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Journalists as professionals in theory and reality

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1 Journalists as professionals in theory and reality

Propaganda, a program of creating opinion, should serve the state as well as political, social and union organizations. But, the journalist should not feel he is a worker for the propaganda apparatus. Naturally, in the process of gathering information, the journalist will represent some point of view but this should be his point of view spoken in his name.

Stefan Bratkowski, Chairman,
Polish Journalists Association, 1980–81

Who speaks here? One of the “mouthpieces” of communist rule, carefully schooled in the rules and rhetoric of communism so that he could lead the population? Yes, but these are also the words of a professional journalist committed to his rights as a professional to work without interference for his own professional goals of service to the society and to professional leadership. Bratkowski’s words were spoken, after the victory of Solidarity, as Polish journalists moved to reclaim their professional rights. The words are those of both a consummate professional and a committed political actor.

Although Bratkowski was a leader in the profession, he was hardly unique. He, like his colleagues, is a product of explicitly political indoctrination. Yet, his message was a call to try to improve the system not merely to serve the Party. In his case, like that of many of his colleagues, he had strived for some thirty years to make his work his own rather than merely to shape it to fit Party doctrines and censors’ regulations. Like his colleagues, he turned to his professional association not for instruction but liberation, however much it had been concerned primarily with instructing. Like his colleagues, he used his profession to involve himself in policy and politics. And, like his colleagues, he was a product of and actor in Poland’s traumas and revolts beginning in 1948 and culminating, for his generation at least, in the hopes and disappointments of Solidarity and its repression in martial law. His professionalism and that of his fellows defies traditional Western theories. It demands explanation.

Journalists and journalism in Poland were important actors and elements in the battles of Solidarity. The media they produced was a major concern for both Solidarity and the government. And, while battles went on between Solidarity and the government over issues related to the mass media, journalists fought with both sides to be allowed to produce what they felt, as professionals, was right. Some of their number used professional positions to take active roles in government and others used them to take roles in Solidarity. Still others used the journalists' association to increase professional power and autonomy and to negotiate policy as their profession's representatives. But, whatever their personal or institutional politics, journalists almost universally agreed on what their professional demands and stances should be, just as they had done in earlier years. Most of those stances made it difficult for them to conform to the ruler's wishes.

When martial law was imposed, journalists were the first of the professional groups in Poland to organize to resist it. In addition, their actions during the Solidarity period appeared so threatening and powerful to the rulers that journalists, as a group, were directly attacked in the initial martial law declarations. More than one-third of Poland's journalists in those first days were either fired from their jobs or refused to work in their old positions in the face of the retreat from media freedom. The journalists' professional association then became the first formal professional group since the communist takeover in 1945 to be permanently disbanded and replaced. The group's undeclared "crime," both before and after martial law, appears ultimately to have been its insistence on acting and being treated as professionals rather than as obedient followers of political leaders.

Their apparent defeat under martial law, when the various legal gains they had made previously were essentially rescinded or reduced and their professional elite was forced to leave the profession, makes their professional life no less significant. Past experiences of this group explain how professional groups develop out of a very politically controlled atmosphere, how professionals work around various kinds of political pressures, and what the countervailing forces are against the politicization of all decision-making. The actions of journalists after martial law was declared and the concern of the regime with controlling the profession (especially those who had earlier supported communist regimes) demonstrate the strength of the professional impulse for independence and the viability of professional links in creating this independent world. Finally, pressure was continued for the same professional rights and privileges by the quisling journalists' organiza-

tion established in 1982. This is a further measure of the significance of professional values.

Traditional Western theories of socialization, of interest group behavior, or of change in communist societies do little to explain Polish journalists' behavior in this crisis situation and in earlier periods of crisis in Poland (1956, 1968, and 1970). Nor do they explain their behavior, in the public eye and behind the scenes, under more normal conditions. Such behavior is more usefully explained by Western theories of professionalization and professional group behavior. This theory provides a model for groups (like doctors, lawyers, accountants, social workers, and other self-defined or publicly recognized "professions") who control unique bodies of knowledge not shared by the rest of society. The possession and use of this knowledge is regulated by the groups' internal structures as well as regulations reinforced by the broader society.¹ Furthermore, professionals are defined as being part of occupational groups that have gone through a process involving the establishment of professional organizations and schooling, developing full-time work commitments, and pressing for the right to control their own work and membership.² In any society these groups, one of which is usually defined as the journalism profession, are able to claim some autonomy and self-control – as journalists in Poland have.³ They also have a higher level of formal and informal interaction and organization than other social or occupational groups. This they have by virtue of their controlled membership, common interests and values, close connections with each other for large parts of their lives, and their self-claimed special roles in society.⁴

The stress in professionalization theory is on the importance not of formal structures and formally stated positions, actions and demands (the least significant form of professional activity in the West and the one that most depends on the "permission" of the political leadership in the East), but on informal group formation as well as the development of values and action based on the rewards and pressures inherent in professional work anywhere.⁵ Even though some of these demands and rewards differ from those of journalists' counterparts in the West, the mechanisms of professional life appear to be comparable.

This approach then gives dimension to the label of "professional" and "professionalized" that so often is used to label any independent contribution by intellectuals in a communist society.⁶ It also provides a model for what goes on behind the lines before the political leadership invites professional participation in policy decisions. In fact, this sociological theory helps explain what has been unexplainable in studies of

communist systems: apparent independent professional action and reaction in the context of politically controlled professional organizations.

The place of Marxism–Leninism and the mass media

The significance of the mass media in any society, but especially in those where mobilization and modernization are primary goals, sets the journalism profession apart from other professions. Journalists play a broader social and political role than other professionals for whom politics has limited political relevance in their work lives. Journalists and their media are charged with being, at least, the “gatekeepers” for all but interpersonal communications in the society.⁷ The nature of their professional life weighs directly on this role. As research on the role of the mass media and its messages done in the West, developing societies, and communist states has shown, the professional life and attitudes of journalists are critical influences on the nature of the news presented.⁸

In the European press tradition, where the press initially developed as, and remained, a partisan force that accepts responsibility for the “good of the society,” the role of journalists as professionals is further increased.⁹ Polish journalists were not only representatives of various political factions and spokesmen for them throughout Polish history, but they were also representatives of the national interest and national culture during the entire Partition period. Then, the three powers occupying Poland allowed Poles virtually no avenues other than their controlled press to express their nationalism and their political ideas.¹⁰ The Marxist–Leninist tradition grows out of this European tradition. In postwar Poland, Marxism built upon, even as it distorted, the historical responsibilities of the Polish press.

Ironically, the ideological basis for the current “Marxist–Leninist” press is, in fact, a product of the Stalinist period. Neither Marx nor Lenin discussed in detail the organization and role of the press in a post-revolutionary society. Marx merely termed the press “a mirror of the spirit of the nation.”¹¹ Lenin saw the press as the most effective instrument for fomenting revolution.¹² Only with the advent of Stalinism was this revolutionary image transformed into a structure for the press system of a ruling party. The Stalinist structure has remained the basis for press organization in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the ideological touchstone with which journalists and political leaders justify their actions.

