

# **ONLINE PARTICIPATORY JOURNALISM IN CENTRAL ASIA: IS THERE MORE PRESS FREEDOM?**

By Nargiza Mazhidova

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Central European University  
Department of Political Science

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Supervisor: Professor Miklos Sukosd

## ABSTRACT

The notion of participatory journalism emerged in democratic states of the West, where it contributes to the idea of press freedom by encompassing the use of Internet and involvement of ordinary citizens. In authoritarian states, however, these features of the notion are viewed as an opportunity to speak out without fear of persecution. The paper studies the features of participatory journalism in authoritarian states of Central Asia. Departing from the fact that press freedom indices assign Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan low scores, the research argues that their measurement of the Internet freedom in these indices is ambiguous. Therefore, it conducts content analysis of the news and blogging web-sites, attempting to identify whether ordinary people feel free to express different opinions and direct criticisms online. The findings of the research suggest that Central Asian online public sphere is diverse and unconstrained. Hence, the study offers a new perspective on the issue of press freedom in authoritarian states and calls for further studies of the notion of participatory journalism in relation to press freedom in non-democratic societies.

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# Introduction

*“Technology will make it increasingly difficult for the state to control the information its people receive. . . . The Goliath of totalitarianism will be brought down by the David of the microchip”*  
—Ronald Reagan, speech at London’s Guildhall,  
June 14, 1989

Technological advances have become a hope for the light at the end of the tunnel in many non-democratic states, where press freedom is one of the most problematic issues. Development of such new media of communication as Internet has a big promise to promote democratization of the media in some of the most isolated and closed authoritarian states.

The International Press Institute report 2008 identified the profession of journalist as one of the most dangerous in Central Asia.<sup>1</sup> Media and press in Central Asia inherited the Soviet legacy of tight control and censorship with continuing intimidation and pressure on reporters. Therefore, it is hard to talk of any form of independent and free media in such authoritarian states as those of Central Asia.

Nonetheless, increasing use of Internet as a worldwide medium of communication, especially in authoritarian states presents one of the most promising areas of expansion for communication and news making agencies. In fact, what Internet promises for journalism and freedom of press is often viewed as something unprecedented. Not only has it allowed for a larger access to information to a wider range of public, but it has transformed the public from passive receivers of information into active newsmakers. Thus, the emergence of the notion of participatory journalism is closely linked to advancement of the new media like Internet that is readily available for use by common people.

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<sup>1</sup> International Press Institute, *World Press Freedom Review 2008. Focus on Asia* (International Press Freedom, 2008) :5  
[http://www.freemedia.at/cms/ipi/freedom\\_detail.html?ctxid=CH0056&docid=CMS1233735127524&country=/KW0001/](http://www.freemedia.at/cms/ipi/freedom_detail.html?ctxid=CH0056&docid=CMS1233735127524&country=/KW0001/)

## Research Justification

The notion of participatory journalism emerged quite recently. It is largely associated with the developed states of the West, where press freedom and free speech constitutes an inalienable right of every person, and use of Internet for expressing one's views is yet another form of exercising this right. Nevertheless, the notion acquires a different role in non-democratic states. When the government policies restrict the degree of press freedom and exercise control over the media outlets, availability of such hard-to-control medium as Internet may stand for unimpeded flow of information. Therefore, online participatory journalism may stand for yet another opportunity to express one's views with no fear of repression.

The notion of participatory journalism in Central Asia is largely understudied. Moreover, the region barely has reliable information about Internet freedom. There are several indices that try to measure Internet freedom around the world. Among those is the Internet freedom index designed by Freedom House that provides the most accurate information about the practices of controlling the web worldwide.<sup>2</sup> However, since the report of 2009 was a pilot project of the organization, it includes only fifteen states of the world representative of all the continents and the states of Central Asia are not included. Therefore, studying the environment and the effects of participatory journalism on press freedom in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan may shed light on variations of the notion in different authoritarian environments. James Pickett provided an overview of the citizen journalism practice in Central Asia in 2006.<sup>3</sup> However, the paper mainly discussed the Central Asian

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<sup>2</sup> Karlekar, Karit Deutsch and Cook, Sarah G. *Access and Control: A Growing Diversity of Threats to Internet Freedom, Freedom on the Net. A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media*, Freedom House ( 1 April 2009) <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=383&report=79&group=19>

<sup>3</sup> James Pickett, "Citizen Journalism in Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities of the Growing Online Community" (2006) [www.eurasia21.com/cgi-data/document/files/eurasia21\\_-\\_citizen\\_journalism\\_in\\_central\\_asia\\_-\\_Pickett.pdf](http://www.eurasia21.com/cgi-data/document/files/eurasia21_-_citizen_journalism_in_central_asia_-_Pickett.pdf)

blogosphere. The present research, in turn, besides the blogging practice expands the discussion of participatory journalism to news articles written by non-professional correspondents.

This study is significant because it aims to contribute to the discussion of new media and authoritarian societies by looking at the development of participatory journalism and its effects on press freedom. It contributes to the existing body of knowledge about the phenomenon by looking at the region that was not previously considered – Central Asia. Moreover, differently from the methods used before, the present study conducts content analysis of the web-sites in order to assess how freely ideas and opinions are communicated on Internet.

### **Hypothesis/Variables**

There are several research questions that are addressed throughout the paper. Firstly, it looks at the ways new media affect the exercise of free speech in authoritarian societies. Secondly, it studies how the involvement of the ordinary people in the news-making affects the content of online public discourse in authoritarian states. Finally it examines interrelationship between the diversity of opinions online and the degree of press freedom in non-democratic societies.

The main argument of the research revolves around the idea that in societies where traditional media of communication are controlled by the government, the notion of online participatory journalism that employs a medium that is hard-to-control (Internet) and that involves people who could not be subjected to state censorship allows for diversity of opinions and criticisms.

The hypothesis to be tested is that *online participatory journalism enhances the press freedom in authoritarian states of Central Asia*. Thus, the research attempts to step away from the findings of press freedom indices conducted by several international organizations that characterize these states as having no press freedom. The study points out methodological

weaknesses of such indices in measuring freedom online, and adopts the method of content analysis for evaluating the extent to which opinions and ideas may be communicated online freely. Thus, the paper does not aim to evaluate the effects of using Internet on performance of the whole media system. The main purpose of present research is to find out whether there is diversity of opinion when ordinary people write about political, economic or social affairs online.

The *press freedom in authoritarian states* is a dependent variable. The research encompasses the variety of meanings the concept of press freedom may have in different contexts, and detailed discussion of those will follow in theoretical part of the work. The research embraces the idea expressed by the Hutchinson Commission that “freedom of press is not a fixed and isolated value, the same in every society and all times”.<sup>4</sup> However, in the present research press freedom measurement is of primary importance. Some of the previous studies measuring press freedom across the countries employed different quantitative and qualitative methods. For instance, in 1960 Nixon used surveys of International Press Institute that were evaluated by judges and experts and further placed each on a nine-point scale.<sup>5</sup> In 1970 Lowenstein designed a Press Independence and Critical Ability index that was based on 23 factors.<sup>6</sup> Some of the later studies including those conducted by the Freedom House mostly assess the level of government control over the press.<sup>7</sup>

Before proceeding with the discussion of the methods employed for measuring the press freedom around the world, it should be noted that the definition of the press have been changing throughout the years. Back in the eighteenth century when it had just appeared, it mainly referred

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<sup>4</sup> Shelton Gunaratne, “Freedom of the Press: A World System Perspective” *International Communication Gazette*, Vol. 64, № 4(2002): 345 <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/64/4/343>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 349

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 349

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 350

to the printed media. Nowadays press media include not only printed newspapers and magazines, but broadcast, radio and Internet. Hence, when speaking of press freedom measurement, it should be clear which mediums of communication are under consideration.

