

will not be acceptable because the editor is close to that person. They are not even asking if the story is interesting; they know it will not be published.

P21: If I know that the owner or the editors have some [personal or political] interest in the story, I would never propose it. No way. I know they [the owner or the editors] will immediately stop me up. I don't think I will have some problems, but they will not let me do the story. That is...That is sort of a rule for me. I know that I cannot go there.

P29: The editorial policy of the media outlet decides if certain information goes or not. And why should I propose a story that I know is not going to go. Do you think that a journalist at Fox can do a story on the financial dealings of Rupert Murdoch? (laughing) Yeah, right...I can suggest the topic and the editors will look at me laugh and say aha ok. I don't want to go there.

P16: Sometime you can try and pack the information in different ways and it will not go no matter what. It happened to me only once to have a story not published, and I was told publicly that it will not go because of the people in the story. I was told not to even start the story.

P15 had a similar experience when her story was approved but never published. She wrote a series of three stories on the same issue and when she asked why the stories were not even looked at by the editors, the answer was that the person of interest in the story had a project with the paper so the story would not be published. She shared the information with a colleague at another newspaper and it was published by the other publication.

P15: I gave the information to several other reporters and the story was published in another newspaper, but not with my byline. That influenced me. I proposed the story, they accepted it, and then they didn't publish it. I was thinking that I would prefer not to know what is behind the stories I am asked to do.

Many of the younger participants take a similar approach and will give a news story that will not be considered by their own media outlet, to journalists at other news outlets. P29 said that because he knows what will and will not be accepted in his own media outlet, even if it is a veritable scoop, he will give it to a competitor so the information will be disseminated. From and editors' perspective, participants such as P6, P3, P26, P12, and P22 say that there are no taboo stories in their media, and the problem arises when reporters don't even propose the news story simply because they perceive it to be unacceptable.

P3: I get very upset when I see this among my reporters; when they tell me that the story is about the company that has a deal with the owner of the paper. So what? That is my problem. I will deal with the owner explaining why I published the story. His job is to investigate and write the story. If the story is not published he can then make a case and tell everybody that he was censored. Journalists don't even ask, they don't even suggest the story or tell [me] the information they have... or tell me months after ...that they knew about it, but figured we would not be interested in it.

This is opposite to what younger participants see as the practice in their newsrooms. P15, P29, P21, and P32 had an experience that was clearly related to how the owner desires play a role in deciding what is or is not an acceptable news story.

P15: We all knew that when we were asked to write about Fershped and Sterjo⁵⁰ that our owner had a quarel with him, and then it is like a raid against him.⁵¹ That's when I feel like a pawn. I know that my sources have [their] interests for talking to me. I don't mind that. My job is to check if the information they provide is correct or not. But I do mind when the owner or the editor have personal interests, because then I know that I am serving their interests.

P7 had a similar experience when she was starting her career. She was asked to write stories on a particular business just to discover that the story was assigned because the editor or the owner had a quarrel with that business's owner.

P7: The information was true and what was published was newsworthy, but then you realize that you are being used [in the name of] somebody's interests. It doesn't feel right.

She said that this does not happen in her present job, adding that it is because now she has more experience and can recognize when the editor wants to use her to push his or the owner's agenda.

Self-censorship From Fear of Libel

Libel accusations are a major problem, creating a sense of self-censoring among the participants, particularly among the younger ones. Many of them had or are involved in lawsuits, which are, as P7 and P15 said, “mentally draining and expensive.” It is not unusual for the

⁵⁰ A company and businessmen that is considered close to SDSM.

⁵¹ A company and businessmen that is considered close to SDSM.

journalists themselves to pay the fines if they change jobs and start working for another media enterprise, or the medium simply said they did not stand behind the journalist and the published story. The older participants were more confident in their ability to protect themselves in case of libel accusations, but they also had higher financial security. As P28 said, he knows that he can find a job with another media outlet, or work for some non-governmental organizations; she could go and work at the embassies and international professional organizations. The younger journalists do not have the same strengths.

P15: It is hard to write about people, because I am afraid I'll end up in court and that is really influencing me. I am now sued and I'll end up paying huge fines.

She explained that the story over which she was sued was assigned to her by her editor. It was an investigative story and she worked on it for a while, collected many of the documents and was confident that the story on the corruption of a high court official was true. However, she was sued over part of the story for which she did not have a written source as proof. Her editors and the paper's owner are not assisting in her defense because she left the paper that published the story. The fear of losing the battle and paying the fine was visible on her face.

P15 added: Yes, I do admit this has an impact on me and I don't want to write stories that are on a particular person. It is much easier to write analysis in which you don't use names.

Support from the newsroom in the legal processes is important for the participants that had such experience (P7, P15, P16, and P20).

P7: That protection from the editors means a lot. If they are not behind you, you lose the energy to investigate; to dig for information especially when you know you'll be faced

with two court cases each month. That is not pleasant at all. When I was sued, I didn't have the support from my editor even though she was also sued. She was not interested in finding any solution, and I was very nervous. I stopped writing about that person. He is now in prison, so I was right. I was not inventing things or tendentious in my reporting.

P20 said that when he was accused of libel for the first time, he was “*trying to pay all my bills and make things right*” before the court proceedings because he was not sure what would happen. Knowing that the owners would protect him because they said they would, he is less afraid, but when he writes crime stories he now publishes only the initials of the accused, although other media outlets will reveal the full name. Journalists working in Albanian media said that the libel accusations and lawsuits are not very common for them, although this is a growing concern for them.

P18: I think Macedonian journalist often get sued by some politicians and businesses. We are less often sued, but we get plenty of phone calls and you might end up beaten up...

P14: I have quite a few colleagues who ended up with a sack over their head and are now so afraid they still censor themselves. The legal system is a bit distrusted among us Albanians maybe because of the previous experience when some cases were fabricated. But I see more lawsuits against the paper now.

Because of this changing practice, P12 said that they are now less willing to use anonymous sources and if they do so, it has to be supported with documents that will prove that the newspaper is publishing the truth.

P12: It is obvious that the lawsuits we have are because these people want to get money from us and luckily so far we won all the cases against us.

The practice of starting and winning lawsuits against journalists and media outlets is dangerous for investigative reporting and, as some participants said, the libel suits, not just the lack of resources (P14, P19, and P16) is the reason why investigative reporting is not developed.

Summary of Second Thematic Activity

Self-censorship is a problem among journalists in Macedonia, especially among the younger ones. However, that is not to say it is new or not present at all among the older participants. What is more disturbing is that in several cases it was not seen as necessarily a self-censorship issue, but as part of the job. As P16 said, the younger reporters learn to protect themselves; they consult with older journalists but also try not to “make waves” (P24).

They fear the possibility of libel suits, and the fact that there are no guarantees that the newsroom and the editors will stand with them in defending against such suits. The participants in higher positions were aware of the problem and, as they said, it is something addressed in the newsroom, but with little effect. Nevertheless, the issue of self-censorship, even though it was present among journalists working in Albanian language media as well, was not as central an issue as in Macedonian media. They feared libel suits but most had received verbal threats and pointed to some cases when journalists they know were beaten up, but they did not report censoring themselves because of the fear of libel suits.

The statement below is maybe a good explanation of why journalists in Macedonia censor themselves and, as P1 explained, this is not something that evolved in the past 20 years, instead it comes with the job in any system.

P1: When my editor in chief tells me that the paper is going to support the election of Gruevski as a president of VMRO, because he is a better option for the party, and as the leader of the state what can I do? Say I don't agree with that because that is not fair for the readers? Or simply you calculate – I know that my position will be affected. Or the editor will say I cannot count on this journalist, he is not reliable, and he will not comply with the editorial policy. And I accepted it. I still have guilty a conscious about it and privately I apologize to the other candidate....But, in the name of my security, my financial existence, my career, I did that. You know...I didn't imagine journalism like that ...I want to say that this self-censorship is working all the time among journalists and you accept the things as such.