Discussion in this section will be limited to the political ideology presented to Polish journalists. It is not intended to be a comprehensive discussion of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the press. The Leninist definition of "freedom of the press" on which communist states' ideology is focused is one in which there is economic control by the "workers" over the means of press production and, thus, workers' interests have precedence over those of the producers of the press.¹³ Communist ideologists stress this use of the press as an instrument both to influence and to reflect working-class opinion. Party domination over the press is, thus, inherently justified by its role as the "vanguard" of the proletariat and by the need to solidify popular opinion to further the revolution.¹⁴

This Stalinist version of the Marxist-Leninist press was imposed on Poland after World War II. When this was done, the press' target audience was shifted from the literate, urbanized intelligentsia to the workers. The goal was mobilization not policy debate. But the focus on advocacy and analysis aimed at structuring the population's thinking to fit historical traditions. This, combined with the respect for the prewar national media which had long upheld national goals while operating under external political controls, helped preserve the legacy of Polish press traditions even in the Stalinist period.

The crucial tract in Polish and Soviet scholars' discussions of the ideological foundations of the communist press systems is *What Is To Be Done?* (written by Lenin in 1902 as a plan for the revolution in Russia). In it, a heavy burden is placed on the press to serve as the political leadership for the underground.

The organization, which will form around this (all Russian revolutionary paper) will be ready for everything, from upholding the honour, the prestige, and the continuity of the Party in acute revolutionary "depression" to preparing for, appointing the time for, and carrying out the nation-wide, armed uprising.¹⁵

This activist image of journalism makes the press "not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator but also a collective organizer."¹⁶ On the other hand, the publication of information for its own sake never entered into these discussions. Professional journalism is, thus, inseparable from political action and the development through the press of ties with workers and peasants and between workers and peasants.¹⁷

The Stalinist contribution to this ideological basis of journalism was a tipping of the balance in favor of journalists as political propagandists rather than as independent agitators. Journalists' popular ties were

intended to be made and maintained by worker-peasant correspondents. This made the press and the journalists that produced it a part of the "thread from the Party, through the newspaper, which extends to all worker-peasant districts without exception so that the interaction of the Party and state, on the one hand, and the industrial and peasant districts, on the other, is complete."¹⁸

This reduced both journalists' control over the media and the significance of the press as an independent institution. At the same time, the Soviet-model press is also a monitor of the bureaucracy and its administrative practices. As such, the press is responsible for collecting citizens' complaints, checking their validity, and forcing action on the valid ones.¹⁹ Finally, there is a clear stress on economic and social modernization.

The Soviet press over the years has been one means by which a predominantly illiterate Soviet population was taught to read, and by which it acquired much of the information necessary for daily living in a nation being transformed from an agrarian into an industrialized, urban society.²⁰

Journalism is, thus, by definition, a political profession in communist societies like Poland. To be politically involved is not necessarily to be less professional or professionally active. In fact, for journalists, being politically active is often a way to forward one's career and do professional work just as, for many lawyers in the United States, political positions and activities are a career enhancement.²¹ And, just as political pressure has often increased journalists' professionalization, the use of political channels and ties has been their way to perform one of their key self-declared professional roles, that of monitor and ombudsman.

In describing their work, Polish journalists in the seventies emphasized that they were experts first and then communists and not an amalgam of the two or simply professionals in the service of the Party. At the same time, they made it clear that, although they earned their salaries from having articles published or programs broadcast, much of what they regarded as professional work involved "behind the scenes" work with political and governmental authorities through a variety of channels and on a variety of levels. For them, then, participation in Party and governmental bodies by making use of their personal ties and connections, serving as experts on commissions, working on professional and policy issues as advisors to citizens' groups as well as government groups, revealing information, speaking at public forums, or being censored and then reprinted in the censors'

reports for top Party officials were all useful channels in professional work.⁷ In the *Solidarity* period, journalists' self-defined professional work also involved journalists participating in intellectual committees to draft press and censorship legislation, schooling young aspirants to the profession, and organizing or acting in bodies discussing policy. And, particularly after the declaration of martial law, for some, professional work was extended to writing in dissident publications or keeping up to date on events and verbally spreading information.

Clearly then, in comparison to most other professions, Polish journalism is a special case. Journalists, more than any other profession in Poland, are expected to participate in political activities as part of their professional work, as defined by their own professional values and the state ideology, simply because the media plays such a critical political role. They also have the least clearly defined professional qualifications and skills so they are the most easily politically regulated and penetrated profession. However, from their own reports and the limited published data that exists, it is clear that, no matter how long and at what level journalists hold political positions, they maintain strong connections with the profession. So, whatever their ostensible tasks or goals, they act first of all as representatives of the journalism profession.

Regardless of the rhetoric about the media being the handmaiden of the Party and "vanguard of the working class," until the introduction of martial law, the presence of professional journalists on Party and state bodies and on citizen groups (including *Solidarity*), as informal contributors to policy discussions, was of benefit to the political leadership. If they participated in Party or state bodies publicly, journalists tended to lend an aura of credibility to these bodies. They also gave their usually faceless membership a clear, publicly recognizable face. And, as recognizable participants in decisions or as behind the scenes actors, journalists and editors served, throughout the postwar period, as necessary links between individuals and groups who shared their interests and expertise. Journalists were, after all, normally the links between groups and with the population and its problems for other actors in policy-making.

This balance between professionalism and political involvement is not without tension. On the one hand, since journalists are so closely intertwined with the Party and state elite, they are well aware of the conflicts, problems and policy shifts within that elite. Hence, they can and do exploit conflicts, problems or shifts to protect their ability to do their work and to push issues that are of interest to them. They also can

make public disputes that the leadership is trying to cover over. On the other hand, although the number of formal positions journalists hold in Party and state bodies and the intensity of personal contacts between top leaders and journalists is determined by non-journalists, these outsiders cannot create or control journalists' desire to be involved or their persistent pressure to be heard. Nor do their demands do anything but exacerbate the conflicting pressure on journalists to be advocates and monitors of the state and the society around them. After all, journalists' reading of their ideologically mandated role, however they see the system, is that they should be "a loyal opposition party in the British sense," monitoring the carrying out of policy and proposing adjustments to it, while protecting their ability to perform professional work correctly.

Traditional approaches to groups and policy making: a critique

Western scholars have observed journalists and other white-collar groups in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as the key interest articulators of these systems. Even in taking into account the extent to which journalists and other professionals are "political," the growing strength and independence of specialists and professionals as well as the resulting divergence between stated policy and its execution in communist countries have been undeniable. How this all happened has remained a puzzle for which the only key has seemed to be the desire of the political leadership to use professionals' expertise on particular issues.

Groups and the aggregation of group interests in socialist states have virtually no ideological justification in Marxism-Leninism. The evolution toward communism is supposed to result in an evolution away from individuals seeing themselves as part of separate and competing groups.²² The structures of the Party and state, as well as of social organizations, have been designed to insure that autonomous group interests do not develop and are not articulated. Instead, organizational structures for professional and social organizations are intended to be "transmission belts" for guidance from the political elite to be communicated to organization members and for information on membership activities and concerns to be transferred back to the political leadership. So, they are not intended to articulate or aggregate specific interests, much less develop an insular group identity.²³

How does professional expertise develop independently enough for

the leadership to hear more than simply approbation of its policy proposals? Why, in times of relative freedom, do professionals suddenly appear to present a coherent and consistent set of professional demands almost without time for prior discussion or germination? How does the professional community, which must serve as a basis for all this, develop, given the strict controls over organizations in these societies? These are all parts of the puzzle of the role of the intelligentsia in communist societies. They have never been satisfactorily put together. Western blind spots are increased by a research focus on academic and research specialists and what they write rather than on professionals and their work. Those with whom we have been the least concerned are the practitioners who, like journalists, after all, help create policy from their positions in advisory bodies and who take policy and remold it in their day to day work as professionals.²⁴