Until quite recently Internet was not considered as a medium of press at all. Freedom House Press Freedom index was the first one to assess the degree of Internet freedom in 2001.<sup>8</sup> In 2009 Freedom House compiled an Internet freedom index that is more accurate in its findings than press freedom index.<sup>9</sup> However, at the moment the scope of the study is limited to fifteen states. Reporters Without Borders press freedom index is another alternative source of press freedom measurement that includes assessment of online freedoms.

## Research methods

With the abovementioned considerations of the press freedom measurements as well as the specificity of the new communication medium, the present study measures press freedom by the availability and diversity of opinions and ideas that are expressed in the web. The Internet is different from newspapers and television in terms of the ways the state or any other authority to control it. If there is Internet in the state, it takes some costly and sophisticated technology to control it. Not all states may afford it. Thus, the measurements that evaluate the effects of political, economic or legal environment in a state may not draw a full picture of the actual situation. Therefore, looking at the actual content of the online sources and identifying whether there is diversity of opinion may serve as an illustrative indicator of press freedom.

Online participatory journalism refers to the notion of active online participation in the form of writing articles or posting blogs by ordinary citizens. It is the assumption of the present

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 361

<sup>9</sup> Karlekar, Karit Deutsch and Cook, Sarah G. *Access and Control: A Growing Diversity of Threats to Internet Freedom, Freedom on the Net. A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media*, Freedom House (1 April 2009) <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=383&report=79&group=19>



research that the notion that involves a hard-to-control medium and individuals who may not be subjected to the respective legislature brings to a wider variety of opinions expressed. Hence, the research identified *online participatory journalism* as the independent variable. As such, the notion defines the method used for conducting the research and its design. Thus, in order to test the hypothesis the research conducts content analysis of online news contributed by non-professional correspondents and of the blogs.

Along with the content analysis, the research reviews background information about political, economic and legal and human rights environment of the Central Asian states. The study conducted by Erica Johnson and Eric McGlinchey demonstrated that the levels of government control over the media varies across the states of Central Asia.<sup>10</sup> Hence, special emphasis is on the legislature of each state concerning the use of the Internet, as it may vary across the states under consideration. It also looks at the level of the Internet penetration in each state in order to draw conclusions about the accessibility of the medium among the population.

Interviews via email were conducted with the editors of the web-sites considered. Some information revealed through the interviews is also presented in the paper.

The research uses qualitative methods of analysis. Information about political, economic, legal, human rights and Internet penetration of the Central Asian states is extracted from books, journals, reports and online sources. The content analysis is conducted by examination and analysis of the articles and blogs on the web-sites chosen for consideration.

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<sup>10</sup> Erica Johnson and Eric McGlinchey, "Foreign Aid and ICT Policy in Central Asia" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September 1, 2005) :3  
[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apo\\_research\\_citation/0/4/1/6/9/pages41695/p41695-1.php](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apo_research_citation/0/4/1/6/9/pages41695/p41695-1.php)

### Case Selection

The units of research analysis are the states of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, but the units of observation are the web-sites. From the large population of the web-sites that may be considered some of the major features of web-site selection criteria include:

- Web-site should be either news-site that has contributions made by non-professional journalists or blog that has posts about state of affairs in the states of Central Asia
- Web-site should contain or be composed of the content on states of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and the topics that touch upon political, economic or social issues
- Web-site should have content that is in Russian or English<sup>11</sup>
- Web-site should be among the ten most popular ranked ones in given scope<sup>12</sup>
- Web-site should be accessible within the states of Central Asia

The indicated parameters of case selection are designed in such a way that it is possible to spot online sources that would contain information relevant for the purposes of present study. They stipulate a specific geographic region, a specific type of online activity and specific working languages. Moreover, out of concerns for readability and accessibility of the selected web-sites, the popularity rating is taken into consideration. The accessibility of the web-site within the region aims to ensure that the content is open for the local public. The domains of the web-sites will not be used as a part of selection criteria, but rather as an indicative feature of the

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<sup>11</sup> Even though some web-sites have content in local languages, Russian is prevalent language of communication in all five states of Central Asia. English is used on many web-sites as an international language that enables readership by international public.

<sup>12</sup> In order to identify the ranking position of a web-site's popularity the research employed Google's PageRank tool, Alexa and Google search

content of the web-sites considered. It is an assumption of the research that the content of the web-sites with domains of the states of Central Asia may have less, if any, criticism and variety of views and opinions on topics concerning government and state policies.

The research is interested in providing the most recent data available. Therefore, the content analysis looks at articles and blog posts that were posted starting from March 2008 up until March 2009. However, since the volume of the content that needs to be reviewed is immense, in the scope of the present study only the content posted during the last month of each quarter of the year is reviewed. Specifically, the research looks at posts during March 2008, June 2008, September 2008, December 2008 and March 2009. The selection of the months is arbitrary and largely aims to be representative of the online activity during the whole year.

The study consists of three chapters. The first chapter covers theoretical background of the topic. It considers the important concepts related to the notion of participatory journalism and attempts to place the notion in the framework of modernization theory, four theories of press, development media theory and democratic-participation theory. The second chapter provides background information on the political, economic, legal and human rights environment in Central Asia as well as the level of the Internet penetration in these states. Further, it argues that the existing press freedom indices do not adequately reflect upon the level of Internet freedom by reviewing the methodology of the index compilation. The last chapter is devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the content analysis and its findings.

Preliminary research expectations are that differently from mainstream media (printed press or TV); the products of online participatory journalism in the states of Central Asia will have diverse views and opinions on taboo topics.

## Chapter I: Theoretical Background

Since the notion of participatory journalism is relatively new and is yet to be placed in a theoretical framework, it may be viewed from several theoretical perspectives. However, before proceeding with the theoretical part of the research, it is necessary to identify the concepts related to the phenomenon.

### 1.1 Press Freedom

As it was mentioned earlier, the definition of press freedom varies across the states and time. In general it is associated with the notion of free speech that is guaranteed to everyone by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, press freedom is often viewed as a human right. Hutchins Commission identified press freedom as “a moral right that entails responsibilities on behalf of the citizens – the real ‘owners’ of that freedom”.<sup>13</sup>

Libertarian concept of the free press implies “a free flow of information unimpeded by any intervention by any nation”.<sup>14</sup> This concept was largely adopted in the West under the CHAOS – competition, heterogeneity, autonomy, openness and selfishness – paradigm.<sup>15</sup> Some other features of the concept include “relative absence of government restraints, prevalence of autonomy, and ability to serve as the Fourth Estate that checks the three official branches of the government”.<sup>16</sup> However, the understandings of the concept vary even among different Western countries. For instance, in the United States the market is viewed as the best guarantor of the independent media, whereas in most of the West European countries press freedom is closely related to public service broadcasting.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Shelton Gunaratne, “Freedom of the Press: A World System Perspective” *International Communication Gazette*, Vol. 64, № 4(2002): 363 <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/64/4/343>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 344

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 345

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 345

<sup>17</sup> Christina Holtz-Bacha, “What is Good Press Freedom? The Difficulty of Measuring Freedom of the Press Worldwide” (Paper prepared for presentation at the 2004 conference of the International

## 1.2 Theories of Press

Central to the discussion of the normative theoretical framework of the press are the four theories of the press developed by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm. These four theories include: authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, Soviet communist.<sup>18</sup> The authoritarian theory derives its normative value from the philosophy of absolutism, where only a small group of powerful leaders could define what is the “the truth”. The role of the press in the framework of authoritarian theory is to advance government policy and serve the state that exercised control by regulating patents and licenses as well as imposing censorship.<sup>19</sup>