Blame Game

The division between the old-guard journalists from the previous system and the younger journalists was apparent in research in Russia (Pasti, 2005) and the Czech Republic (Volek, 2010) as well. In Romania, this division was defined as two classes of journalists, the moguls and proletariat (Coman, 2009, 2010). It was not a startling discovery that this division in the corps of journalists was also present in Macedonia. However, the intensity of these divisions was surprising. The old generation saw itself as representing true professionals, capable and courageous enough to be critical; not willing to compromise [on professional standards]; relevant

and credible resources for the public. On the other hand, the younger participants were trying to survive, keep their jobs, and viewed the older generation as an obstacle to professional evolution as well as the reason for why they are in the situation they are in. Within this younger post-communist generation of journalists there are two sub-groups: those that started working in the first private media in Macedonia during the 1990s, and the even younger journalists who started their careers after the conflict of 2001. For the purpose of clarity, the first sub-group of the post-communist journalists is here labeled the middle group. Participants who are in this middle group are now senior journalists or top tier-editors that are loudly, publicly critical towards the old-guard journalists but are at the same time critical towards their younger colleagues. Common characteristic for this middle group is burn-out, fatigue, and disappointment in the profession; they seek ways to protect themselves; and are unable to change anything to improve the state of journalism and media in Macedonia. The youngest journalists, those with less than 10 years of experience, were very practical: they appear disinterested in being overly critical toward either of the other two groups, but say that they are just playing by the rules established by those before them. As P24 said, he is “just trying to keep my job” and “not make many waves.”

Older Generation Defending the Profession

The participants that got into journalism in the communist era were very critical of the present state of the media and of the younger journalists. They kept repeating that in the previous system there was “order,” that is, there was clear division of labor. For instance, it was known that you started on the city desk and after a few years you moved to other parts of the newspaper; it was clear who covered the most important stories, wrote commentary, and communicated with party leaders. As P1, P3, P4, P13, P28, and P17 said, only the top editors were executors of the

orders from the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Macedonia. The rest were allowed to be critical to some extent and trained in the tradition of objective, balanced, and fair reporting, providing information for the public. This was also within the spirit of the social-political workers, where the interest of the public workers was purportedly the supreme arbiter of what news was disseminated. Having that experience in the previous system, they see journalism today as defective.

P3: Today you have some serious manipulation of journalism. We have propagandists not journalists. They function as inside spokesmen for whoever is in power and say they are journalists. It's not an accident that we have so many young commentators, young people who are the rising stars. They are uneducated, inexperienced, and easy to be molded, as you want them to be molded. I know how I was when I was starting in the city desk, but then even if I made a mistake the damage was not as big as today. Now you put them straight in the political section, or even worse send them to cover the U.N. Assembly in New York and they don't even know English. They are now the main correspondents about the work of the government. They are the regular passengers on the government plane.

P13 and P17 had similar opinions and complained that their younger colleagues are uneducated poltroons who don't know anything but are good executors and do whatever they are told (by owners, politicians, or their sources) without asking or thinking if that is professional. However, P3 himself said that he is the one promoting younger journalists too fast and sending them to important events like covering the meeting of the prime minister in Brussels [EU headquarters] or in United Nations.

P3: We don't have good journalists to work with. And when I see someone better – better in terms of writing, I take them from the city desk, the not so important part of the newsroom, and put them on the political desk so that I can have more events and issues covered. You recognize him as good and you [assign] him to cover events like....the prime minister's visit to Helsinki (laughing). This reporter is shocked. And you as editor because you didn't have the time to get to know him, get disappointed because you realize he is just a little bit better than the average reporters. And that average now is way down from what it used to be.

P17: The enormous number of media attracted plenty of young, so called colleagues. They are people who like to work in the media, who have no training but are needed for the media to form a team. These journalists are executors; when you give him an order, he doesn't think about it, he does what he's told. He would do anything to please the owner and the editor who are now two bodies with one mind. ... Do you know what the owners do now? They know they can't tell us, older journalists, [what to do] and simply we get passed in the process. He calls the brat who does what he is told and goes as a first story; as you don't exist in the information process.

This anger of being passed up in the news covering process was present among many older reporters especially in broadcasting. They were frustrated that many of the younger colleagues do not ask for advice or help; when the older journalists criticize the younger colleagues, they are viewed as enemies (P25).

Journalism in the eyes of the older journalists, is still relying on them because the young ones are “anonymous” (P13), “nobody knows them” (P3), or “respects them” (P17). This is partially true, because most of the commentators, analysts are all older journalists who established their career in the previous system.

P3: I'd be happy if I could work only with my reporters on their training... if we would not need people like Mirka, Gero, me, or some other people who are still writing ...

Only P27, from this generation that started working as journalists in the previous system, was more critical towards her own generation. In her opinion, the older journalists who participated in building an independent Macedonia could not separate the patriotic from the professional. In her words, this generation is still regularly acting as advisors to political leaders and policy makers instead of as journalists. On the other hand, none of them are working with the younger journalists.

P27: I know that the young journalists want to hear feedback. They do want to have a discussion and [learn] how to make the information better. But nobody talks with them. They are left alone to learn from the bad examples because they are the mainstream today... This young generation of journalists who are already known names are so afraid not to put a label under their names that they don't do anything.

Middle Group Blaming Everybody except Themselves

The participants with 10 and more years of experience often made comparisons between themselves and the younger journalists, criticizing them for lack of ambition and a lack of desire to learn and advance, but mostly for a lack of love for the profession. In their eyes the younger

journalists do not care about journalism or the public and are willing to do what they are told for less than 200 Euros (\$250) per month.

P11: We have people in journalism who don't care about the standards. They are younger people who work for 150 Euros and are just pretending to be journalists; they will read a report or sign a story that was written by their editors. They don't understand the dimension of such information, the manipulation with the truth, or that way of interpretation of the facts. This situation is across the board, both in the Macedonian and Albanian-language media.

P8: I think we were the last generation who got into journalism that really loved the profession and we worked on our development. All of us got on a beat and worked on training and development on that beat. Maybe we were also happy to catch the first wave of media pluralism and maybe that is why we invested more of ourselves. But the new generation came. We took positions of editors and realistically stopped doing daily journalism; we are not reporters any more. The new generation, 90 percent of them, is only holding the microphones. There is a hyper production of young reporters who don't know anything and don't want to learn anything.

P6: When I was starting, I was ambitious... I wanted to see my name on the front page. I fought to get that. The reporters now don't have that. They are not fighting to get on the front or on the third page. I have no clue why that is.

On the other side, some participants (P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P23, P26, P30, and P31) perceived the older generation as being guilty for the present conditions of the media in

Macedonia. They accused them of making deals with politicians, giving up their own professional standards, and for becoming activists and propagandists.

P5: The bad thing is that we still have older generation of journalists who unfortunately are ...to call them an open wound to journalism today. They are connected to one or other political elite and defend their political interests rather than the interests of the profession. The younger journalists learn from them. They think that is the right way.

P6: Let's take our first editor. Today, we are working for the same company; we see each other every day and we fight constantly. He was my teacher, but trust me what he was in 1996 is not what he is today. Now we have an activist and politician, and then we had the most talented journalist.

P23: I am very sad because people who taught me journalism were the first to run away from their own rules and principles that they preached and in which we believed. My teachers are now activists, they are putting labels on other journalists, and they are the ones making the divisions between "patriots and traitors."

This group of journalists is tired and burned out; these journalists wanted to leave the profession for good or at least to seek shelter somewhere until the times and work conditions change. Interestingly, P6, P23, and P8 who were the most disappointed, had worked or were still working as correspondents for foreign news agencies or media such as the British *BBC* and German *Deutsche Welle*.

P23: I probably sound very pessimistic and disappointed, but it is hard for me to find a balance between my understanding of journalism and what I do today. I wish I could

break away and wait for things to change. ... It is not easy day after day to be forced to tell somebody else's truth.

P23 was so pessimistic that he felt the need to call the researcher an hour after the interview ended to add that he hopes that his generation, “*is the last generation of journalists destroyed by this transition and that some other generation will be able to change something.*”

Young and Unwilling to Advance

The youngest participants, with three to nine years of experience, were also saying that the older generation is the one that brought journalism to its current state. The older generation for them includes the journalists from the previous system and the middle group that is now holding editing positions (P7, P2, P15, P21, P24, P29, and P32). The youngest journalists are ambitious and want to see themselves as editors (P24, P29), but are also cautious.

P24: If I want to advance and become an editor, I know I'll have to decide on what side I'm going to be. Luckily, I am not interested in becoming an editor yet so I don't have to make that compromise.