At the same time, research on the policy process that has focused on individual policies and their implementation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has generally concluded that involved professionals, like "the managers, teachers, educators and scientists" Joel Schwartz and William Keech found to have been the most influential in blocking Khrushchev's educational reform proposal,²⁵ are the most powerful actors. Yet little is known about why this happens since professional opposition to leadership policies is seldom actually sanctioned or publicized. The impetus for action is assumed to be the desire on the part of individuals "to protect interests derived from occupational roles," as is true for any professional in Western society.²⁶ The power of these professionals and their specialist counterparts is, further, seen in Western professional literature as deriving from "their technical expertise, their indispensability to the ruling circles, and their access to influential media of communication,"²⁷ as well as from their less well defined ability to drag their feet or reinterpret the policies they are to follow.²⁸

The entrance and involvement of these specialists and professionals into the policy process has been seen by Western researchers as being a result of an invitation from or the weakness of the political leadership.²⁹ Although the totalitarianism of Stalinist control seems to have been far less strict than it appeared in the 1950s, it is clear that both the level of group activity and the visibility of that activity have increased with the technological modernization of the post-Stalin years. The increase in the technological knowledge and sophistication required for decisions to be made has clearly increased political leaders' propensity to seek advice and defer to it or to allow professionals ever in-

creasing autonomy in the performance of their roles.³⁰ Beyond the simply technological imperatives, political leaders' increasing claims of deference to specialist and professional interests also have been used as a measure of their desire to involve and integrate an increasingly complex and educated population in the policy process. The claim then is that leadership decisions come from experts and are not politically motivated.³¹

Western theorists have differed on the fundamental nature of groups in these societies. Claims of full comparability between groups and group input in communist societies and pluralist Western societies are not made either in group theory (which has never dealt with "the communist case")³² or by those who have sought to apply that interest group theory, however imperfect the fit, to behavior in communist states.³³ Furthermore, few parallels have been drawn, in theory or in actual research, between the behavior and demands of specific groups in the West and in the Soviet bloc.

The variety of definitions of "group" in communist politics given in 1969 demonstrates the disagreement among theorists on the nature of "groups" and on the key lines of social and political division in communist societies. In the ensuing years, that definition has been made no clearer:

Brzezinski and Huntington see policy-relevant groups as forming principally upon occupational lines (and at the upper reaches of the Soviet elite), such as the military, the state bureaucracy, the Party apparatchiki, etc. Meyer, cautioning against all attempts at an *a priori* listing, suggests that interest groups may form around issues or individual political leaders or bureaucrats, in addition to occupations. Barghoorn, following Leonard, argues that the major policy groupings do not form along occupational lines but cut across these to coalesce around issue orientations. They are most usefully identified as "modernizers and conservatives, revisionists and dogmatists." Skilling and Griffiths similarly conclude that groupings most frequently form around issues, but unlike Barghoorn, they see a great multiplicity of viewpoints . . . Brzezinski, Azrael, and Barghoorn stress the Party's formal monopoly over decision making and the weakness of interest groups. At the same time, they suggest that certain groups, especially those with relatively high institutional cohesion, such as the military, may occasionally act as successful veto groups, successfully resisting Kremlin pressures. Meyer, while pointing out the serious lack of knowledge of Soviet policy making processes, suggests that the interests of a wide variety of groups are considered by Soviet decision-makers. At the same time, he con-

cludes usually such interests do not count heavily. Griffiths, Skilling and Meissner, by contrast, argue that certain kinds of strategic groupings do count very heavily in Soviet decision-making.³⁴

Even studies of the roles of specific professional or specialist groups or of the making of individual policies have hedged on the question of the real meaning and composition of groups.³⁵ Measurement of strength or influence is done not on the basis of group action but by external evaluation both of the perquisites and position of members in each of these externally defined groups³⁶ and the correlations between the public statements of group members and the changes made in policies from their initial presentations to their enactment.³⁷

Studies of interest groups' input into policy have also failed to grapple with the nature of group interaction. In most of the research that has been done, group interests have been treated as those of essentially "non-associational groups" identified not by their own organization but by their common individual reactions to policy moves and their common social or demographic characteristics.³⁸ This is done without any clear evidence of interaction and self-identification within a group. Such different entities as formal groups, social groups, and "groups" that represent a common opinion held by individuals with no sense that they have anything in common thus get equated. The assumption is that all affiliations are potentially equal and significant group interests are not recognized by the polity.

The loyalty of Party members to any of the other groups they might join is an open and unanswered question, although most researchers take it for granted that Party membership is the dominant force in an individual's life simply because the Party is so selective and requires such a high level of constant organized activity and identification. Furthermore, since membership in the Communist Party is required for many responsible professional positions, the assumption is that it is the primary force for both institutions and individuals.³⁹

Focused as most research has been on academic specialists, the wisdom has been that individuals give advice as individuals or, at most, as members of small institute groups. Group identity and interaction are factored in only where occasionally individuals are identified with a profession and the body of knowledge professionals have from scholarly meetings and journals. Western scholars, and their East European counterparts, have only glanced at "hands-on" professionals. The assumption has been that their only work is done by individuals with little or no sense of how their actions fit with the

broader professional community and its goals. "Hands on" professionals' only influence on policy then is assumed to be tied with policy-makers' anticipation of what professionals, who filter and implement the policy, will do to it. In this way, the duel between policy-makers and professionals sounds not unlike the "nondecision making" described in Western pluralist models.⁴⁰

In fact, however, sociological research done on the intelligentsia in Eastern Europe, and particularly in Poland, has demonstrated that, however much Marxist theory denies the existence of groups and group interests, there are clear patterns of group identity and interaction in all of these systems.⁴¹ The identification of individuals with their professional or occupational group is stronger than their alternative affiliations with class, regional, or social groupings. This identification with one's profession or occupation is reinforced by the fact that individuals tend to share a common life-style, set of values, and social circle made up primarily of those in their own profession.⁴² Furthermore, professionals have a higher status and more material benefits than workers or party and state bureaucrats.⁴³ This insures their primary identification with their profession as does the fact that, as long as they remain in a profession, they work with and share pressures and problems with both Party and non-Party people in that profession. Groups, then, exist through informal group interaction based on common values and common friendships growing out of professional life even if formal associational channels are far more controlled than those of Western groups. An individual's ties with a profession are further strengthened by the material and status rewards he receives for his position. Such professional communities clearly appear in periods of crisis, when professional groups respond almost immediately with their own demands and new organizational structures. But, these networks and rewards also clearly continually provide for informal communication of individual professionals' concerns, reactions and gains as well as informal but effective pressure on individuals for group cohesion and adherence to professional norms and values.

Western studies, both of group dynamics and of professional groups as interest groups, stress the importance this informal interaction has in insuring that a group can make an impact on policy.⁴⁴ For, as Mancur Olson has pointed out, even in pluralist states where there is no pressure against group affiliation, the activities of an organization or the claim of representation by a formal organization are not sufficient incentives for individuals to align themselves with any organization. Benefits attained by formal representatives are, after all, available to

everyone in a group regardless of his participation in the organization. Therefore, two other incentives must be used to bring individuals into organizations: direct material incentives that are available only to members and small group interaction and pressure.⁴⁵ In addition, given the strength of the informal connections between professionals and their socialization into a unique value system, professionalization theorists see formal organizations as nothing more than the product of the professionalization of a group and the resulting need to bridge the gap between public and professional "governments" so nonprofessionals recognize the profession and its rights.⁴⁶ In effect, informal organizations of colleague networks are the vital links in professional life and political activity. They insure consistent policy preferences and reactions to policies.