The libertarian theory is associated with enlightenment and the concepts of freedom and search for truth. It was within libertarian theory that the press acquired its reference as “the Fourth Estate”, establishing the principle that the press check on government.<sup>20</sup>

The social responsibility theory implies that press has certain obligations to society. Thus, it is often viewed as an advanced version of the libertarian theory that fails to consider such issues as internal press freedom and press concentration. The theory assigns the press certain functions like making information, discussion and consideration accessible, to act as a watchdog, to provide entertainment, to preserve financial autonomy, etc.<sup>21</sup>

The Soviet communist theory has its roots in authoritarian press theory with slight adjustments to the values and ideas of the socialist system and its party.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to those, D. McQuail presented the development media theory and democratic-participant theory. The development media theory concerns the Third World

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Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), PortoAlegre,Brazil, July 25-30):7  
[www.kowi.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/publikationen/docs/good\\_press\\_freedom.pdf](http://www.kowi.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/publikationen/docs/good_press_freedom.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Michael Kunczik, *Concepts of Journalism. North and South*, (Düsseldorf : Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1988)46-49.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 46-47

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 47

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 48

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 48

countries, recognizing the role of media in affecting national development and emphasizing the grass roots involvement. It especially emphasizes the dependence of the developing states on the technology, skills and cultural products of the developed states.<sup>23</sup> The democratic-participant theory is largely associated with developed liberal societies emphasizing the needs, interests and values of the receivers of media products in a political society. Thus, the theory endorses locality, de-institutionalisation, smallness of scale, interchange of sender-receiver roles and horizontality of communication links.<sup>24</sup>

The general assumption behind all of these theories is that “the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates.”<sup>25</sup> Hence, it should be expected that media systems of authoritarian states are not free as oppose to those in democratic.

### ***1.3 Participatory Journalism and Journalistic Practice***

The notion of online participatory journalism seems to fit the best within the democratic-participation theory of press as it emphasizes the importance of the interactivity and possibility for active participation of the masses in the process of making news and generating content. Thus, it would be expected that participatory journalism may exist only in the media systems that have libertarian values in their foundation. However, because of the specific features that Internet as a medium of communication has, the notion of participatory journalism is present in societies of authoritarian and libertarian media systems. In order to proceed with this discussion it is necessary to highlight the features of the concept of journalism and how participatory journalism is different from it.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 48

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 49

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 46

Journalism is understood as a profession that performs the functions of “gathering, processing, checking and commenting of news and/ or entertainment.”<sup>26</sup> Professionalization plays a key role in journalistic practice, as it underlines the quality of performing the abovementioned functions. Central to the idea of journalistic professionalization are the notions of autonomy and independence.<sup>27</sup> These principles ensure reliability and truthfulness of the information provided by journalists in a variety of media outlets. They also imply responsibility that journalists bear for anything that was communicated to the public.

The essence of participatory journalism lays in extraordinary contribution to news-making that ordinary citizens offer, creating yet another dimension of the way the news are produced. However, exactly because it is the ordinary people who are engaged in making the news the issues of journalistic professionalism, truthfulness and objectivity in news-making largely remain problematic for the notion of participatory journalism. Thus, the issue at stake is whether a person who does not have a proper educational background or training may produce a content that can be used as a reliable source of information.

There are several views on the topic. Representatives of the mainstream journalism see participatory journalism as a threat, as it seems to have no editorial principles or journalistic ethics whatsoever. Another view, however, considers it to be equal as civil journalists perform the same functions as those of the mainstream. Michael Kunczik argues that there is “no specific journalistic competence because the techniques of researching, writing and editing can also be practised by talented lay people after a period of practice.”<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Auli Harju claims that information produced and represented by professional journalists is never neutral, rather it is

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 11

<sup>27</sup> Auli Harju, “Citizen Participation and Local Public Spheres: an Agency and Identity Focussed Approach to the Tampere Postal Services Conflict”:99 in Bart Cammaerts, and Nico Carpentier, eds., *Reclaiming the Media. Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles*, (Bristol, Intellect,2007)

<sup>28</sup> Michael Kunczik, *Concepts of Journalism. North and South*, (Düsseldorf : Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1988) , 32

universalized, reproducing legitimacy of elite actors.<sup>29</sup> Thus, there is no single answer to the question whether participatory journalism may be considered as a new type of journalism that due to technological innovations included the non-professional ‘content-generators’. However, what should be kept in mind is that it seems to perform the same functions.

There is no one single definition of what participatory journalism is, so the present study adopts the understanding of the notion as

“the act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information...”<sup>30</sup>

Thus, an important feature of the notion is the ability of the ordinary citizens who were formerly passive receivers of information to actively contribute in making of the news and producing content for the public.

The notion of ‘blogging’ as a citizen based form of journalism, where individuals seek to establish an online presence, is largely associated with the notion of participatory journalism.<sup>31</sup> Starting off as individual weblogs, blogging was widely used as a page in the web authored by a single person and containing wide range of information. However, with time ‘portal-like’ or ‘content aggregator’ blogs appeared to unite like minded individuals willing to share information and make contributions.<sup>32</sup> By acquiring a form of venue for public discourse, the notion of blogging raised the heated debate over its relationship and possible qualification as a type of journalism.

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<sup>29</sup> Auli Harju, “Citizen Participation and Local Public Spheres: an Agency and Identity Focussed Approach to the Tampere Postal Services Conflict”:100 in Bart Cammaerts, and Nico Carpentier, eds., *Reclaiming the Media. Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles*, (Bristol, Intellect,2007)

<sup>30</sup> Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis, *We Media. How Audiences are Shaping the Future of News and Information*, (The Media Center at The American Press Institute, July, 2003) :9 [www.hypergene.net/wemedia/](http://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/)

<sup>31</sup> Stuart Allan, *Online News*, (Maidenhead, England, New York: Open University Press, 2006) 44

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 45



The activity is made possible because of the new communication medium – Internet – that allows two-way interactivity and creation of content that is available to everyone in the web. Therefore, Internet as well as its effects and uses in a society are an integral part of the phenomenon.

Modernization theory that was at its peak in 1950-1960's argued that technological advances will inevitably have positive effects on the processes of political and economic development of developing states.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, based on several studies of the effects of Internet use on society, it was concluded that besides increasing communication techniques among the people, Internet has ability to bring in new participants and to strengthen social capital.<sup>34</sup>

Talking about Internet and its role in changing nature of journalistic practice, it should be noted that in general the Internet enhances people's ability to access primary documents that previously needed journalist interpretation.<sup>35</sup> In media sphere, use of Internet was largely incorporated into the product of traditional news organizations and lives of journalists.<sup>36</sup> Jon Pavlik came up with three phases of the web-sites traditional media organizations may have: 1) reproducing online the content of newspaper or television show; 2) some form of interactivity, original content and hyperlinks; 3) live entrance and participation in actual events, full-fledged interactivity.<sup>37</sup> Pavlik assumes that presently different web-sites are at different phases, or they evolve from one to another. However, only the last phase is probably the closest to the idea of participatory journalism.

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Kunczik, *Concepts of Journalism. North and South*, (Düsseldorf : Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1988) , 86

<sup>34</sup> Robert Klotz, *The Politics of Internet Communication* ( Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2004), 42

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 121

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 117

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 122

## 1.4 Accuracy of online sources

An important concern raised by increasing use of Internet in journalistic practice touches upon the issue of accuracy. Specifically, even though the use of the new medium allows for more and faster news, the tradeoff between availability and accuracy remains an important factor to consider when praising the numerous advantages Internet brings into journalistic practice. The problem goes even further when ‘nontraditional sources’ of information are involved. Robert Klotz refers to nontraditional online sources mainly as to the news that are reported by those without formal training in journalism<sup>38</sup>, - something that is a distinctive feature of online participatory journalism. Thus, in spite of the assumptions of modernization theory and supposedly positive effects of new technologies on the processes of democratization, from the standpoint of journalistic practice, there are certain aspects that give the medium a negative connotation. It can be assumed, therefore, that if the use of Internet as a medium of communication may pose certain tradeoffs for journalistic standards, the problem may have even bigger effects when it comes to using it as a medium of communication by ordinary people, who would not have any journalistic ethics or norms whatsoever.