For P15 and P7 the process of advancing and becoming editors would mean that they would have to stop writing and that is something they are not willing to give up.

Summary of the Third Thematic Activity

The division between younger and older journalists is so high, it is reaching the point of conflict. The lists of journalists and media that are labeled “traitors” only reinforce the blame game. To reiterate, there are three groups of journalists: the older group that is leftover from the communist

system; the middle group, which started working in the first wave of private media and are now editors and senior journalists; and the young journalists who started working in the news media after 2001. The older participants accuse their younger colleagues of being uneducated “holders of microphones” who are not able to think with their heads and have no courage to stand up to the owners and editors. They seem to ignore that they are suggesting the younger journalists should raise their voice against them. The middle group was critical towards their younger colleagues, voicing similar arguments as the older group but at the same time being critical towards them, saying that they are the ones assembling the lists on “traitors and patriots” and surrendered their professional standards by becoming activists and propagandists. This middle group considered itself blameless for the state of contemporary journalism; P6, P8, P23, P16 even admitted being tired, ashamed, and wanted to take a break and wait for times to change. Although they had some top editorial positions in their media, they felt incapable of changing anything.

Education: Acknowledged and Ignored Problem

Professional education was identified in the literature review as crucial for the professionalization of journalism. In this thematic category, I will discuss in detail what participants detected as problems in their journalism education. In the previous three themes, the more experienced participants described the young journalists as “uneducated kids” who want to be journalists and who are easy to manipulate. Contradicting this opinion, the younger participants said that good editors who are willing to work with them are absent. Across the board, all participants agreed that education is a problem that needs serious discussion and improvement but no one is doing anything about the problem.

Formal education

Of the 32 participants 17 have formal journalism education, mostly gained at the in Skopje. Only one was a student at the Macedonian Institute for Media, a graduate of its One Year Diploma Program. Eleven of these 17 participants perceived their journalism degree to be less than useful (P1, P2, P8, P10, P15, P18, P19, P20, P21, P24, and P25). As they pointed out, their education was only theoretical, without the hands-on experience of what it would be like to work in a newsroom. They also perceived no advantage to their degree when looking for a job, compared to individuals with degrees in other disciplines. Three of those with journalism degree saw a benefit in the fact that they had a much broader general knowledge in economics and law compared to individuals with a degree from MIM, for example. They admitted, however, that despite the predominantly theoretical journalism education they received, they did get exposed to professional ethics and standards, as well as benefiting from networking and getting a job in the media during their studies or immediately after graduation.

P2: At the faculty we got only theory. I don't think it is very important to have a journalism degree. You can work as a journalist with any kind of degree or without a degree. Today literally anybody can work as journalist.

P21: I started working in a newsroom when I was in my fourth year in college and that is when I realized that I have not learned anything about journalism. It is mostly theory.

P8: The compilation of the curriculum that was and still is multidisciplinary with classes in economics, politics, law, sociology, is a concept that provides a solid base for further specialization in one of those areas. The missing element is the practical experience that

is now compensated by the MIM program. But it would be better if we have a combination of the two.

Participants who do not have a journalism degree said that they did not feel they needed such a degree. In fact, many of them saw the absence of a journalism degree as an advantage because now they have another option. They have a degree in economics, literature, philosophy, classic and modern languages, or political science; one even had a degree in theology.

P14: At the beginning I thought it was a handicap because I didn't have a journalism degree, but over time and various trainings I think I know enough about journalism. Now it is to my benefit that I have another degree because I have a choice. I have a backup profession.

In fact, participants with the journalism degree said they would like to have the option of a backup profession. P19 said he is studying law and has a “*fixed idea that after five-six years when I get tired of running after news to open a legal office and work as a lawyer*”.

P29 said that if he is given a chance to go back to school, he would study anything but journalism.

P29: I would still work as a journalist. But now I have plenty of colleagues who don't have the degree in journalism and work as journalists. The difference is that they can go and find something else if they want. I don't have that choice. All I know how to do is this.

P30 and P31 are part-time instructors at Journalism Faculty at St. Cyril and Methodius, but as P30 said, although the new curriculum is good and ambitious, its strength is questionable given that the program does not have qualified people to teach classes. The educational system in Macedonia does not permit professionals without higher degrees to be the instructor of record in university programs. The Macedonian Institute for Media and their Journalism School, which opened in 2008, has a curriculum that is more practically oriented and employs professionals as part-time instructors. They offer limited amount of general knowledge.

Learning in the Newsroom

All of the participants said that they learned the profession on the job, observing how other journalists work, and carrying out their daily duties. In this context, journalists in Macedonia define journalism as a craft rather than a profession.

P15: I didn't learn anything, literally nothing, from my journalism studies. Everything that I know, I learned in the newsroom. And what and how you learn depends very much on who works with you. When I started with Vreme, we had editors who worked with us on style, on editing, on story ideas. But some of the colleagues who were transferred to the political desk, they didn't have that and it was harder for them to learn. I think it's very important to learn from the editors who are still writing so I can see some of their writing, see how they do research for the story and how they construct the text. Now, I don't have that kind of editors. Most of them are like copy editors, and you don't have anybody to emulate and learn from.

Similar statements came from many of the younger participants with less than 10 years of experience. They felt that they learned the most when an older journalist or editor works with them on their stories from brainstorming to editing. This learning process in the newsroom used to be more structured. In the previous system, as the older participants said, the city desk was where they learned the craft. For newspaper journalists this happened at the publication of NIP Nova Makedonija (the dailies *Nova Makedonija*, *Vecer*, *Birlik* and *Flaka*) and for broadcast journalists at the public Macedonian Radio and Television (MRT). The private media (*Dnevnik*, A1 TV, Sitel TV and *Fakti*, the first private Albanian language daily) in the first years continued the practice of in-house training because majority of their journalists were young and with no journalistic experience. However, this practice stopped and none of the editors participating in the study could explain why or when that happened. Although the older journalists and editors kept complaining that the younger generation is uneducated, they themselves admitted they are not investing enough in their training or working with them individually. As P3 said, the moment they see some talent, the editors test the young journalist.

P17: My generation was the last one that got trained at the public television; that started to fall apart when we were there. We moved in the new private media and there we maybe didn't have the time or desire to produce a new generation of journalists.

P31: The journalists who are now coming to the paper do not get the time for training that for example, we got; to spend some time on the city desk, covering small and simple stories. They are now advancing faster and that period of steelifying [training them] is much shorter. I don't know, but for me that six months on the city desk was useful not just

for learning but for finding myself in the profession, and I guess I was lucky to be recognized by some of the editors who saw the potential in me and worked with me.

P30: The daily dynamics don't allow you to pay more attention to younger colleagues and their training and this is partly why we have such problems now.

The younger participants said they still learn a good deal from the editors working on their story or when they talk with them about the angle of the story, the sources, and the questions they should ask before they start working on the story. As P24 and P32 said, that is when they “steal” knowledge (P5, P7, and P23) from editors.

P7: I would love to have a mentor as I had when I was starting out, but I don't. The mentor is the one who will pass you the knowledge. Vera (her first mentor, who passed away) was not a selfish editor who did not want to pass along what she knows. She worked with me daily on brainstorming, angles of the story, focus, and most important she was honest. If there was pressure from the editor-in-chief she would tell me. Later all the other editors lied to me. They will say, do the story, and later criticize you for doing it wrong. For example, they'll let you do one or two stories on something and when they start getting phone calls, they say it's your fault. Young reporters don't have mentors now.

P15: There are not many journalists or editors who are good teachers and can pass on their knowledge. In my newsroom, I have six editors and only one is a good teacher. If he is not there, you lose the enthusiasm to work. And another problem is that they [the

editors] don't write. We should learn from them by reading stories they wrote to see how it should be done. Now they are just copy editors.

This lack of on-the-job training is alarming in the Albanian language newsroom. The participants who work in Albanian media said they have problems recruiting journalists. There are few of them at the university and MIM program, and there is no program that will provide formal journalism education in the Albanian language in Macedonia.

P14: I think that for a long time the papers will be the place where young journalists will learn journalism.

However, as they said, there is no media that work with their younger reporters, training them in the manner that existed in the '90s.