A shift, in our approach then, is required to fully understand the role and position of any professional group in these societies. We need to move away from measuring the existence of "group" input on the basis either of formal structures, dominated in Poland and elsewhere in the communist world by the political leadership, or of the public statements of specialists within a profession. Instead, we need to focus on charting informal and internal group activity and the manipulation of structure and policies. We also need, of course, to monitor the public and, where we can, the private statements and activities of individuals and formal organizations.

Taking into consideration the existence of interactive groups with clear group goals and pressures for their cohesion, thus, adds to traditional Western perceptions of policy-making in communist states. Ironically, this assumption that some level of interaction holds individuals in professional circles and insures the influence of professional interests on decisions has long been pivotal in Kremlinological studies of communist elites.⁴⁷ But, this basic assumption has not been carried down to the level of individuals and their respective professional groups.⁴⁸ As a result, policy decisions have been treated essentially as elite decisions for which specialist and professional advice is commissioned or sanctioned by the leadership.⁴⁹ Little or no consideration is given to competition or cooperation between groups except when they are pictured as "opinion clusters" composed of individuals from various fields with a common perspective on a specific issue.⁵⁰ Nor has there been sufficient consideration of the ability of groups to make their own policies in areas that are not of direct interest to the political leadership. In addition, the natural reactions of professionals, when policies go against their interests, needs to be taken into account.⁵¹

And, given the stress by Western research on the formal invitation to participation and the formal, visible participation of individuals and group representatives in stating policy options, there has been little accounting, except under the rubric of "bureaucratic inertia," for the limits on change exerted by professionals.⁵² As a result, we have been able to paint only a very rough sketch of the deliberate policy advocacy and manipulation that is done "behind the scenes." Yet, the gap between stated policies and their reality, the inability of even the most repressive regimes to transform all behavior and get full support from professionals, and the number of abandoned policies (as well as policies made without any elite policy commitment) make it clear that much goes on both without political leaders soliciting advice and outside formal public channels.

Finally, as Western studies of decision-making in communist states have shown, it is bureaucratic interests that have the most power.⁵³ In part, Western bureaucratic theory⁵⁴ can be applied to explain the strength of institutional interests in communist societies. But, bureaucracies' strength in protecting institutional prerogatives exists in spite of the penetration of the Communist Party into virtually all institutions – something Western theory maintains would naturally destroy institutional identity. The power of bureaucratic interests, in spite of the Party's penetration, exists in small, less complex institutions as well as in large, professionalized and insulated bureaucracies whose powers are critical to national policy, such as the military and the economic ministries. This suggests that more is involved than simply the model of Weberian-style bureaucracies.

Here, too, Western professionalization theory offers a useful paradigm. For, as the bureaucratic state developed in the West, professionals' life increasingly moved in setting to large bureaucracies. In communist states, political penetration has made independent professional work outside of some bureaucratic setting almost impossible even for the members of the "free professions." To deal with the impact of this bureaucratization on professional life, Western theorists have developed two paradigms:

- (1) The paradigm of patronage relations in which the consumer or bureaucratic employer dominates professional behavior by determining how professionals should meet their needs. This is done through the employer's control over the recruitment of professionals. Because of this, professional workers' primary loyalty is to their employer.
- (2) The paradigm of mediative relations where a public bureauc-

racy, involving nonprofessionals, stands between the professional and his consumers. It decides, in part guided by the expertise of the professional, what the clients' needs are for services and how they should be met. In this case, professional identification is split between the employing bureaucracy and the professional group.⁵⁵

If one were to follow the totalitarian model, on the other hand, patronage relations would determine professional behavior. Experts would willingly limit their activities to serving as sources of information for elite decision-making and establishing careers solely through ties with members of the political elite. Their loyalty would be measured by their support for elite positions. It would then follow that, because of their ties to the political elite, professionals would make no attempt to articulate independent and oppositional interests. Their only concern would be to move up in the political hierarchy.

Interest group research done on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, however, shows that this is not normally the case. Professional demands do occur. Professionals, no matter how closely they are connected in their work or personal lives with the political leadership, do make demands and press for autonomy. And, ultimately, professionals are able to mediate between the public and the political leadership.

The professional model

The conflicts between theories of how groups should and can act under the constraints in communist societies and the realities of group action are, at least, partially explained with the professionalization theory that has been used by sociologists and political scientists to deal with groups or "professions" in the West, ranging from the traditional "free professions," like doctors and lawyers, to those enmeshed in twentieth-century bureaucracies. The occupational groups to which it has been applied are defined in Western sociological theory as groups with unique skills and, therefore, the option of becoming "private governments" with at least some authority and autonomy in their own spheres of interest and expertise.⁵⁶ They exist as independent communities with informal organizational structures, unique sets of values, and lengthy socialization processes that are longer than any other period of socialization in an individual's life.⁵⁷

As a result, professionals, as portrayed by these theories, have a permanency of involvement and a set of values that supersede most

other group ties. Informal organization, characterized as it is by a colleague network, is the vital link in professional life. Formal professional organizations are really structural concessions to represent a profession to nonprofessionals.⁵⁸ Given this model of professional life, explanations of professional behavior focus primarily on less articulated and less public activities and on the professional and his informal network rather than on formal "professional" pronouncements. Professionals are not seen as simply being "invited" into the policy process. They also act independently to formulate professional rules and policies and press to protect and enhance their interests. The political leadership in communist societies serves, then, not as the "gate-keeper" but as the target of professional pressure and, ultimately, the arbiter of professional demands.

Professionalizing

The ability of any profession to reach the point where it can build and maintain a significant amount of autonomy within a bureaucracy is a result of both the process of individual professionalization and the process of professionalization for the group itself. The latter occurs as the group moves to take an increasingly autonomous position by establishing its own formal and informal structures. At an individual level, four elements are involved in transforming an individual into a professional: (1) the recruitment and training process; (2) work experiences and the resulting interaction with fellow professionals; (3) the structures and rules for controlling professionals' behavior that are developed within the profession and codified and reinforced by formal and informal professional associations; and (4) the impact of external images of the profession held by the society.⁵⁹ Each of these four elements plays a crucial role in transmitting professional values and expertise and in creating and maintaining an insulated subculture. All of them go on in any environment in which the profession develops. Furthermore, the experience of Polish journalists indicates that political pressure and manipulation of the profession do not stop individuals from becoming professionalized. These political pressures may veil the professionalization, but, in reality, they sharpen and make more urgent the move to professionalization.

The same is true of the effect of political pressure on the professionalization of the group. In spite of the repression of the Polish journalism profession during World War II and under the Stalinist

system, as well as the pressure of the political elite against the development of group autonomy and ideals, professionalization has occurred. The Polish journalism profession has followed the same course of development as have Western professions functioning without these kinds of political controls.