## 1.5 Anonymity of users

Another important issue especially in the context of authoritarian states, concerns the level of control that may be exerted over the Internet. Both democratic and authoritarian governments can regulate it “by controlling its underlying code and by shaping the legal environment in which it operates”.<sup>39</sup> In relation to this the Global Internet Liberty Campaign argued that some provisions of the international human rights documents guarantee freedom of

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 118

<sup>39</sup> Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor Boas, “Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (2003):3  
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1072>

expression “without regard to borders”,<sup>40</sup> – a promise that may be ensured the best by the use of Internet. Departing from these considerations the Campaign interprets article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>41</sup> in light of unconstrained use of Internet.

The principles of the Campaign proceed with the claim that the right of anonymity online goes in hand with the right of free expression. Specifically, they imply that the right to express political beliefs with no fear of persecution and to control the disclosure of personal identity is closely related to the freedoms online.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed Internet is able to bring the anonymity of the user-participants, i.e. it empowers those who did not feel comfortable or were otherwise inhibited in expressing their opinions, including those that concern politics. Thus, Lee Salter infers that anonymity provided by the use of Internet frees from one of the fundamental requisites of human communication – responsibility.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, he notes that in authoritarian context the anonymity provided by the medium is even more important as it allows for expression of criticism without the fear of being persecuted for charges like libel or defamation.<sup>44</sup> Hence the dichotomy of anonymity and irresponsibility especially gain momentum in non-democratic settings, when the freedom of speech is hampered by the fear of repression.

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<sup>40</sup> “Impact of Self-regulation and Filtering on Human Rights to Freedom of Expression” in *Filters and freedom : free speech perspective on internet content controls*, Electronic Privacy Information Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Washington D.C. 2001), 194

<sup>41</sup> “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without inference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, and regardless of frontiers”

<sup>42</sup> “Impact of Self-regulation and Filtering on Human Rights to Freedom of Expression” in *Filters and freedom : free speech perspective on internet content controls*, Electronic Privacy Information Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Washington D.C. 2001), 196

<sup>43</sup> Lee Salter “Democracy, New Social Movements, and the Internet. A Habermasian Analysis” in McCaughey, Martcha and Ayers, Michael eds., *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2003) 138

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 138

## 1.6 *Techno-optimism and techno-pessimism*

In general the discussion of the effects of technology on society is summed up in theories of the two schools of thought: techno-optimists and techno-pessimists. The former assume that technology has a positive effect, while the latter disagree and even argue that it may harm in certain cases.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the effects of technology are evaluated by the effects it has on the society. Salter argued in this respect that “impact of particular technology on a range of distinct societies is often diverse”.<sup>46</sup> Thus, he claimed that in different societies depending on the interests and priorities of their members, the technology will be shaped and modified to suit those. He concludes therefore that in order to have an adequate assessment of the technology, one need to be aware of the range of interests and the ones that try to dominate the discourse as well as the degree to which a technology is “closed” to interests.<sup>47</sup>

Since participatory journalism is a new phenomenon, there is no one developed theoretical framework it would fit in. Most of the information available largely describes the variety of ways and forms citizens use the Internet and the effects it has on society. That is why identifying important concepts and components of the notion is an important part of the research. By looking at the major components of the notion – Internet and press – the research attempted to define the placement of the notion of participatory journalism in existent theoretical framework.

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<sup>45</sup>Bart Cammaerts, *Internet-Mediated Participation Beyond the Nation State* (Manchester University Press, 2008),63

<sup>46</sup> Lee Salter “Democracy, New Social Movements, and the Internet. A Habermasian Analysis” in McCaughey, Martcha and Ayers, Michael eds., *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2003) :120

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 120

## Chapter II: Background information about press freedom in Central Asia

As it was discussed earlier, there are several ways to measure press freedom across the countries. However, not all of them include measurement of Internet freedom. The ones that do measure it are: Freedom House Press Freedom index and Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom index. The measurement of the former is based on assessment of political, economic and legal environment of a state on press freedom. The measurement of the latter, besides the indicators identified by the former, considers violations of journalists' rights as well as control over Internet. In 2009 Freedom House completed the first report on the Internet freedom index that consists of the scores on obstacles to access, limits on content and violations of user rights. An extended overview of the three indices and their meaning can be found below. Before proceeding to those, however, the research provides a brief overview of background information about the states of Central Asia. It includes information about political, economic, legal and human rights environment in the states of Central Asia as well as the level of Internet penetration in each state.

### *Kazakhstan*

Kazakhstan as well as other states of Central Asia used to be a part of the USSR. After acquiring independence in 1991, it adopted the constitution where proclaimed itself to be democratic. In fact, however, the republic has authoritarian rule, where Nursultan Nazarbayev is president for life and the most powerful man in the state.<sup>48</sup> Its economy is the largest in the region with the GDP of \$176.9 billion as of 2008 and \$11.500 per capita.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Central Intelligence Agency "CIA World Factbook", country profile: Kazakhstan  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

The Human Rights Watch Report 2009 informs that the state has “slow progress on democratic and human rights reforms” listing violations in freedom of expression and information, in freedom of religion, and against human rights defenders.<sup>50</sup> The right of free speech and to receive information is guaranteed by article 20 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the law “On Mass Media” was adopted in Kazakhstan in 1999 providing regulation of mass media in the country.<sup>52</sup> Specifically, it provides definitions of the mass communication media, regulations of mass information dissemination and rights and responsibilities of journalists. Of relevance to present research is the fact that Kazakhstan is one of the two states in Central Asia that list Internet as a mass medium.<sup>53</sup> The amendment to the law stipulating the inclusion of the Internet was done in 2008. Thus, online content is subject to the same legal provisions as of those in other media outlets.

The level of internet penetration in Kazakhstan as of 2008 is 12.4%<sup>54</sup> - among the highest in the region. In combination with the highest GDP per capita in the region the online community of Kazakhstan is the biggest and most dynamic in the region.

### ***Kyrgyzstan***

Kyrgyzstan is often called the ‘island of democracy’ in Central Asia. However, it is also one of the poorest states in the region with the GDP of \$11.41 billion in 2008 and only \$2,100

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<sup>50</sup> Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2009. Events of 2008*. (Human Rights Watch 2009): 381-386  
<http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2009>

<sup>51</sup> Constitution of Republic of Kazakhstan, art. 20

<sup>52</sup> Право и СМИ Центральной Азии [Law and Mass Media of Central Asia], “Закон Республики Казахстан «О Средствах Массовой Информации» [Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Mass Media”]  
<http://medialawca.org/document/-1578> (accessed 15 May 2009)

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Internet World Stats. Usage and Population Statistics, “Asia Internet Usage and Population”,  
<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

per capita.<sup>55</sup> In spite of low GDP, the level of Internet penetration in Kyrgyzstan is 14%.<sup>56</sup> This stands for 750,000 Internet users out of 5,356,869 Kyrgyzstan's population.

According to Human Rights Watch human rights are at risk in Kyrgyzstan especially in the areas of civil society, media, protection of women and refugees.<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, the freedom of the press is guaranteed by article 16 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic.<sup>58</sup> The law "On Mass Media" regulating the work of media outlets and journalists was adopted in 1992 and has not been amended yet to incorporate Internet as a medium of communication.<sup>59</sup>

### ***Tajikistan***

After acquiring independence in 1991 Tajikistan experienced a bloody civil during 1992-1997.<sup>60</sup> The war threw the country's political and economic and infrastructural development several years behind. Thus, in 2008 its GDP that amounted for \$15,4 billion, and \$2,100 per capita. Internet penetration is 6, 7%.<sup>61</sup> Thus, only a limited amount of people in Tajikistan may afford regular access to the medium.