P12: There is no good school that will teach them how to work, like it was in my case at Fakti. I don't know why. Nobody is even trying to produce new names [journalists], to invest and teach them. I don't know why.

P12, who is an editor and media owner, boasted that the best Albanian journalists in the country work for his media outlet. He said that they do not have many young journalists and, he admitted that the few who work for him have “*no clue how they learn.*”

P14: In regard to the final product, the Albanian media are one to two levels below the Macedonian media. That is primarily because of a lack of journalists and lack of training.

Seven participants mentioned a practice that is now happening more often than before 2001, when Albanian journalists were employed by Macedonian-language media.

P5: The difference is big. If you stay and lock yourself in that circle, in the Albanian media, first you won't learn much. That was the main reason why I got a job with a Macedonian media outlet. There, [in the Macedonian media] I was working with more experienced journalists, learning from them by observing and stealing from their experience and developing my own style. Also, the competition was bigger so you are enthusiastic about showing how good you are. This competition does not exist in the Albanian media.

P12, who worked for A1 TV for several years, wanted to eliminate the perception that the Albanians cannot work in the Macedonian language but also saw a chance to militate for topics of interest for Albanian audiences, topics often ignored by mainstream Macedonian media.

P12: For example, Idrizovo is a mixed village, Macedonians and Albanians. The primary education in the mother tongue is a constitutional right but in Idrizovo, Albanians don't have that right. There, the mayor said that there are no conditions for a program in Albanian and kicked the Albanian kids out of the school. He said, let the ministry bring in the containers (a type of movable buildings) and have classes there, while the school building is half empty. There are many similar examples in the daily life of Albanians, but Macedonians don't know them because the Macedonian media don't report them. These problems are considered Albanian problems and the media are not interested in them. A1 from time to time covers such stories and other media even less. But these topics should

be regularly covered. Because if you don't, if you write about it on occasion, when it becomes a bigger problem, protests or God forbid shootings – Macedonian media start asking why this happened. They haven't followed the problem, and they are surprised. They came when it was too late, when the shooting started.

He added that because of that attitude the 2001 events occurred but, now because the newsrooms have a more diverse workforce, and there is better cooperation between Macedonian and Albanian journalists, the situation has improved.

Training Provided In-House or by Other Organizations

Journalism training provided within media organizations are rare and those that used to have them don't have them anymore. Journalist training offered by outside organizations is still available, but not as often as in the 1990s. Four participants (P3, P22, P12, P25) mentioned that they have received journalism training offered through or sponsored by programs run by the American Embassy that is between two weeks and ten months (depending on the program), but that experience is hard to implement in the newsroom in Macedonia although P22 said because of that experience he is now working as producer/manager.

P9: Nobody works on further professionalization and training. I have had only one professional development training since WAZ took over. Then, it's symptomatic, this is a German company and you don't have one person who speaks German at all three papers. They just now have a beginner's course in German, and this is not through WAZ, but through the German Embassy. An additional problem is that very few of the journalists

speaking any foreign language. They travel abroad with the government and rely only on the official translation and communication with our politicians.

As the number of foreign organizations who work on media development decreased, so did the amount of training programs for journalists. However, the problem is that even when there are training programs and forums or discussions, the journalists are not interested in attending or come to those events just to cover them, not to participate. P19 said, “If the journalists don’t invest in their own education, nobody will do that for them.”

Summary of the Fourth Thematic Activity

Journalism education is a big problem that needs to be addressed. It is clear from the previous section that the present state of formal journalism education does not produce professional cadres of journalists able to work in newsroom without further in-house training. However, this training in the newsroom happens only occasionally and inconsistently. The younger reporters learn just by observing and less from formal discussion with the editors or senior journalists. They are advancing in the careers faster than their preparation warrants. The editors admit that they are forced to send them to cover the story of the day unprepared, but on the other hand, they say they don’t know why no one works with the younger generation. The number of training programs organized by foreign organizations is also decreasing as these organizations shift their interests to other parts of the world. If journalism education is not addressed, it will lead to a further decline in the quality of journalists and journalism in Macedonia. Another issue is that the older generation of journalists, those who are still active and considered opinion makers, learned the business in a system in which journalists were

considered political workers who primarily promoted the work of the Communist Party and the accomplishments of the communist system.

P23: The value of journalism went down when uneducated journalists came from the street. The half educated, or kids who didn't know what to do with themselves, became journalists and sell themselves as such. First, they take the position of those who studied to be journalists, and second, they blot the value of the profession. They are more susceptible to manipulation. They sound improper on television and radio, they write badly in newspapers. That is the collateral damage of the pluralism in the media.

The irony of this statement is that P23 does not have a journalism degree and got into journalism by chance. As he said, he was bored and was looking for something to do and joined the newspaper with his friend whose father was an editor. He learned the job from the editors and at the different media for which he worked. When he began his journalism career in 1996, these editors were still interested in passing their knowledge on to the younger generation.

Agents of change that cannot change anything

The fifth thematic category developed when the participants were answering a specific set of questions on how they see their role in society. It was interesting to note that as was the case in the conflict between the understanding of the ideals of professionalism and its practice, so there is a conflict between the role the journalists wish to play and that which they are actually playing. Their perception of their role is also related to their views on democracy in Macedonia.

Agents of Change

Despite the divisions and blame game between the older and younger participants, their perceptions of their role in society were relatively similar. They all said that they see themselves primarily as information providers, but not simply as “*transmitters of the information*,” as P6 said, but also as helpers steering changes and improvements in the conditions of society. Twenty-five (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P20, P21, P23, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30, and P31) of the participants, and for all the editors, this role of providing information and making society better was not so much related to being objective, balanced, fair, and impartiality, but rather to being an active participant in making the changes in the society.

P2: I see journalism not just as providing information, but more as a tool to help the citizens' change something. We should be the visionaries to accomplish something in society; to help make a better society.

For P27, P25, P1, P11, and P12, journalism is a mission serving the public and to broaden the public's horizons, and improve the society. P12 even went a step further when he said that he got into journalism by accident, but sees his mission now as a mission from God to change Macedonia for better.

P27: I have some romantic understanding of journalism as a mission. It is a mission and the supreme arbiter is the public. You don't work for the owner, the boss, he is only paying your salary, but you serve the public. Public interest is... you defend it day by day

because with each day you are in danger to act professionally or unprofessionally. You defend that public interest every day, but what I want to say is that here no one is even trying to pass the test.

Watchdogs and Monitors of the Government

In addition to the desire to change society, participants who had done some investigative stories underlined the watchdog role of journalism (P16, P14, P8, P7, P19, and P29).

P16: Journalism is one very noble profession, important for the society. We are the link between the people and the power and that is for me the basic function of journalism. It should be the monitor of the government, not to let them abuse their power for personal gains.

P7: Our role is to give them [the public] the truth; to be watchdogs of the government and simply to make the whole country better.

State of Democracy

The participants linked their role in society with the development of democracy in Macedonia, and many of the participants said Macedonia seemed more democratic in 1991 than in 2010. P9 and P10 compared the present state to an autocracy, where fear and political divisions rule in place of democracy and debate. The oldest participants, P4 and P13, said that there is little difference between this system and the communist system. Many said that they are frustrated, because journalists and the media cannot change anything in society; they [the journalists and the media] are “*puppets serving the politicians and owners*”, as P13 said. For

P29, P23, and P6, the crisis in journalism is only a reflection of the crisis and the divisions in society.

P13: Then [under communism] we had a one party system and no democracy. Now we are allegedly a democracy, we have a multi-party system, but the main financier and controller of the media paradoxically is the state, again....We arrived in a completely wrong place. Instead of freedom we are now in the biggest [state of] non-freedom.

P4: The factual situation points to one of post-transitional totalitarianism, which is no less dangerous for the democratic processes than communist totalitarianism. If you are in a situation where journalists are beaten, prosecuted, are victims of the political and business elites and oligarchs, then you don't have conditions for an objective and professional journalism.

In such a situation, the participants did not feel that they fulfill their role of changing and creating a better society, or serving the public.

P15: There is no democracy in the media and without that you cannot build democracy in society. We are now creating public opinion with a dose of subjectivity.