The historical pattern common to Western professions and to the case of Polish journalists began with individuals performing the work of the profession on a full-time basis and counting on it for their main income. When individuals were committed to the profession as full-time work, the need to perfect a body of expertise and protect work options then became greater. Professionals pressed for the establishment of training programs and, eventually, for their inclusion in university curricula. This resulted in the development of standards for entrance into the profession that involve lengthy and costly training programs and early recruitment. It also has given the profession more exclusivity and more worth in comparison with other occupations. Schools, in turn, have served as an organizational base for the establishment of a professional association, with the university affiliation simultaneously raising the status of the profession.⁶⁰

Those pushing for specialized training and those involved in it subsequently form a professional association. The title of the profession often is changed to further upgrade a profession's public image. The association then discusses such questions as: is this a profession; what are a professionals' tasks; and, how can the quality of recruits be raised? During these discussions, conflicts develop among practitioners from different backgrounds. Campaigns to separate the competent from the incompetent begin as well.⁶¹ The result of these developments has been that the profession goes through a series of major upheavals. A pecking order for the delegation of tasks develops. The "old guard," who learned through apprenticeships and are committed to their patrons and the use of "talent" as justification for entrance into the profession, fights against newcomers who came from the prescribed university course. This generational conflict stimulates pressure to put hiring and firing under professional group control. At the same time, there is competition for "turf" between the profession and neighboring groups. All of this eventually adds to the development of an entire system, both formal and informal, to regulate professional behavior and emphasize the role of the professional in serving society. It frequently involves political agitation to win the support of law to protect the "turf" of professional work and the profession's own code of ethics. To further protect their "turf" and

their status, professional groups also develop rules to eliminate those who disgrace the group, to reduce internal competition and to emphasize that only a member of the profession can provide certain services to the society.⁶² In the West, these crises and issues of identification are never fully resolved, so they return off and on as the profession develops and the society in which professionals work changes.

These crises are even less fully and permanently resolved in the communist world. Leadership changes and increase or decrease in political pressure bring each one to the surface again and again. The demographic devastation of World War II in Poland further created an age imbalance that exacerbated the generational conflict and the need for issues to be reconsidered and battled through with each generation. And, the prohibitions on visible and independent group activity make any full public resolution and commitment impossible.

Professionals and the policy process

The nature and significance of professional group and individual professionals' involvement in the policy process is dependent on more, though, than the invitation and interest of the political elite in both Soviet bloc and Western states. The nature of an issue and its relevance to different individuals or groups determine who gets involved and how. Which professionals and professional groups get involved in the policy process depends, as well, not simply on who the policy-makers want to hear but also on the nature of a given profession and the profession's own priorities. Finally, the stage at which groups become involved in a decision or policy and the impact they have are outgrowths of the nature of the policy itself as well as the political leadership's interest in that policy.⁶³

From the perspective of professional and specialist groups, policies are not all the same. Some have a direct impact on a profession, its work and its compensation. Formal professional groups play significant roles in organizing around these issues and advocating policies that increase the profession's standing and its benefits. They also act to strengthen professionals' power and the power of the professional association. In doing this, professional groups claim authority and responsibility for themselves.

Other kinds of policies are relevant to professionals only when their expertise is relevant to resolving issues on an individual or informal group basis. In these cases, normally, the policy has no direct impact on an individual's life or work. The professional serves as a repre-

sentative of other groups through the use of his technical expertise and recognized knowledge in a particular area. Finally, in some policies, professionals are involved as policy administrators. The passage of these policies affects the profession's role but not necessarily either its own interests or work patterns. In this final case, professional involvement occurs through advocacy by the professional association or experts from the profession and through policy administration.

Issues that affect professionals' own lives and work are regarded by professionals and their associations as their exclusive domain. The tendency is to keep the public and the state government away from what they see as professional concerns. In doing this, professional associations, both formal and informal, become "private governments" providing services and material benefits to their members. They also set up structures to regulate individual behavior within the professional community. Finally, they move to represent the interests of the profession to the public government.⁶⁴ In acting as representatives of the profession, professional associations jealously guard the ability of professionals to be sources of information and personnel for governmental decisions and committees and also to serve as the links between the professionals and their public.

Internally, each professional association has its own governance. This governance is determined by the profession's goals, the nature of its membership, and its members' socio-economic positions and needs as well as the association's past history.⁶⁵ Formal structures are intended to aid the organization in being the chief law-making body for public regulation of professional concerns.⁶⁶ These structures also are designed so internal controls can be maintained on association members in order to increase the group's leverage on professional issues.⁶⁷ Professional organizations, in trying to control the profession, seek to diffuse conflicts among individuals coming from different specializations, regional bases and social backgrounds. To do this, they divide professionals up into sections reflecting the varied interests and foci of the group's members.⁶⁸ They also seek to develop close coordination between local and national branches. By establishing and maintaining this control and coordination, professional organizations influence the public regulation of the profession and its work. They also influence the profession's membership and its public image.

This internal structure is not designed to insure democracy and full participation of all professionals within the organization. Dissent within the profession weakens the organization's negotiating position. So dissent and deviation, either in professional work patterns or be-

havior, are discouraged both formally and informally. As a service organization, the professional association is involved in lobbying and providing guidance to the government on complex issues. Group democracy and action are replaced by power invested in a permanent bureaucracy and a relatively stable and identifiable elite. So, crucial issues are seldom discussed and voted on by the profession as a whole. Instead, they are normally handled informally by the profession's leaders.

Ironically, though, however strong and visible that formal elite is, it is not the only professional elite. In each profession, there is, on the one hand, a parallel elite of individuals whose professional work is seen as excellent. On the other hand, those who make a career out of professional politics and representation are a self-selected few. They tend to be persons of high, but not top, prestige and authority within the profession. Their work is normally not a model for the profession. In fact, because movement up to the top of the professional organization is usually a result of gradual advancement up through lower level professional offices, most of those in the formal organizational elite spend years of their careers working less than full-time in real professional work. Their relationship with the profession as a whole is skewed by their experiences as bureaucrats and lobbyists. As a result, in Western democracies where professional organizations' dynamics have been studied, these individuals, the bureaucrats, are identified with the professional world they represent and not stellar professional work.⁶⁹

Previous studies dealing with the dynamics of professional groups in Eastern Europe found patterns which seem, on the surface, similar to this.⁷⁰ Thus, the dynamics of professional organizations in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union may be as much a result of their professionalism as of the demands by political leaders that they serve as "transmission belts." For this, the case of Polish journalists serves as a test since journalists are the profession whose loyalty is most demanded by the elite.

Structurally, professional associations in communist societies are hybrids of the two most common forms of professional organization: the guild model of equality among lower level professionals in various workplace and speciality groups⁷¹ and the pyramidal hierarchy model of a bureaucratic structure working to protect the profession against external bureaucracies.⁷² Clearly, the pyramidal hierarchy takes on greater significance in communist systems where the pressure and interference that most bedevils the profession comes from external

Party and state bureaucracies' control and direction. This external pressure makes the nonbureaucratic guild model less effective because the ruling bureaucracy of the Party and state both mandates and then responds only to corresponding professional bureaucracies. This same pressure, though, also exists in increasingly bureaucratized Western states.⁷³

The structure and effectiveness of professions' and professionals' involvement in policy that does not directly impact on professional work is limited more by political pressures than is professionals' influence on policies regulating their profession. For professional groups in Western and communist societies who contribute to policy-making as advisors or administrators, policy-making is a complex process. It has many stages at which individuals and groups can visibly and invisibly enter and impact on policies. Involvement in the early stages allows individuals and groups to define the issues and solutions they want to consider. It also allows them to determine who will be heard in the debate. Involvement in the middle and most public stages is often limited to tinkering with the basic policy set out early on.⁷⁴ Finally, although manipulation and redrawing the administration of a policy often has a significant effect on the public's sense of a policy, it seldom leads to a change in policy and most frequently ends with sporadic and undeclared distortions of it. This, ultimately, may force rethinking of policy but is not well enough articulated to serve as a clear model for a policy reform.