Problems with human rights in Tajikistan are "numerous and chronic" with government's extensive control over media, political organizations, NGOs, etc.<sup>62</sup> Article 30 of the Constitution

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<sup>55</sup> Central Intelligence Agency "CIA World Factbook", country profile: Kyrgyzstan  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kg.html> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

<sup>56</sup> Internet World Stats. Usage and Population Statistics, "Asia Internet Usage and Population",  
<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

<sup>57</sup> Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2009. Events of 2008* (Human Rights Watch 2009): 387-392  
<http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2009>

<sup>58</sup> Constitution of Republic of Kyrgyzstan, art. 16

<sup>59</sup> Право и СМИ Центральной Азии [Law and Mass Media of Central Asia], "Закон Республики Киргизстан «О Средствах Массовой Информации» [Law of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan "On Mass Media"]  
<http://medialawca.org/document/-87> (accessed 15 May 2009)

<sup>60</sup> Central Intelligence Agency "CIA World Factbook", country profile: Tajikistan  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

<sup>61</sup> Internet World Stats. Usage and Population Statistics, "Asia Internet Usage and Population",  
<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

<sup>62</sup> Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2009. Events of 2008* (Human Rights Watch 2009): 413  
<http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2009>

guarantees freedom of speech, press and use of mass media.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the Law “On Press and Other Mass Media” was adopted in 1992 regulating the work mass media outlets.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Turkmenistan***

Turkmenistan is one of the most isolated and closed states not only in Central Asian region, but in the world. Nevertheless, it is rich with natural resources, so its GDP for 2008 constituted \$29.65 billion; GDP per capita - \$6,100. Even though the figures suggest relatively high level of income for Turkmen people, the level of Internet penetration in Turkmenistan is the lowest in the region - 1,4 % (2008).<sup>65</sup> President Berdimuhamedov increased internet access in schools and internet cafes, but the speed and quality of the service are largely inadequate.<sup>66</sup>

Even though Article 28 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan provides citizens with the freedom of conviction and the free expression of those convictions, as well as the freedom to receive information, provided it is not a state or any other secret<sup>67</sup>, repression and poor score of human rights are the problem remaining in the state throughout the years.<sup>68</sup> The Law “On Press and Other Mass Media” was adopted in 1991.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, art. 30

<sup>64</sup> Право и СМИ Центральной Азии [Law and Mass Media of Central Asia], “Закон Республики Таджикистан «О Прессе и Других Средствах Массовой Информации» [Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Press and Other Mass Media”] <http://medialawca.org/document/-52> (accessed 15 May 2009)

<sup>65</sup> Internet World Stats. Usage and Population Statistics, “Asia Internet Usage and Population”, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

<sup>66</sup> Central Intelligence Agency “CIA World Factbook”, country profile: Turkmenistan <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tx.html> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

<sup>67</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Turkmenistan, available in Russian at <http://medialawca.org/document/1431-1433>

<sup>68</sup> Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2009. Events of 2008* (Human Rights Watch 2009): 425 <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2009>

<sup>69</sup> Право и СМИ Центральной Азии [Law and Mass Media of Central Asia], “Закон Республики Туркменистан «О Прессе и Других Средствах Массовой Информации» [Law of the Republic of Turkmenistan “On Press and Other Mass Media”] <http://medialawca.org/node/122> (accessed 15 May 2009)



## *Uzbekistan*

The authoritarian rule of Islam Karimov was established in Uzbekistan in 1991.<sup>70</sup> As Kazakhstan it has vast natural resources. In 2008 the GDP of the state constituted \$ 71.63 billion. Nevertheless, GDP per capita in Uzbekistan is just a bit more than in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan - \$2,600.<sup>71</sup> Despite a better economic index Internet penetration in Uzbekistan is only 8.8%.<sup>72</sup> However, since Uzbekistan is the country with the largest population in the region this percentage comes to 2,400,000 Internet users – the biggest in the region.

The freedom of conscience, speech and convictions is guaranteed by article 29 of the Constitution, yet with the provision of limitations for reasons of state or any other secret.<sup>73</sup> The Law “On Mass Media” was adopted in 1997.<sup>74</sup> Uzbekistan is another state in the region that included Internet in the list of mass communication media. This is stipulated in article 4 of the Law. Nonetheless, one of the major problems in Uzbekistan identified by Human Rights Watch is continual lack of the rule of law that provides fruitful soil for all kinds of violations of human rights.<sup>75</sup>

All in all media systems of Central Asian states are developing on the remnants of the Soviet system of government control over all kinds of media outlets. The leaders of each of the states see press freedom as threatening the stability of their regimes and therefore they exercise control over the content of all of the media. This tendency has been reflected in reports of several

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<sup>70</sup> Central Intelligence Agency “CIA World Factbook”, country profile: Uzbekistan  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Internet World Stats. Usage and Population Statistics, “Asia Internet Usage and Population”,  
<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm> (accessed on 23 May 2009)

<sup>73</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, art. 29

<sup>74</sup> Право и СМИ Центральной Азии [Law and Mass Media of Central Asia], “Закон Республики Узбекистан «О Средствах Массовой Информации» [Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Mass Media”]  
<http://medialawca.org/document/-88> (accessed 15 May 2009)

<sup>75</sup> Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2009. Events of 2008* (Human Rights Watch 2009): 435  
<http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2009>

international organizations dealing with spread of democracy and press freedom around the world. Some of the prominent organizations in this field include Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders. Their annual press freedom indices assess the political, economic, legal and human rights environments across the states of the world. Moreover, each of the indices claims to include assessment of the Internet freedoms. Next sections of the paper review the methodology of each index and assess their representativeness in measuring specifically Internet freedoms.

## **2.1. Freedom House Press Freedom Index**

*Freedom House* was established in 1941 in New York, USA. It is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that is funded by tax deductible grants and donations.<sup>76</sup> Annually Freedom House releases a Freedom of the Press index report that assesses the degree of print, broadcast and internet freedom.<sup>77</sup> The ratings of the index across the countries are based on examination of three broad areas: political environment, economic environment and legal environment. Countries are given a total score from 0 (best) to 100 (worst) on the basis of a set of 23 methodology questions divided into three subcategories.<sup>78</sup> The degree to which each country permits the free flow of news and information determines the classification of its media as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. Countries scoring 0 to 30 are regarded as having Free media; 31 to 60, Partly Free media; and 61 to 100, Not Free media. Based on these criteria the states of Central Asia are classified as Not Free. The results of the Press Freedom index 2008 are summarized in the table below:

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<sup>76</sup> Freedom House, "About us" <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=2> (accessed on 11 April 2009)

<sup>77</sup> Freedom House, "Map of Press Freedom" <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=2> (accessed 12 April 2009)

<sup>78</sup> Freedom House, "Methodology.2008 Edition" [http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana\\_page=348&year=2008](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana_page=348&year=2008) (accessed 12 April 2009)

**Table 1**  
**Freedom House Press Freedom Index 2008**

	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	<b>Tajikistan</b>	<b>Turkmenistan</b>	<b>Uzbekistan</b>
<b>Legal Environment</b>	26	22	25	30	29
<b>Political Environment</b>	30	28	28	37	38
<b>Economic Environment</b>	22	20	24	29	25
<b>Total Score</b>	78	70	77	96	92
<b>Status</b>	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free

Information taken from Freedom House Press Freedom Index 2008 Country Report <sup>79</sup>

Based on the Press Freedom index in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan the situation with press freedom is the worst. In Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan the scores are slightly better, but still not good enough to qualify for even as Partly Free.