P30: You cannot have democracy without free media. I don't know, that is an axiom for me. First we need to have a public that will build some democratic principles. To fight for the public through debates, through pointing to bad and good examples of how democracy does not or should function; to fight for it. If you don't have a debate on the most important issues, you do not have democracy. The media are the ones who should

foster that debate, who mobilize the public and makes public pressure for implementation of rule of law. In the past 18- 20 years we have done very little on that plan.

Summary of the Fifth Thematic Activity

Participants see themselves in a role of agents of change whose mission is to serve the interests of the public and to improve society. This stand reflects the point of view of an activist not that of a professional journalist. Another role of importance and one mentioned by the participants who did some form of investigative reporting, is being a watchdog over the powerful, exposing corruption and wrongdoings. Participants, as they did when discussing professionalism, accused the media owners and political elites of not fulfilling the watchdog roles are the owners and the political elites. The watchdog role and the role as agents of change is not accomplished because of the general state of democracy in the country, which is described to be very similar to the communist system. Only a few of the participants think that they would be able to improve journalism's situation by reforming the Association of Journalists or through their own efforts. That could change when Macedonia begins negotiations with the EU and foreign capital is injected in the broadcast industry.

Summary of the Chapter

After conducting long interviews with 32 participants from various media outlets who have short and long tenures as journalists, the researcher discovered five major thematic categories: (1) Ideal vs. reality, or when journalists do not behave according to professional standards, even as they define them; (2) Self-censorship as being a rule; (3) The blame game, with older journalists blaming younger journalists, and vice versa, for the problems in

journalism; (4) Education; acknowledged and ignored problem; and (5) Agents of change that cannot change anything.

The first thematic category covers the clash between the participants' ideal understanding of professionalism and the reality that reveals many reasons why this professionalism is not accomplished. Most of the time, the participants blame sources outside journalism i.e. the influence of the owners, their businesses, government, and political parties. It is also clear that newsroom routines and the internal divisions among journalists have an even bigger impact on their professional performance.

The first thematic category in a way introduces or underlines the other three categories. Self-censorship is present to such a degree that it stops being viewed as censoring in any form but rather as an unwritten rule, a part of the job. As P1 said, self-censoring is normal, *“journalists know how far they can go and what issues cannot be covered because of the interests of the owners, parties, state...”* As he said, it is not a characteristic of the Macedonian system alone but exists in any media system. Journalists censor themselves to protect their jobs, advance their career, and also as a protection against the increasing numbers of libel suits and high fines they have to pay when they lose these suits. The third thematic category explores the generational divisions between journalists, leading one group to accuse another of being culpable for the present situation in Macedonian journalism. So the older generation said the young journalists are simply holders of microphones, and are only conveyor belts of information and thus abrogate their responsibilities. Furthermore, the older generation of journalists accuses the younger generation of being uneducated and lacking passion for journalism, seeing it as a regular job instead of a key profession in society. On the other hand, the younger generation (most

vocally the middle group of journalists who started careers in the 1990s with the first private media, and are now on editorial positions) said that the older journalists, their teachers gave up on their own professional standards when started negotiating with politicians and owners and became activists. Across the board, all journalists are disappointed in the state of the news media. Education, or the lack of it, emerged as a significant problem that was addressed by all participants in the study. Formal journalism education is lacking relevance to the practical needs of the newsrooms; on the job training happens by accident.

The last thematic category explores the journalists' perception of their role and what surfaced is a difference in what they would like their role to be and the reality of what they do. They want to see themselves as agents of change who improve society. It is a mission in which the supreme arbiter of the journalists' success or failure is the public. Participants with investigative reporting experience underlined the watchdog role, which is monitoring the work of the government, its institutions, and of businesses. However, Macedonian journalists, too, do not accomplish these roles. Their work has had little effect in exposing corruption and abuse of power because Macedonia is far from a democracy. In fact five participants (P6, P9, P13, P17, and P28) said that there was more freedom and democracy in 1991 rather than in 2010.

In the following chapter, the researcher will present conclusions that she has drawn from the research, including recommendations for journalists, media, and professional organizations as well as ideas for future research.

CHAPTER VI:

CONCLUSION

The researcher discovered similarities in the participants understanding of professionalism as well as their understanding of their role in society and democracy in Macedonia, which was the focus of the study. The five themes developed in the analysis: (1) Ideal vs. reality, or when journalists do not behave according to professional standards, even as they define them; (2) Self-censorship, as rule; (3) The blame game, with older journalists blaming younger journalists, and vice versa, for the problems experienced in journalism; (4) Education, the acknowledged and ignored problem; and (5) Agents of change that cannot change anything, another exhibit of the tensions between the ideal and desired journalistic roles, and reality. These themes constitute the theoretical framework of journalism in transformation.

The thematic categories that developed in the study were somewhat expected given the researcher's knowledge of media in Macedonia and the information presented in the pertinent literature. What was unexpected was the intensity of the divisions and the duality, which was in essence a kind of split personality found in the articulated journalistic standards and the ideal roles to be played by journalism, or double talk⁵², between the journalism practiced and journalistic roles that are actually fulfilled. In a way, this is not a huge surprise as the declared wish to build democracy also contradicts the reality: Democracy may have been stated as the ideal and accepted goal in Macedonia, but it has not been achieved. The continuing political,

⁵² Coman (2010) used this term when described the Romanian moguls.

ethnic, and cultural divisions of the country are also reflected in the media, by the journalists, and in their work. The symbiosis between politics, business, and media produces an environment in which journalists feel as if they are under siege by institutions and individuals, including by their own colleagues. The journalists and their inability to find common ground to fight for better working conditions and the implementation of the professional standards, undermines their role in developing the stated desire to establish a democratic society.

The five thematic categories also describe a journalism that is trying to find a place for itself in the transformation at a time that it is losing the battle with political, business, and social forces in the society for gaining greater freedoms and protections, for establishing and enforcing journalistic standards, and for defining universally accepted and supported role(s).

The first thematic category revealed in detail the discrepancy between the definition of professional journalism and its practice. As is the case of the Metykova and Cesarova (2009) study of journalists in Hungary, Slovakia, and Czech Republic, journalists in Macedonia identified objectivity, balance, and truth as the synonyms for professional journalism. The ideal journalist is independent, apolitical, credible, and someone who goes beneath the surface to investigate each story. That understanding of journalism is connected with the fifth thematic category that deals with the role of journalists. Twenty-five of the participants said that their role is to inform the public, to change society for the better and serve as watchdogs over societal institutions; to be the voice of regular people and to discover the truth.

The reality, however, appears to be the opposite of these ideals. P29 said that the crisis in society is reflected in the media. P23 lamented that journalists and media are divided on political lines as

is the rest of the country. Seventeen of the participants had the feeling that they are not able to change anything given the present conditions under which they practice journalism. The established newsroom routines or their absence, together with the absence of a clear division of labor (e.g. reporting versus commenting) creates confusion and grey areas that are abused by owners, the government, politicians, and business people who, therefore, have undue influence in shaping the content of news media. Professional organizations are perceived to be useless, even as political rather than truly professional in nature, devoted to defending and enforcing professional standards and ethics. But the problems in the Macedonian media and in journalism are much too significant to be resolved simply by reforming professional organization. P31, P27, P19, P5, P2 and P3 pointed out some serious ethical problems. Journalists, following their own agenda or the agenda of different “power centers” (as P31 defined political and business interests) are not interested in providing a truthful or at least the full (as P27 said) information about an event or an issue. P6 and P29 claimed the information is there, but it is up to the public to watch and read various media to “understand what happened” (P 29). Ironically, both agreed with the rest of the participants that the public in Macedonia is not well informed. P27 was the only one to admit that Macedonian journalists do not care about the public (“there is not even attempt for that”). The practice of using anonymous sources provides an opportunity for journalists to put their own opinion in the story (P15) or to publicize special interests. All participants said in different ways that although they can blame the politicians or the media moguls they are the ones who allow it, whether that be his “managerial compromise” (P4), following the editorial policy of the medium (P22, P2, P26, and P31) or to keep her job (P21 and P15). Interestingly several participants (P4, P3, P23, P25, and P17) said that the change should come from the government and their political will to change something. In that case, the present

situation with A1 TV can be seen as an attempt of the government to regulate the media sphere. On the other side, if the government was determined to regulate the media, the same rules and investigation should have been done in other media too.