Journalists tend to be one of the most privileged professions because they enter into the early stages of policy-making and play "gate-keeper" roles in later stages. Some have ties with top political leaders and know, from friends, when an issue is being discussed by the leadership. They can use highly personalized and private channels to influence top elite discussions: personal and informal connections with leaders and their assistants that have been built up through years of joint work and social contact; non-published communications to the elite; and part-time or full-time work in political offices. In the most public stage of the policy process the press is one of the major forums for debate and the presentation of information. At a minimum, in the press and professional groups, there are veiled discussions that are monitored by the political leaders or are reflections of private presentations made directly to those leaders. It often is to the advantage of the politicians to allow open discussion so long as this discussion does not jeopardize their ideological power. Only in this way can the top elite be assured of obtaining the most accurate information from the broadest

range of experts without those experts limiting themselves to what the elite wants to hear. Such discussions also stimulate non-expert opinion from those directly affected by the policy. This is most often voiced through journalists' reports or letters to journals and public agencies.⁷⁵

Once data has been presented, the elite tends to withdraw to prepare a draft or final proposal for approval by the designated government agency. This normally ends the debate on a specific policy but does not always end the policy process. Individuals, even in strictly regulated communist polities, articulate their interests indirectly and try to get special treatment. Frequently, the aggregate behavior of social groups in response to a policy becomes a significant part of the memory of the elite and of society. This is then taken into account when policy-makers redesign policy. Journalists contribute to both the articulation of individual interests and the visibility of specific group responses to policies by acting as ombudsmen for individual problems and constantly reporting on events and attitudes through their public and private channels. This means that, while citizens are made aware of policies through the media, journalists also serve as channels to modify the impact of policies on individual citizens and to alert policy-makers to problems in how their policies work. Finally, explicit and direct criticism of the impact and administration of a law is made. This broader discussion, characterized in its public form as "press criticism," is, in part, an indication of policy-makers' interest in the administration and the success or failure of a policy in real life. From the perspective of the population, this press criticism is aimed at pressuring the elite to legitimize discussion and modify a policy.

Clearly, journalists are more involved in policy discussions than many professions because of their control over media platforms for public debate and their ties with political elites. Like the professional organizations that protect professional interests, this involvement is not simply a matter of invitation by the policy-makers. It is a product of the relationship between professional role demands and the requirements of political involvement. Frequently, too, elite policy-making is influenced by the experiences they had, when they worked in one or another profession or policy area.⁷⁶

As in the West, movement from professional work to political work is dependent on the nature of the profession: the congruence of the skills of professionals and those needed by politicians; the ability of individuals in a given profession to abandon their work for temporary or permanent political activity; and the particular occupational needs satisfied by the government.⁷⁷ For journalists and lawyers in both the

East and West, movement into politics does not go against professional requirements and traditions. For other professions, like the medical profession, movement into politics requires time and skills which practicing in a profession like medicine does not allow. As a result, some professions are more likely to be actively involved in policy debates not directly affecting their professional worlds than are others.

Thus, Western oriented professionalization theory provides a model for explaining both the power of professionals and specialists and the ability of groups to affect policy in communist systems when neither professional dominance nor group interests are recognized as legitimate. Clearly, the gate-keeper role of the political elite is crucial in any situation. But, the apparent congruence of behavior between Western professional associations and those in Eastern Europe suggests that the natural dynamics of professional interaction may be a significant factor in politics. It also suggests that this will be more true for purely professional issues with low political salience and a limited constituency than it is with other issues. But, in less visible ways, professional input, buoyed by professionalization, occurs on all levels.

Polish journalists: the virtues of atypicality

The atypicality of Polish journalists and their national environment makes their professionalism an ideal and accessible model for looking at the relationship between professionalization, professional group imperatives, and professionals' input in policy-making. Polish journalists, first of all, do not have the normal qualities that are assumed by Western theorists to be necessary for a group to feel that it is imperative to act as professionals. To a greater extent than most professions, journalists do not share a common class origin. They are very involved in politics and very divided as a group in their political orientations. They enter the profession without any single training base.

They have, however, all the characteristics of professional groups: high levels of self-definition as professionals, and of loyalty to their profession. In addition, they have had very high, almost exclusionary, patterns of informal group interaction. Like Western journalists, they have developed this sense of an overriding professional identity in spite of the fact that they are in a highly unregulated, competitive, yet bureaucratized field, and do their work through constant formal and social contacts with individual sources of information from outside the profession. They must maintain and impose their professional identity

and boundaries on a world where writing well is not considered either a unique skill or a technological necessity.

Finally, the world of Polish politics is the most tumultuous and unstable in Eastern Europe. It is a political situation into which journalists are constantly drawn. The demands on them, though, are never consistent. This makes them periodically rethink their personal and professional ideals and affiliations.

Research opportunities

For Western researchers, Poland is also an environment where discussion and action are more open and visible than in other more stable and controlled communist states. So, even under the conditions of the mid-seventies, interviews, survey research, and access to internal professional transcripts and reports allowed this study to survey far more than merely what had been published. This primary data, reinforced and enlivened by the words and works of journalists, press scholars, and politicians in the heady discussions and experiments of the Solidarity era and the dramatic changes that came with martial law, provided the data for much of this discussion of journalists' life and work. It reflects the research done on the journalism profession in the West and the research of Polish scholars on the profession as well as the writings of journalists about their work, their profession, and their concerns. In fact, much of the discussion of changes is based on Polish scholars' surveys done in 1958 and 1962⁷⁸ among Polish journalists and a survey done by this author in 1976 using a similar sample of Polish journalists. More impressionistic evidence as well as information about policy relevant behavior and non-public negotiations largely comes from interviews with 200 journalists in Poland in 1975–76 and smaller samples in 1979 and 1983. This data was further validated by the comparable interview results when interviews were done with former Polish journalists in Western Europe and the United States between 1976 and 1983.⁷⁹

Professional demographics

Polish journalists, as a group, have been one of the most diverse professions in postwar Poland.⁸⁰ Their social composition, particularly in terms of class origins and the level of feminization, have changed dramatically since the communist takeover after World War II. Beginning in 1948, workers, peasants, and women entered the

Table 1 *Percentage increase in membership in the union of journalists 1951–80*

Year	Number of members	Percentage increase
1951	643	?
1954	2,399	273.1
1956	2,826	17.8
1958	2,961	4.8
1961	3,691	24.8
1964	4,406	19.3
1968	4,802	8.9
1971	5,346	11.3
1974	6,055	13.3
1980	9,000	

Sources: SDP Archives, 1976 and 1980

profession in large numbers – far larger than before the war.⁸¹ In the initial postwar years of Stalinism, the profession grew rapidly (Table 1). This Stalinist era group continued to be the core of the profession for the next thirty years since they came into the profession, in the late forties and early fifties, when they were in their teens and early twenties. As a result of this stability, there were places for only a few recruits in the sixties and seventies. And, while a large number of the profession's elite, who had entered soon after the war, retired, resigned, or were kept out of the profession after the declaration of martial law, this generation remained a major professional force both numerically and as role models for professional work in the post-1981 era. The next most numerically and professionally significant group has come from the 1970s entrants who rose to prominence as a result of Solidarity and the changes in the profession.

As a profession, journalists and journalism are considered to be part of the intelligentsia. They have life-styles, values, and social status like those of other intelligentsia groups. But, at least in the forties and fifties, when there was massive recruitment of potentially loyal regime followers into the profession, the majority of those able to get work in the profession were working class. From 1950 to 1955, 66 percent of the students in journalism education programs were working class.⁸² These "intelligentsia converts" remained in journalism for the next thirty years. For them, the gains in being raised from the working class to the intelligentsia have been invaluable.