Freedom House Press Freedom Index 2008 is compiled based on the data from 195 countries and territories. The survey is based on the finding of 23 methodology questions divided into three sub-categories: political environment, economic environment and legal environment.<sup>80</sup> It is claimed that the findings are analyzed and evaluated by regional experts and scholars, together – 33 analysts and 10 senior-level ratings advisers.<sup>81</sup> The methodology questions are designed to assess the “enabling environment” in which the media operates. Thus, in each category the questions focus on the factors that may influence media content and its free operation.

Closer review of the questions in each category shows that in any of them there is no explicit question that would cover the freedoms or restrictions of expression on the Internet. Thus, for instance, even technically if the legislature of a state does not list the Internet as one of

<sup>79</sup> Freedom House, “Country reports. 2008 Edition”

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=107&year=2008> (accessed 12 April 2009)

<sup>80</sup> For a full list of methodological questions used by Freedom House Press Freedom index 2008, please, see Appendix I Section I, or go to Freedom House Press Freedom index 2008, Methodology, available at [http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana\\_page=348&year=2008](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana_page=348&year=2008)

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

the mass communication media, then virtually none of the questions is able to assess the degree to which the factors that are examined by the questionnaire may affect the freedom of information flow in the Internet. Departing from these considerations, one may claim that for many states the Internet presents a medium the effect of which has not been included in the Freedom House press freedom index yet. Nonetheless, for the purposes of present paper the indicators of the index are illustrative of the political, economic and legal environment in which the media systems exist and develop.

### **2.1.1. Freedom House Freedom on the Net Index 2009**

In April 2009 Freedom House released the first report of the Freedom on the Net index that provides ratings and analysis of Internet and digital media freedom in 15 strategic countries that represent the sample based on geographical, regional, economic development and Internet and digital media freedom diversity.<sup>82</sup> The index covers the period between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2008 and it is compiled of nineteen questions and ninety subquestions grouped into three categories: 1) obstacles to access; 2) limits on content; 3) violations of user rights.<sup>83</sup> For the full list of methodological questions used in the study, please, see Section II of Appendix I.

In spite of the fact that freedom House's Freedom on the Net index is likely to become one of the most reliable sources of assessing the Internet freedoms across the states, at the moment the study does not include the states of Central Asia into consideration. Therefore, it cannot be used for the present research.

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<sup>82</sup> Karlekar, Karit Deutsch and Cook, Sarah G. *Access and Control: A Growing Diversity of Threats to Internet Freedom, Freedom on the Net. A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media*, Freedom House ( 1 April 2009):12 <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=383&report=79&group=19>

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 13

## 2.2. Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index

*Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontieres)* was founded in France in 1985 as a non-profit organization.<sup>84</sup> However, it is present on all five continents and has more than 120 correspondents in different countries of the world. Some of the functions the organization performs include: defending imprisoned and persecuted journalists, exposing mistreatment and torture of them, fighting against censorship and laws that that undermine press freedom, providing financial assistance to journalists and media outlets that are in difficulty, and improving their safety.<sup>85</sup> The organization is funded by the sale of its publications, public grants and partnerships with private firms.<sup>86</sup>

The Press Freedom Index of Reporters Without Borders reflects the degree of freedom that journalists and news organizations enjoy in each country, and the efforts made by the authorities to respect and ensure respect for this freedom.<sup>87</sup> The index consists of a questionnaire with 49 criteria that includes every kind of violation directly affecting journalists (murders, imprisonment, physical attacks and threats) and news media (censorship, confiscation of newspaper issues, searches and harassment).<sup>88</sup> The violations of the free flow of information on the Internet are also reflected in the questionnaire. It also considers the degree of impunity enjoyed by those responsible for such violations. The ranking reflects the situation during a specific period of time. The first ranking index came out in 2002. For 2008 out of the 173 countries considered the Press Freedom Index of the Reporters Without Borders ranked states of Central Asia as follows:

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<sup>84</sup> Reporters Without Border, "About Us" [http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=280](http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=280) (accessed 15 April 2009)

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

<sup>87</sup> Reporters Without Border, "How The Index Is Compiled" [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=29013](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=29013) (accessed 15 April 2009)

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

**Table 2**  
**Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index 2008**

Rank	Country
106	Tajikistan
111	Kyrgyzstan
125	Kazakhstan
162	Uzbekistan
171	Turkmenistan

Information taken from the Reporters Without Border 2008 Press Freedom index<sup>89</sup>

The ranking suggests that Tajikistan has the best press freedom score among the Central Asian countries, with Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan coming next. Turkmenistan is the worst place for journalists to be in the list of the states considered.

In order to assess the degree to which the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index measures freedom online, the study looks at the methodology of this organization for processing and analyzing the information. It should be kept in mind that the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index reflects the situation during a specific period of time. Thus, for instance, the scores presented above reflect upon the events that took place between 1 September 2007 and 1 September 2008.

Reporters Without Borders sends their questionnaires to the partner organizations (18 freedom of expression groups in all five continents) and to its network of 130 correspondents around the world, as well as to journalists, researchers, jurists and human rights activists. Upon

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<sup>89</sup> Reporters Without Borders, “2008 Press Freedom Index”[http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=29031](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=29031) (accessed 16 April 2009)

completion of the questionnaires by these people the organization evaluates the responses based on a scale and gives a country-score to each questionnaire.<sup>90</sup>

The questionnaire consists of seven parts, each considering specific aspect of media freedoms and journalists' status. While most of the questions cover the types of violations that may be committed against journalists and pressure that may be exerted over them, there are separate sections inquiring about the practice of censorship and restrictions in the Internet. Thus, the present research is mainly concerned with the following part of the questionnaire<sup>91</sup>:

#### THE INTERNET AND NEW MEDIA

Was/were there (yes/no):

- 45. A state monopoly of Internet service providers (ISPs)?
- 46. ISPs forced to filter access to news, cultural, social or political websites (not including pornography or gambling sites)?
- 47. Websites shut down or suspended after pressure on ISPs?
- 48. Cyber-dissidents or bloggers (how many?) imprisoned for more than two days?
- 49. Cyber-dissidents or bloggers (how many?) physically attacked or injured by representatives of the state?

In general, the design of questionnaire for the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom index seems to have a more detailed approach to investigating press freedom situations in countries under consideration. Moreover, the questionnaire takes a detailed account of the Internet freedoms available to journalists and general public in each state. Therefore, the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index can be considered as more adequate in reflecting the situation with freedoms of journalists in traditional media outlets and in new media.

The only problem that may be encountered when dealing with the ranking of the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index is ambiguity over the methods of counting the scores. Differently from Freedom House Press Freedom index where each questions is evaluated on the scales from 0-2, 0-3, 0-4, 0-6 or 0-10, there is no clear way to assign numerical values to

<sup>90</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "How the Index Was Compiled" [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=29013](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=29013) (accessed 15 April 2009)

<sup>91</sup> For a full list of methodological questions used by Reporters Without Borders press freedom index, please, see Appendix II or go to Reporters Without Borders press freedom index, Questionnaire for Compiling the 2008 Worldwide Press Freedom Index, available at [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=29011](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=29011)

the answers for Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom index. Nevertheless, as the methodology of the index suggests, the ranks are given to the states based on the cumulative score for all the answers to the questions. Thus, the mechanism of evaluating the answers and giving them a specific score is not transparent in case of Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom index.

In addition, Christina Holtz-Bacha noted that the meaning of press freedom varies across the states.<sup>92</sup> Thus, she claims that not always the data necessary for conducting such surveys is available for each state.<sup>93</sup> And even if there is data, the interpretation of it by the team of researchers is not always unbiased. Similar point was earlier expressed by Hocking who did special studies for the Hutchins Commission.<sup>94</sup> Thus, he noted that the concept of the “free press” changes across societies and time and cannot have the same meaning in different settings.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, judging the level of press freedom based on the set of criteria relevant to one society during certain time may produce unreliable results.