The second thematic category, self-censorship, was again noted in the literature and was expected, but it was less recognized as self-censorship and more as part of the job. Nineteen of the participants that were doing some reporting (some editors don't write stories some do) felt that they have the freedom to select stories and their angles, but at the same time admitted that there are topics they cannot propose or will not be allowed to cover. This contradiction is interesting: They are free to do what they want, yet they know what they cannot do. For the participants with less experience that was part of the job, it was not perceived as a form of self-censorship but it was fear that prevents them to propose stories and issues where their owner or editors have interests. The more experienced participants had also accepted it as a practice normal for any system to be able to stay on the job and advance, but also to be able to protect themselves from lawsuits, as an evidence of the "ingrained" self-censorship mentioned by the former president of AJM in the MSI for 2008.

Divisions between the old guard, the journalists from the previous system, and the younger generation, developed in the new system, is also a process noted in the literature review. It was mentioned in Pasti's (2005) study of Russian journalists and that division was primarily in their perception of the roles they play in society. Coman (2010) described a division on two classes: proletariat, the majority of journalists, and a smaller but stronger group of media moguls, journalists-managers, who are the "vassals" of the owners implementing their interest and breaking the professional standards. Unlike Romania, Macedonia does not have media moguls.

The division between the older and younger generations is part of the blame game going between different groups of journalists about whose fault it is they are in the present conditions. The older and experienced participants said that the younger generation is uneducated, holders of microphones, who without asking do what they are told to please the owner; who don't understand what they are doing and the implication of their actions. The younger generation, on the other hand, accuses the older journalists who made deals with the owners and the politicians, established and continued with the practice of servitude. Some of the participants who had higher position were frustrated that they are being passed in the information process; that they are replaced by younger reporters who do the job that the owner or editor asked them to do; and if they complain they could be replaced without any problems. And both groups are correct. If the older generation made the deals and paved the road, the younger generation continues the same practice deteriorating the journalism and media conditions further. To get out of the present situation both groups (old and younger generations) need to work together within their respective newsrooms to establish rules and standards that will be enforced, rather than continue to play this blame game and further deteriorate the state of journalism and media. P8 and P30 used the Macedonian proverb "The dogs are barking, but the caravan continues," which in this case describes perfectly the present situation of journalism in Macedonia.

The fourth theoretical theme that developed was on journalism education. In the literature journalism education is essential for the process of professionalization. Halin and Mancini include it as one of the three elements by which they measure professionalism in the models of media systems. Formal journalism education in Macedonia has similarities with the programs in Eastern Europe described by Hiebert and Gross (2003) with the exception that the university is

missing the practical application of the theory, while the second program at the Macedonian Institute of Media and the new Journalism School offers less theoretical and general knowledge base. From the 32 participants in the study more than half had a degree in journalism and almost all said that it was not something they considered important. Theory was not applicable in the newsroom, they had no advantage compared to journalists with other degrees, and had to learn the craft of reporting in the newsroom as everybody else. What is of concern is that many of the participants felt that they are not learning in the newsroom either. As P15 said most of the editors are copy editors so she cannot compare how he/she works, and only a few know how to pass on their knowledge. On the other hand, the editors and senior journalists participating in the study said they don't know how and where their younger colleagues learn the craft of reporting. They do not have the same system that existed in socialism and the first 10 years of the new system where the younger reporters learned the craft in the city desk. This practice was preserved in the newsrooms of the private media like *A1*, *Dnevnik*, and *Fakti*. As P27 and P31 said this kind of training does not exist in the newsrooms so the young journalists learn from "bad examples" that are now "unfortunately mainstream."

However, if this issue is not addressed by the journalists and the media management they cannot expect more from the up and coming journalists. Professional standards are taught in school, but enforced in the newsrooms. Journalists with a journalism degree can come and know what they should do, but learn to bend those standards according to the established standards, rules, and routines of the newsroom, or the lack if such allows them each to do what they think is sufficient, as P32 stated. Education and journalism training can only work if that knowledge is applied in the newsroom and the ethical standards are enforced. From what the participants said

and described the standards, routines, and rules are adjusted depending on the story and the interest of the top-tier editors, owners, and their political interests.

And finally, how is all this connected to democracy. Schudson (2008) said and there are many examples where journalism and media do not produce democracy, but they “can help democracy thrive” (p.26). Christians et al. (2009) pessimistically conclude that the conditions the media operate in are [increasingly] more restrictive and oppressive (p. 240) and that the quality of performance for journalists and media varies from place to place. However, as Christians et al. (2009) claimed there is still a need for normative theories that will provide guidelines towards what journalists need to strive to achieve. In that sense Macedonian journalists maybe know where they would like to be, but are at the same time doing little to get close to the ideal of the “fourth estate” and providing the public service. It is much easier to blame the peers, owners, institutions, politicians, and the endless transition for the present situation.

The themes developed in the research are not entirely new. Previous studies discussed in the literature show that throughout post-communist countries journalists are facing similar problems with high levels of self-censorship; generational divisions; differences in defining and practicing journalism; academic journalism programs that are useless in the newsroom and little or no professional development on the job; weak professional organizations that do little in protecting their members and enforcing professional standards and self-regulation. In fact, many would argue that these findings are not any different in describing journalism in the Western countries. However, the Macedonian model of journalism in transformation is an example of what happens when politics and business get too involved in the work of the media and journalists adapt to work by politicians’ and owners’ rules instead of following their own

professional and ethical standards. Weak professional organization and divisions among journalists as an occupational group makes the situation only worse. Jakubowicz and Sukosd (2008) talked about media wars, but in a context of journalists defending the profession from the interference of politics (Czech Republic and Hungary as examples). In Macedonia these wars are disputes between the journalists themselves. These can be as Trpevska (2009) explained because of business or political conflict of interest between the owners of the media (Sitel TV and A1 TV) or conflict initiated by political parties and the media getting involved in defense for one or the other operation (as it is now with the case of A1 where opposition parties support A1) while the party on power and the media outlet that stand behind it defend the state position). In such an environment the interests of the public, their right to have the complete and full information is ignored (in not completely neglected).

Recommendations

The theoretical framework developed in this study shows that journalists in Macedonia recognize the roots of the problems, but feel impotent to affect changes. The pessimism and despair are exhibited in their complaints, but not with any accompanying attempts to overcome the negatives that cause them. After reflecting on the findings presented in this study, the author makes the following recommendations for journalists, the mass media, and professional journalism organizations in Macedonia.

Recommendations to Journalists

- Stop fighting among each other and protecting the interests of the owners and political entities.

- Start discussions on how to improve working conditions in your respective media outlets and in the media world in general.
- Stop making compromises that destroy your reputations and put you in danger of acquiring a politically inspired label.
- Specialize and work on your furthering your professional education, but also participate in the education and training of younger colleagues in the newsroom and outside of it.
- Preserve your personal and professional integrity and credibility.
- Preserve the sense of camaraderie and journalistic community.

Recommendations to the Media

- Define your editorial policy and present it to the journalists.
- Develop internal professional standards and codes of conduct that will provide guidelines for the journalism practiced and the ethics behind it.
- Be transparent regarding the political orientation of your newspaper, magazine, radio or television station (if you have one); be consistent and defend the editorial decision connected to that orientation and do not bend the established rules in the interest of the owner or of a politician or political party.
- Establish forms of internal self-regulation that will enforce professional standards and the ethical behavior of the staff, including editors; this can be achieved with the appointment of an ombudsman or an editor assigned to deal with external and internal complaints and issues.

- Organize in-house training programs for the further development and specialization of journalists.
- Have a designated editor(s) who will work with beginning reporters and provide basic training for them, so they will learn the accepted standards and rules of your media outlet and provide mentoring as part of that training.
- Provide conditions and contracts that minimize journalists' switching jobs.
- Establish a firm policy of communication between owners, political parties, and journalists.
- Establish formal cooperation with educational institutions in the country to ensure the appropriate journalism education and training.
- Establish internship programs for journalism students.

Recommendations to the Professional Organizations

- The Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM), which now has a new leadership and changed statute, should concentrate on increasing and mobilizing its membership.
- Improve the image of AJM by increasing its presence in the newsroom, e.g. discuss problems and dilemmas regarding professional standards in the newsrooms when problems occur, mobilize the members of the news staff, foster an environment of open discussion and dialog between journalists, editors and management.
- Document the violations of the AJM Code of Ethics and address those violations with journalists and editors.