In later years, the smaller groups of entrants into the profession were less working class in origin. By 1964, only 34.2 percent of the profession as a whole claimed to be from working-class backgrounds.⁸³ This balance did not change dramatically in the 1970s. In fact, in television, the number of journalists coming from working-class backgrounds was so low that one journalist commented that being working class was "an element of snobbism among television journalists."⁸⁴ This was, in part, a reflection of television journalism's higher visibility and material benefits. But, basically, it was a result of the fact that television emerged as a "serious" media in Poland only in the 1970s. Then, when most television journalists were hired, the issue of "class background" was less significant.

With the advent of the Solidarity period, the class structure of the profession did not change dramatically. Worker journalists were not treated as members of the profession. Those already in the professional association and in established professional circles simply treated "worker-journalists" as newcomers who would have to serve the customary apprenticeship period before they could be treated as full-scale professionals.

Education and professional training, as is clear from the problems and adjustments in the journalism education programs of the postwar period, are not required for professional work in journalism. In the early period of heavy recruitment, there were more journalists with only high school education than there were with university degrees.⁸⁵ Even by 1969, only 58 percent of working journalists had completed a university education and an even smaller percentage had formal journalism training. The legacy of the fifties remained: politics took precedence so 72 percent of journalists under thirty-five had completed their university degrees but only 34 percent of those between forty-five and fifty-five, individuals who entered the profession in the initial postwar years when political qualifications were paramount, had finished their university course work.⁸⁶ Furthermore, few journalists in Warsaw actually finished professional training and even fewer of those who worked outside Warsaw had training in journalism.⁸⁷ This pattern continued throughout the Solidarity period.

Not only has professionalization occurred without autonomous professional education, but, it also occurred even where individuals entered journalism from other fields. To make this shift involved getting new skills and working in new ways as well as shedding old loyalties. More than half of the journalists surveyed in 1962 had worked outside journalism: 49.7 percent had had no other work prior to entering

journalism, 16.5 percent had been government bureaucrats, 8.3 percent had worked in other areas of publishing, 1.6 percent had been in the arts, 1.6 percent had been workers, 1.5 percent censors, 1.3 percent engineers, 1.2 percent military or internal security officers, and 0.6 percent lawyers.⁸⁸ A similar question in 1976 showed a comparable relationship between individuals with journalism as a first and only profession and those with training and work experience in some other profession. In fact, because this later survey was done primarily among regional and lower level journalists, even more (60 percent) claimed to have had some other profession prior to becoming journalists. This movement into journalism from other work is reported to have gone on in the 1980 period as well, among those who did make a permanent move into the profession.

Professionals' political affiliations

The prime challenges to the autonomy of journalism come from the political authorities in Poland. They define the journalism profession as an "instrument of the Party" and demand that it be a part of the political establishment in a more direct sense than other professions are. Party membership is, therefore, more common for journalists than for other professional groups in Poland. Nearly half (47 percent) of all members of the Association of Polish Journalists (SDP) and 56 percent of all those involved in work related to journalism were Party members as of 1975.⁸⁹

Ironically, though, whether or not having that percentage of journalists as party members was considered ideal, it is clear that the regime has been able to encourage but not force Party membership. The martial law attempt to get control of the profession and limit its autonomy did not result in journalists taking on Party membership as a prerequisite to professional work. The profession was, at least initially, fragmented because of individuals' intense reaction to martial law and its system of repression. Many journalists left established, high visibility positions and Party membership on their own or because they were blacklisted. Membership in the new Association of Polish Journalists of the Polish People's Republic (SDPRL) also ceased to be a simple matter of membership and became a political statement because the new Association appeared as an imposed substitute for the old Association, involved as it was in 1980–81 with Solidarity.⁹⁰ So, since membership was taken as a sign of support for the regime, a slightly higher percentage of the Association registered Party membership. As of 3 May, 1983, of the 5,375 members of the SDPRL, 65 percent were

members of the Communist Party and 4 percent were members of the two minor parties.⁹¹ The rest had no party affiliations. Still, even under martial law, the authorities could not bring nearly half of the working professionals into Party membership.

As with other professions involved in politics, appointment to important positions in the profession is controlled by the Party through its right to approve all major appointments (*nomenklatura*) at all governmental levels. Therefore, in managerial positions considered important by the Party bureaucracy or leadership, Party membership is higher than in other positions. In 1977, according to a report by the Association of Polish Journalists:

Membership in political organizations by editors down to the level of managing editor is high. In RSW Prasa [the major publishing house formally sponsored by the Polish United Workers Party], 80% are members of political organizations [including the minor parties]. In Radio and Television, 70% are members.⁹²

For purely journalistic positions (beginning with managing editor but not including editorial writers), the percentage of Party members is significantly lower.⁹³ For those who entered in the Stalinist period of early and massive recruitment, though, Party membership was clearly an advantageous substitute for the previous experience and education new entrants did not have. More of those who entered in this period are Party members than was the case for those who joined in the 1960s and 1970s.⁹⁴ Yet, this Party membership did not necessarily guarantee journalists easy advancement into prestigious positions other than the few closely controlled by the Party's *nomenklatura*.

This has been clear not only from the presence of a significant percentage of non-Party members in the upper levels of the professional hierarchy but also by the concentration of journalists who are Party members. Warsaw, the most advantageous and prestigious place to live and work, has a much smaller percentage of Party journalists than other areas where professional work has lower status but staffs are smaller and local officials' surveillance is far higher.⁹⁵ While there was a temporary dip in Party membership as a result of Solidarity's power, particularly in smaller cities and towns outside the capital, the prevalence of Party membership in the regions outside of Warsaw returned with the reimposition of media control under martial law. In 1983, then, 70.3 percent of regional journalists were Party members – a clear increase from the late seventies.⁹⁶

Party membership, in the past, has had somewhat greater influence on the field of specialization:

The highest level of Party membership is found in the Party department (organization department). In that department, 89.1% are P.U.W.P. members. A significant number of Party members are also in the departments of economics (54%), agriculture (51%), information (from news agencies) (52%), international (48.5%) and national (48%).⁹⁷

The high percentage of Party members in the information department (the lowest paid, lowest in status, and most isolated) then is evidence that Party membership has been an aid to entrance but not necessarily any guarantee of mobility within the profession.

Self-identification

Whatever their backgrounds, political affiliations, and past ties, journalists see themselves as journalists. They also see their profession as "the best" of the professions. In fact, measured by the standards of willingness to leave the profession, ranking of occupations, and journalists' rates of interaction with members of other groups as compared to their interaction with fellow journalists, Polish journalists have a higher level of professional identification than has existed in any other professional grouping.⁹⁸ Overwhelmingly, in 1976, journalists surveyed said they would not like to leave the profession (86.6 percent of those surveyed said they would not like to leave the profession, 12.6 percent said they would like to leave it). Even in the aftermath of criticism of the media in the Solidarity period and the repression of journalists and media workers involved with the reform movement, ultimately few complete departures from the profession took place. One estimate by a former official of the SDP was that initially some 2,000 left because of expulsions or an unwillingness to work under the military regime; but, within six months of the declaration of martial law, all but a few had returned to the profession in some form – lesser known publications, writing under pseudonyms, underground writing, or publishing jobs – and all but a few who remained outside the profession did so as journalists making symbolic gestures. Even at that, professional circles and information exchanges continued and were strengthened in this period (for a full discussion of the professional response and involvement in Solidarity and during the martial law period, see chapter 6).