By pinpointing the difficulties of applying the methodology of the cited indices in cross-national studies, C. Holtz-Bacha concludes that in-depth analysis of separate or only few countries is an effective strategy for outlining national characteristics of a media system.<sup>96</sup> Present research is in line with the statement. Thus, besides providing background information about political, economic, legal and human rights environment of the Central Asian states, it

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<sup>92</sup> Christina Holtz-Bacha, “What is Good Press Freedom? The Difficulty of Measuring Freedom of the Press Worldwide” (Paper prepared for presentation at the 2004 conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), PortoAlegre,Brazil, July 25-30):6 [www.kowi.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/publikationen/docs/good\\_press\\_freedom.pdf](http://www.kowi.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/publikationen/docs/good_press_freedom.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 4

<sup>94</sup> Shelton Gunaratne, “Freedom of the Press: A World System Perspective” *International Communication Gazette*, Vol. 64, № 4(2002): 345 <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/64/4/343>

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 345

<sup>96</sup> Christina Holtz-Bacha, “What is Good Press Freedom? The Difficulty of Measuring Freedom of the Press Worldwide” (Paper prepared for presentation at the 2004 conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), PortoAlegre,Brazil, July 25-30):12 [www.kowi.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/publikationen/docs/good\\_press\\_freedom.pdf](http://www.kowi.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/publikationen/docs/good_press_freedom.pdf)



studies development of the notion of online participatory journalism by conducting content analysis of news and blogs posted in the Internet by non-professional correspondents. The purpose of reviewing the press freedom scores of Central Asian states was to provide some background information about the concept and understanding of press freedom in the region. Both of the indices cited define press freedom situation in Central Asia as ‘not free’ and scoring very low in the ranking list of the states. Thus, by reviewing the methodology of compiling the information for such indices it was revealed that measurement of Internet freedom is not reflected well in the Freedom House Press Freedom index. This finding provides for yet another reason to test the claim that online participatory journalism may have effects on press freedom, especially in authoritarian regimes. However, since the new media have features different from those of traditional, it would be hard, if possible at all, to measure its effects on the press freedom. Therefore, the study of online content is viewed as yet another way to investigate the level of press freedom in states under consideration.

## Chapter III: Participatory Journalism in Central Asia

The major argument of the research is based on the findings of the content analysis of the selected web-sites. Since participatory journalism in simple terms may be described as an act of producing content by ordinary people, the research examines two types of online activity – people contributing news articles to various news web-sites and people blogging.

### **3.1. *CentrAsia, EurasiaNet, Neweurasia***

The notion of participatory journalism is relatively new in Central Asia; therefore there are few news web-sites that publish ‘user-generated’ content. Most of the web-sites that publish news online either represent the online version of the traditional newspaper editions or pro-governmental news agencies that engage in state propaganda. Therefore, the web-sites that would contain articles contributed by non-professional journalists are the ones registered and maintained by agencies outside of the region (in Russia, USA or Europe). This fact, however, is not detrimental for the research, because as a medium of communication national borders make little difference for the flow of information.

#### **3.1.1. News web-sites**

Departing from these considerations, the news web-sites that are considered in given research are: [www.centrasia.ru](http://www.centrasia.ru) and [www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org). The former contains articles in Russian language, the latter – in English. Both of the web-sites cover news articles on a wide variety of political, economic and social issues in all five states of the region and they are accessible within the states. The articles posted on the web-sites are written by random contributors, freelancers, professional journalists and partner news agencies. Thus, the content of the web-sites is filtered for the articles posted by non-professional correspondents only. Finally, [www.centrasia.ru](http://www.centrasia.ru) and [www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org) are ranked as the most popular by Alexa Internet Toolbar. Alexa Site

Information provides database of information about sites that includes statistics, related links and other information for assessing popularity of a web-site in the Web.<sup>97</sup> Both of the web-sites were ranked as the most popular results of the search,<sup>98</sup> and they are accessible in the five states of Central Asia.

### 3.1.2. Blogging web-site

In addition to news web-sites that have contributions of non-professional journalists the research examines blogs. In addition to the popularity criterion mentioned earlier for selection of the blogs it includes consideration of the number of visitors and posts as well as the availability of regularly updated posts. Since results of Alexa Internet Toolbar did not provide with a web-site that would meet the criteria of the research, the selection of the blogs is based on the top results of Google search.<sup>99</sup> It should be noted that for the purposes of present research the blogs considered do not include personal blogs, but blog-hostings that contain posts by a variety of users. Furthermore, only those blogs that discuss political, economic and social issues of the Central Asian states are selected.

Based on the Technorati State of the Blogosphere 2008 report there are more than 133 millions of blogs in the world.<sup>100</sup> Out of these, the blogs in Russian make up for 5% of the world

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<sup>97</sup> Alexa. The Web Information Company “About Alexa Internet” <http://www.alexa.com/company/> (accessed 25 April 2009)

<sup>98</sup> The parameters that were entered for identifying the most popular web-sites included “Central Asia news” as keywords. Since the study is interested in news web-sites in several languages the same combination was entered in Russian. The results of the search can be viewed on the following links <http://www.alexa.com/search?q=%D0%A6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%8F+%D0%90%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%8F> and <http://www.alexa.com/search?q=Central%20Asia%20news>

<sup>99</sup> Results of Google search represent the matches of keywords in the headings and the text body of a web-site as well as the links that refer to the keywords typed. The keywords used for selecting the blog were “Central Asia Blog”. The results of the Google search can be viewed at <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=Central+Asia+blog&aq=f&oq=>

<sup>100</sup> Technorati, « State of Blogosphere 2008. Itroduction” <http://technorati.com/blogging/state-of-the-blogosphere/> (accessed 20 April 2009)

blogosphere.<sup>101</sup> In fact, Russian is a working language of the most of the Central Asian blogs because of its still wide popularity among the region's population.<sup>102</sup> Thus, it will not be wrong to assume that Central Asian blogosphere constitutes a part in the 5% of the world's blogosphere assigned to Russian bloggers.

Yandex Blogs Search 2009 newsletter reports that there are 7,4 millions of blogs in Russian blogosphere; out of those 6,9 millions are personal diaries and more than half-million are online communities.<sup>103</sup> Only 12% of these blogs are active, meaning those that contain at least five posts and were updated at least once during the last three months.<sup>104</sup> Only 5% of the blogs and communities are updated at least once a week.<sup>105</sup> There is no statistics on Central Asian blogosphere, but keeping in mind that Russian is still the dominant online language in states of Central Asia, it would be logical to assume that Central Asian blogosphere constitutes a part of Russian blogosphere.