- Organize training programs and forums for members to enhance professional standards and practices.
- Create sections within the organization that address different issues and diversity, and special sections for journalism students, freelancers, and journalism educators.
- Survey members to assess training and educational needs.
- Foster dialog through regular meetings with AJM members.
- Strengthen the Council of Honor by providing logistical support to the volunteers on the Council.
- Continue to provide free legal assistance.
- Increase and strengthen cooperation with other domestic and international professional organizations.
- Secure stable revenues through memberships and services; international assistance should be used for additional project-based activities, not for the daily functioning of the organization.
- Cooperate with the newly formed Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers to increase membership and help establish the union in media outlets.
- Encourage owners to provide legal contracts detailing the rights and obligations of the staff and the management.
- AJM and the Union should work together to increase the sense of security among journalists and other professional staff, and decrease the pressures brought by political parties, government, owners and other interest groups.

Limitations of the Study

As any other study, this one has limitations that come from the selection of the participants and the method that was used. One could argue that because the study included participants from a small number of media outlets concentrated in one area (the capital Skopje) that is a limitation because it did not include participants from smaller, local media across the country. As stated in the methodology section, the researcher selected participants from media that were considered mainstream within the two largest ethnic communities and those that have the most readers or viewers. It also included only participants from the core desks of the newsrooms, e.g. politics, economics, social and judicial issues, and the city beat. One can assume that journalists working in entertainment and sports, or working on a smaller media outlet, would have different problems and issues and, thus, a different perception of professionalism and their role in society.

An additional limitation is the smaller number of Albanian participants; their recruitment for the study was difficult, especially when it came to the younger members of this group. A larger number of Albanian participants may have provided more data for comparison within the group and comparison with the Macedonian participants.

This study exclusively involved journalists working for Skopje-based media. One could argue that the pressures faced by journalists in smaller newsrooms outside of the capital city are even greater than those faced by Skopje-based journalists. Another factor that might have changed the findings if other than Skopje-based journalists would have been involved in the study is that this group has even fewer opportunities for continued professional education. The

study also did not include journalists working in the public broadcasting system and in its local affiliates.

A final limitation is that the researcher did not solicit the views of the media owners. It is likely that the owners would have different perspectives on when, if, and how they balance interests of the media business with the interests of the journalists and of the public. That dimension was not explored in this study.

Future Research

Future investigation could build on the qualitative study presented in this thesis. For example, researchers could conduct similar qualitative analysis among the journalists and reporters in the region of South East Europe who are going through similar processes of transformation and share their history as former republics of Yugoslavia. The research itself was envisioned to be a two-part study in which the researcher could use the findings to construct a survey that will provide a socio-demographic profile of journalists in Macedonia similar to the studies done on the American journalists that provides measurements of their profile through several decades. This would provide a quantifiable profile of the Macedonian journalists and changes could be followed through time.

As a corollary to this study, future research might focus on a content analysis of the stories written by the participants in this study. Such a study would either reinforce or contradict the participant journalists' understanding of professionalism versus what they actually produce.

Considering that online news media are starting to develop in Macedonia and that there is good access to the Internet, it would be interesting to test the model developed in this study with journalists working with this new media.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Descriptions of Participants, Where They Work, Positions and Years of Experience

Participant 1 (**P1**) holds a high editorial position at the daily *Dnevnik* and has more than 26 years of experience. He started as a reporter with *Vecer* and continued his career with *Dnevnik* in 1999 as a senior reporter in the internal political desk and in 2005 was promoted to editor. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 20 minutes. Venue: In the office of one of the editors.

Participant 2 (**P2**) holds editorial position at the daily *Dnevnik* and has more than nine years of experience. She started as a reporter in the weekly *Sedmica* and continued her career with *Dnevnik* covering city desk and in 2004 was promoted to editor of the city desk. She holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 3 (**P3**) was holding an editorial position at the daily *Nova Makedonija* (a few months after the interview he left the paper) and has more than 24 years of experience as reporter and editor. He started as a reporter in daily *Nova Makedonija* and in 1996 was one of the founders of *Dnevnik* and worked as editor and managing director. In 2004 he was one of the founders of the daily *Vreme*, and in 2009 moved and set out to revitalize *Nova Makedonija*. He left the paper in 2010. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. As a reporter he covered political issues and all of the breaking stories in formation of Macedonia as an independent state and was involved in the evolution of the media

and forming of the private media in Macedonia from the beginning. Interview length: 50 minutes. Venue: In his office.

Participant 4 (**P4**) holds an editorial position at A1 TV and has more than 40 years of experience. He started his career as reporter/commentator in the youth publication *Focus*, in the 1970s. After the closing of the publication, he continued to work as a reporter for Macedonian Radio where he was covering the transformation of the state. In 1995, he continued his career in Germany as a visiting editor for *Deutsche Welle* in Macedonian. He returned in Macedonia in 1997 as an editor in the news division of Macedonian Television. He moved to A1 TV in 1998 as an editor and in a period between 2004-2008 he was editor in chief. Currently, he is an editor on the debate program that airs on A2, the satellite station, and he is still connected to the main newsroom of A1. He also still works with *Deutsche Welle* as the regional editor responsible for Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 5 (**P5**) holds a high editorial position at Al Sat M TV and has more than 12 years of experience. He started his career in TV Era, a local Albanian language station in 1997. In 2000 he started working in the Kanal 5 TV and covered the 2001 conflict as the only Albanian journalist working for Macedonian language TV station. After the conflict he transferred to Radio Free Europe, Macedonian service where he worked until 2006 when he transferred to Al Sat M. He holds a BA in Theology. Interview length: 1 hour 15 minutes Venue: In a bar.

Participant 6 (**P6**) holds a high editorial position at the daily *Vreme* and has more than 13 years of experience. He started his career in *Dnevnik* in 1996 as a reporter. At the end of 2000 he became a correspondent for Reuters, and two years later also took an editorial position in A1 TV.

Since 2009, after a large group of editors and journalist left the paper for *Nova Makedonija*, he moved to *Vreme*. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 7 (**P7**) holds a reporter position at the daily *Dnevnik* and has more than 10 years of experience. She started as a reporter in daily *Vest* and continued her career with *Dnevnik* in 2005 as a city desk reporter and working on investigative projects, for which she had received several awards. She holds a BA in political science from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 8 (**P8**) holds an editorial position at Al Sat M TV and has more than 14 years of experience. He started as a reporter at *Dnevnik* and from there moved to several dailies and magazines in Macedonian and Albanian language. He was also working for the BBC in Macedonia. He started in Al Sat M while working for daily *Vreme* and since 2008 only in Al Sat M. Throughout his career he covered mainly political parties and politics. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 30 minutes. Venue: In a restaurant.

Participant 9 (**P9**) holds a senior reporter position at the daily *Dnevnik* and has more than 20 years of experience. She started in 1991 as reporter at the daily *Nova Makedonija*, and continued her career with *Dnevnik* in late 1990 as reporter covering Macedonian foreign policy, the negotiations with Greece on the name issue and the negotiations for European Union and NATO membership of Macedonia. She holds a BA in economics from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 17 minutes. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 10 (**P10**) holds a senior reporter position at the daily *Dnevnik* and has more than 13 years of experience. She started at the daily *Vecer* as a reporter and continued her career with *Dnevnik* in 1996. She covers crime and the judiciary. She holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 10 minutes. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 11 (**P11**) holds editorial position at Al Sat M and has more than 12 years of experience. He started as reporter at the daily *Fakti*, moved to Macedonian Television Albanian Program, and in 2006 moved to Al Sat M. He also works as a correspondent for Radio Free Europe Albanian section, and a lecturer in Shtul University in Tetovo. He holds an MA in communication. Interview length: 1 hour 15 minutes. Venue: In a restaurant.

Participant 12 (**P12**) holds a high editorial position and one of the founders of the Albanian language daily *Koha* with more than 11 years of experience. He started as reporter in the daily *Fakti*, *Koha Ditore*, *Lajm*, and *Koha*. He also worked as a reporter and news editor at A1 TV for four years. Interview length: 1 hour 45 minutes. Venue: In a restaurant.