Journalists' responses in 1976 to the question "What do you think is the best occupation?" were equally indicative of individuals' commitment to journalism and its basic goals. The largest percentage of

respondents listed "journalism" as the best occupation (23.6 percent). Those who did not see their own profession as the "best" tended to focus on other comparable professions. In the case of Warsaw professionals, most saw the non-technical intelligentsia as "the best" but, in the case of regional journalists, technical intelligentsia careers were considered the best. On the other hand, although 9.2 percent of the journalists surveyed held Party positions and 49.4 percent said they performed some official social function, none listed "Party activist" as the "best occupation." Only two respondents listed institutional party and state positions as the "best occupation." Similar results were reported in 1958 when journalists had to rank professional groups. Then, journalists ranked teachers, doctors and engineers highest because of their roles in "educating the society" and "developing Poland" – roles journalists' own professional ideology specifies as primary responsibilities of their profession. Lawyers and artists were ranked lowest because they had "little influence on changes in the society" and "play a minimal role in the society" – again a reflection of journalists' application of their professional values.⁹⁹

The 1976 breakdown of these measures of identification in terms of the other potential pulls on journalists' self-identification indicates that professional identification is overwhelming. In fact, competing pulls for loyalty tend to increase identification with journalism. Members of the PUWP are more positive about the profession than are non-Party journalists: 38.5 percent of PUWP journalists think journalism is the best occupation while 22.7 percent of non-Party journalists ranked it as the "best profession." Working-class background, correlated as it is with Party affiliation and with the profession as the prime mode of upward mobility, yields virtually the same breakdown.

Anecdotal evidence further indicates that, in spite of journalists' own criticisms of their profession's past work and in spite of public attacks in the 1980s on the media, this positive image of the profession has remained. Problems were blamed on outside interference and occasional "weak" professionals not on the professional work itself.¹⁰⁰ Individuals left the profession after martial law because their past work was defamed or not appreciated and they "had fought the battle to be professionals too long." They did not leave because they had found some better calling. Finally, whether or not they remained in their positions, journalists continued to do work related to information gathering and presentation and attacked those who denigrated the profession by violating professional ethics or restricting their professional autonomy to suit political demands.

Informal group interaction

Even more crucial than individual identification in determining a profession's ability to function as a group controlling its own world and acting in the public arena are the patterns of individual social interaction. In communist societies where formal professional organizations are monitored and controlled, independent action occurs primarily through individuals' informal, personal relationships. The more the profession is the prime source for professionals' friendships, the greater its base for group action. To identify patterns of informal group life, three questions were asked of Polish journalists: "With whom do you associate most frequently?"; "How would you characterize staff relations on your journal?"; and "Do you interact with journalists from other journal staffs?"

Journalists in both 1956 and 1976 reported that they spent most of their social time either with other journalists or with their own immediate families.¹⁰¹ Professional factors (residence, position and years in the profession) and incidental personal factors (such as wartime affiliations) account for variations in journalists' social lives. Those outside of Warsaw spend more time with other journalists than do those living in Warsaw who, on the whole, have much larger intelligentsia circles.¹⁰² Journalists in editorial positions spent slightly less of their nonwork time with other journalists than did those who were simply staff journalists. Party members associate as frequently with other journalists as do those with no Party affiliation, although they do have a slight tendency to see Party activists more frequently (9.1 percent of Party members said they associated frequently with Party activists while 2.6 percent of non-Party members reported contacts with Party activists in their personal lives).¹⁰³

Entry into the profession without the customary educational credentials and class background is also not a deterrent to close primary social contacts with other journalists. In fact, in both 1958 and 1976, journalists' involvement with other journalists was greater for those coming from working-class backgrounds or having less than a full university level education. For them, not only was entry into the profession a significant move for upward mobility but it also was the most comfortable of the intelligentsia professions with which they could associate.¹⁰⁴

Interaction with journalists from staffs other than their own, a demonstration of professional group as opposed to work place affiliations, is high. Not only are relations between journalists on a single staff close but journalists relate socially and professionally with members of other staffs with high frequency. Given both the high level of primary social

interaction among journalists and the extent of journalists' association with members of other staffs (88.5 percent of those surveyed in 1976 said that they associated with journalists outside their immediate work group), there clearly are informal links that draw professionals together outside of their workplace, allowing them to discuss their problems and options as well as to reinforce common goals and behavior patterns. From this data too, there are indications that, even in "normal periods" of external control, there has been an interlocking pattern of contacts holding journalists together as more than colleagues who work together and need to protect their journal or television program.

With the advent of the Solidarity press and the movement of workers and non-journalists into it, these patterns of association by traditional journalists did not decrease. Even those who worked for Solidarity and its press reported in 1983 that, when martial law had closed their journals and offices down, they had little inclination to continue their ties with the workers and new "journalists" with whom they worked during the fifteen months of Solidarity. Instead, they kept their ties with colleagues from earlier years. The only deviation from the pattern that appeared in the 1958 and 1976 surveys was that, after martial law was declared, journalists had a tendency to exclude from their social circles old friends and colleagues who had made different political choices in responding to the declaration of martial law and the closing down of the old postwar association. This split was particularly evident among older journalists who had entered the profession after the war and had their own independent financial cushion. It was less the case for young journalists who were dependent on their work for their livelihood.

The Polish case

The world in which these journalists work has been one of change and upheaval interspersed with longer periods of stability and Party control. It is also one in which even the most control-oriented leadership has been forced to compromise full communist rule and recognize the Catholic Church's right to function and the right of the peasantry to private farming, as well as to show greater tolerance of independent opinion than has existed elsewhere in the Soviet bloc. All of this brought with it a factionalization of the political leadership that gave journalists options in their elite affiliations. With this factionalization among regime politicians and compromise with popular demands on the mass level, Poland has, since the Stalinist period, been

a "quasi-pluralistic authoritarian" state rather than a representative of the more authoritarian Soviet model.¹⁰⁵ Leaders have been overthrown by mass action three times, as the Gierek leadership was in August 1980. The media and leadership policies have been subject to scathing criticisms in each of these periods of upheaval. Journalists and other groups, thus, have been pushed and pulled from one set of demands and expectations to another. They also have regularly experienced losses of freedom after the Party leadership quashed popular unrest. With this has come disillusionment and retreat into silent work for individual and group interests.

The instability of political rule in Poland has brought with it a greater freedom for groups to be seen and their demands heard. It has meant, even in the Stalinist period, a decreased level of fear and increased willingness publicly to voice demands and opinions about the political situation.

In these ways, the experience of Polish journalists is an atypical case for Soviet bloc states. But, although the boundaries of tolerance have normally been broader in Poland than in other Soviet bloc states, the state ideology, the Party and state institutions, and the "rules of the game" are the same as those in the other systems in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ And, while the shifts in leadership and the periods of free discussion have given journalists a sense of freedom and an acute sense of being controlled when liberalization moves are halted, the direction and pressure of Poland's political leadership has been toward using the media and controlling or coopting the profession.

Journalists' ability to maintain and protect themselves is based not simply on greater freedom in Poland but on their professionalization. This took root not in the uniquely Polish moments of freedom but in the repressive days of the Stalinist imposition of communist rule. Such soil clearly also rooted the journalists of Hungary, who joined the "revolution" in 1956, and Czechoslovakia, many of whom were leaders or observers in 1968.¹⁰⁷ These journalists behaved as Polish journalists did in 1956, 1970, and 1980. And, the realities of professional life, although the restrictions may be looser, are not that distinct from the realities of journalists' lives in the more controlled system of the rest of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁸ The similarities in the system and in journalists' reactions to them suggest that the Polish profession is a more accessible but not necessarily the only professional group, or a more real element, in communist politics than its counterparts in other systems or from other professions.