Participant 13 (**P13**) holds a high editorial position at the daily *Utrinski Vesnik* with more than 35 years of experience in print media. He started as reporter and foreign correspondent in *Nova Makedonija* and in 1998 continued his career in *Utrinski Vesnik* in which he was one of the founders. He is often criticized by the mainstream media for his progressive views. He holds a BA in political science from Zagreb University. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 14 (**P14**) holds an editorial position at the daily *Koha* and the new magazine *Epoha* and has more than 10 years of experience. He started his career in the daily *Fakti*, and

then worked as a freelancer for the magazine *Lobi* and the bilingual daily *Global*. After the closing of *Global* he worked as a correspondent for the Kosovo daily *Koha Ditore* and continued at *Lobi*. Since 2006 he worked mainly as freelancer on investigative stories and in 2007 engaged as an investigative reporter and coordinator for the networks SCOOP and the Project for Investigating Crime and Corruption in Southeast Europe from Sarajevo. He started working for *Koha* and *Epoha* few months prior the interview. He holds a BA in Albanian language from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 30 minutes. Venue: In a restaurant.

Participant 15 (**P15**) holds a reporter position for the daily *Nova Makedonija* and has more than six years of experience. She started as reporter at the daily *Vreme* and only recently she began working for *Nova Makedonija*. She holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 15 minutes. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 16 (**P16**) holds a senior reporter position for *Nova Makedonija* and has more than 12 years of experience. He started as reporter in daily *Dnevnik* and continued his career in daily *Vreme* in 2003. He has been profiling himself as an investigative reporter who uncovered several big stories while working for *Vreme* and is facing prison if convicted for one of the stories published in 2006. He holds a BA in political science from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 25 minutes. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 17 (**P17**) holds a editorial position at Kanal 5 TV and has more than 25 years of experience. He started as reporter in dailies *Vecer* and *Nova Makedonija*, and Macedonian Television and continued his career is Kanal 5 TV in 1990s. He was president of Association of

Journalists of Macedonia for eight years, until 2010. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a restaurant.

Participant 18 (**P18**) holds a editorial (and reporter) position at the daily *Koha* with more than nine years of experience in Albanian language print media. He started as reporter at the weekly *Lobi*, and then worked for daily *Koha Ditore*, which was published in Kosovo and Macedonia. In 2006, he continued his career at the daily *Fakti*, and in 2009 moved to daily *Koha*. He is also correspondent for the Kosovo daily *Koha Ditore*. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 45 minutes. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 19 (**P19**) holds a reporter position at the weekly *Fokus* and has more than 15 years of experience in various print and electronic media. The interview with him came after several of the participants referred him. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a restaurant.

Participant 20 (**P20**) holds a reporter position at the daily *Koha* and has more than five years of experience covering crime and social issues. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 40 minutes. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 21 (**P21**) holds a reporter position at the daily *Vreme* and has more than five years of experience covering education and social issues. She holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 22 (**P22**) holds a producer position at Sitel TV and has more than eight years of experience. He started as a reporter covering crime, education, health, and social issues. In

2008 after his return from a nine months professional development in the United States as part of a State Department Professional Development Program he had taken over and developed a position of producer, which is new and encompasses many functions that are not part of the producer job in the United States, such as dealing with programming, human resources up to developing the station's web site. He holds a BA in classic languages from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour and 10 minutes. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 23 (**P23**) holds a high editorial position at the A1 TV and has more than 13 years of experience. He started as a reporter in *Dnevnik* in 1996 and continued his career in A1 in 2000 as reporter on the economic desk and in 2007 became an editor in the news department. He also works as a correspondent for *Deutsche Welle*. He holds a BA in political science from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a restaurant.

Participant 24 (**P24**) holds a reporter position in Kanal 5 TV and has more than five years of experience. He started as reporter at the daily *Dnevnik* while still studying journalism and continued his career in Kanal 5 in 2007 as a general assignment reporter. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a restaurant.

Participant 25 (**P25**) holds an editorial position at A1 TV and has more than 17 years of experience. She covers politics and foreign politics. For two years she was correspondent from Brussels. She holds an MA in communication. Interview length: 50 minutes. Venue: In a bar. .

Participant 26 (**P26**) holds a high editorial position at A1 TV and has more than 15 years of experience. He started his career as reporter at the daily *Dnevnik*. Then for a brief period

worked for Sitel TV and in 1999 continued his career in A1 as a reporter and editor in the economic desk and in 2007 news editor. He holds a BA in classic languages from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 15 minutes. Venue: In a restaurant.

Participant 27 (**P27**) holds an editorial position at Al Sat M TV and has more than 20 years of experience. She started her career at the Macedonian radio as a translator, and reporter covering foreign policy. She made a brake for few years and returned in journalism as a freelancer, editor and trainer at the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR). Since 2007 she is working as a web editor and producer at Al Sat M. She was also president of the Council of Honor at the time of the interview. She holds a BA in philosophy from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: hour 25 minutes. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 28 (**P28**) holds an editorial position at Sitel TV and has more than 20 years of experience. He started as reporter in Macedonian radio covering political parties and politics. He continued his career in A1, then in 2003 moved to Kanal 5, and four years ago to Sitel TV. There one day of the week he is an editor responsible for the main news for that day and he also produces his own political show called “Nie” (“Us”), which is broadcast once a week . He has been working with different print publications and is an active blogger. He holds a BA in literature from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 one hour 25 minutes. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 29 (**P29**) holds a senior reporter position in Sitel TV and has more than 10 years experience. He works as general assignment reporter covering events from education, the Macedonian Orthodox Church, political parties, and lately has been covering the prime minister

and the government. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a bar.

Participant 30(**P30**) holds an editorial and commentator position at the daily *Dnevnik* and has more than 10 years of experience mainly in electronic media. He started his career in Sitel TV, than A1 TV and in 2003 with several other reporters and editors moved to Kanal 5. In Kanal 5 he had top editorial position before he resigned in 2008. He started working at *Dnevnik* in 2009. He is also an instructor at the Journalism Faculty in Skopje. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 15 minutes. Venue: In the office of one of the editors.

Participant 31 (**P31**) holds a high editorial position at the daily *Dnevnik* and has more than 10 years of experience. He started as reporter in *Dnevnik*, but for few years worked at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs PR office. When he returned in *Dnevnik* worked as columnist before taking the editorial position. He holds a BA in journalism from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Interview length: 1 hour 15 minutes. Venue: In the office of one of the editors.

Participant 32 (**P32**) holds a reporter position at the daily *Vreme* and has more than five years of experience. He started as a sports reporter in a local (Skopje) radio and continued his career in *Vreme* as reporter covering politics and in 2009 became the main reporter covering the negotiations with Greece over the name issue and Macedonian membership in the EU and NATO. He holds a diploma from the Macedonian Institute for Media One-Year Degree Program. Interview length: 1 hour. Venue: In a bar.

Appendix B

Discussion Guide

- Tell me how you started working as a journalist? (Explore the professional background as well, e.g if they have any journalistic training or schooling.)

- Do you like being a journalist?

- Tell me about your usual day at work. What you do?

- What is important for you when you research and write a story?

- In your opinion what is professionalism in journalism?

(If the participant does not start talking about objectivity, ethics, or ethical code, I'll ask questions that will seek his/her opinion on those topics.)

- How do you see your role as journalist in Macedonia?

- Do you have problems doing your job (what kind of problems, how you deal with them, have you ever being afraid to publish the information you have gathered while reporting, do you have support within the newsroom regarding the stories you report if yes, who gives you that support and how is it offered ?)

- What is your favorite story and why? – (This question was not included in the analysis, because only three participants provided the researcher with copies. This was an especially big problem for the broadcast reporters; they had no samples of their stories.)

- What do you feel when you see the published lists of names of journalists and media that are labeled as a traitors or working for a certain political option? (Added question)

Vita

Katerina Spasovska was born April 2, 1971 and raised in Makedonska Kamenica and Skopje, Macedonia. She earned her bachelor degree in journalism from Saint Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. In 2000, she earned her master's degree from the University of Missouri, after which she returned to Macedonia and continue working as a journalist and journalism educator. She is pursuing a doctorate in the College of Communication and Information at the University of Tennessee. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at Western Carolina University.