Departing from these considerations, the research identifies [www.Neweurasia.net](http://www.Neweurasia.net) as the blog to be considered. The web-site was identified using Google search engine with the keywords "Central Asia Blog". It was ninth most popular result of the search, and after excluding upper results under other parameters of the criteria *Neweurasia.net* was identified as the most representative of the given cases. Specifically, it contains posts on all five states of Central Asia; the topics cover political, economic and social issues of the states; the blogs are in

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101 LiveInternet, "Исследование русскоязычной блогосферы (весна 2009). Блогосфера Рунета" ["Research of Russian Blogosphere (Spring 2009). Runet blogosphere"]

<http://www.liveinternet.ru/users/varenn/post101057909/> (accessed 19 April 2009)

102 James Pickett, "Citizen Journalism in Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities of the Growing Online Community" (2006):3 [www.eurasia21.com/cgi-data/document/files/eurasia21\\_-\\_citizen\\_journalism\\_in\\_central\\_asia\\_-\\_Pickett.pdf](http://www.eurasia21.com/cgi-data/document/files/eurasia21_-_citizen_journalism_in_central_asia_-_Pickett.pdf)

103 Yandex, «Блогосфера Рунета.Весна 2009. По данным поиска по блогам Яндекса» ["RunetBlogosphere. Spring 2009. Based on the Yandex Blogs Search"] (2009): 2

[www.download.yandex.ru/company/yandex\\_on\\_blogosphere\\_spring\\_2009.pdf](http://www.download.yandex.ru/company/yandex_on_blogosphere_spring_2009.pdf)

104 Ibid, 2

105 Ibid, 2

English, Russian and local language of every Central Asian state. It is open for public within the region. Furthermore, the web-site is regularly updated and it is recognized as one of the leading blogging sites on the region.<sup>106</sup>

### **3.2. Background information about the web-sites**

The first web-site – **CentrAsia** – was launched in 2002 in Russia and currently it is one of the biggest sites covering the Central Asian region. It is read by more than 15 000 of visitors in 24 hours, of which one third is Central Asian public.<sup>107</sup> The web-site contains news, press digest, analytical articles, reference information, personal database, sites catalogue, discussions.<sup>108</sup> All the articles on CentrAsia are in Russian language without options of English or any of the local language translation. Besides five republics of Central Asia the web-site provides news coverage on Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Iran, China, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey. The editorial principles of the agency suggest that it has no political or national affiliations, and it aims to provide interesting information, free analysis and open discussion. The web-site has a list of so called ‘*our authors*’, which consists of the last name, first name and the country of the correspondent. While it is not clear whether the list represents the hired journalists that write for the web-site, it may well be that these are the pseudonyms ordinary people use when their articles are published. It was not possible to disclose the identity of the article contributors. Therefore, it is assumed that when a first name and a last name of the authors are indicated on the web-site, it is either a real name of a person or a pseudonym. All of the articles selected for consideration on CentrAsia are signed by the last and the first name of the person.

<sup>106</sup> Neweurasia, “Partnerships” <http://neweurasia.net/partnerships/> (accessed 25 May 2009)

<sup>107</sup> CentrAsia, «О Рекламе на ЦентрАзия» [“About advertisement on CentrAsia”] <http://www.centrasia.ru/banner.php> (accessed 23 April 2009)

<sup>108</sup> Ibid

The second news web-site – **EurasiaNet** – has its base in New York, USA and is operated by the Central Eurasia Project of the Open Society Institute.<sup>109</sup> The purpose of the web-site is to present a variety of perspectives on contemporary issues of the region by utilizing a network of correspondents based both in the West and in the region. The news articles published by EurasiaNet include those published by partner news agencies as well as professional journalists. The articles selected for present study are written by random people that write under pseudonyms. Information about the authors of the articles is available in the bottom of each article. EurasiaNet offers its contributors compensations for 750-words-long articles. Some of the topics discussed include political affairs, civil society development and economic and environmental trends.<sup>110</sup> EurasiaNet provides information both in English and Russian language; however, since the content of the articles in both languages is the same the research considers only the English version.

The third web-site – **Neweurasia** – is a network of weblogs project which is a result of the partnership of *Transitions Online* and *neweurasia*. *Transitions online* was founded in 1999 as a Czech non-profit organization sponsored by Open Society Institute. Currently it operates as an online magazine covering a variety of issues on the post-Soviet area.<sup>111</sup> Currently the project is supported by Hivos – a non-governmental organization based in Netherlands that is guided by humanist values.<sup>112</sup> *Neweurasia* is one of the leading blogging sites in the region. Thus, the idea behind the partnership's project is about "bridge bloggers" - coordinators who speak both English and local languages and can act as a bridge between the English and local-language

<sup>109</sup> Euarsianet.org, "About Euasianet" <http://eurasianet.org/about/index.shtml> (accessed 25 April 2009)

<sup>110</sup> Euarsianet.org, "Contribute to Eurasianet" <http://eurasianet.org/contribute/> (accessed 25 April 2009)

<sup>111</sup> TOL, "About TOL, TOL History and Timeline"

<http://www.tol.cz/look/TOL/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=18&NrIssue=1&NrSection=2&NrArticle=11869> (accessed 15 April 2009)

<sup>112</sup> Neweurasia, "Partnerships" <http://neweurasia.net/partnerships/> (accessed 25 May 2009)

blogging communities.<sup>113</sup> The participants of the blog are “from within the region itself, as well as from the global Central Asian diaspora”.<sup>114</sup> The bloggers are identified by nicks. There are just few of them that write under a proper name, however, it was not possible to identify whether the names are real. The aim of the weblog site is to serve as a venue of unfiltered reporting, analysis and commentary from people of various backgrounds.<sup>115</sup> The topics of interest include political, economic and social issues. The content of the weblog is available in English, Russian and every local language of the Central Asian states respectively. Thus, *Neweurasia.net* serves both international and local public. The overview of the web-site selection criteria is available in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Criteria and case selection of the web-sites**

	<b>Region (posts covering Central Asia)</b>	<b>Non- professional contributors</b>	<b>Langua- ge(s)</b>	<b>Popularity ranking (Google’s PageRank or Alexa)</b>	<b>Accessibil ity in Central Asia</b>
<b>Centrasia.ru</b>	Central Asia +Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Iran, China, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey	Articles by: 1)Random contributors 2)Hired journalists 3)News agencies	Russian	1st popular	Yes
<b>Eurasianet. org</b>	Central Asia +Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Mongolia,Turkey	(Paid)articles by: 1)Random contributors 2)News agencies	English, Russian	1st popular	Yes
<b>Neweurasia. org</b>	Central Asia	Bloggers	English, Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik,	9th popular	Yes

<sup>113</sup> What is neweurasia? <http://www.neweurasia.net/what-is-neweurasia/> (accessed 16 April 2009)

<sup>114</sup> Christopher Schwartz, Managing Editor of neweurasia.net, e-mail message to Nargiza Mazhidova, May 21, 2009

<sup>115</sup> What is neweurasia? <http://www.neweurasia.net/what-is-neweurasia/> (accessed 16 April 2009)

			Turkmen, Uzbek		
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### 3.3. Selection of articles and blogs

Based on the research design, the first step of the content analysis was to conduct review of the web-sites to identify which articles/entries in chosen months qualify the criteria of the research design. The results of the preliminary review of the web-site content of March 2008, June 2008, September 2008, December 2008 and March 2009 for each state are provided in the table below:

**Table 4**  
**Statistics on the amount of articles/entries**

	March 2008	June 2008	September2008	December2008	March 2008	Total for site
<b>Kazakhstan</b>						
<b>CentraAsia</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Neweurasia</b>	9 (eng) 3 (rus)	7(eng) 1 (rus)	2(eng) 5(rus)	2 (eng) -	7 (eng) -	<b>27 (eng)</b> <b>9(rus)</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	12	8	7	2	7	<b>36</b>
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>						
<b>CentraAsia</b>	2 (rus)	1 (rus)	-	2 (rus)	4 (rus)	<b>9</b>
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	-	-	-	3 (eng)	4 (eng)	<b>7</b>
<b>Neweurasia</b>	4 (eng) 5 (rus)	6 (eng) 5 (rus)	- -	- -	6 (eng) -	<b>16(eng)</b> <b>10(rus)</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	11	12	-	5	14	<b>42</b>
<b>Tajikistan</b>						
<b>CentraAsia</b>	-	1 (rus)	-	2 (rus)	6 (rus)	<b>9</b>
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	1(eng)	1 (eng)	-	1 (eng)	-	<b>3</b>
<b>Neweurasia</b>	6 (eng) 6 (rus)	5 (eng) 2 (rus)	5(eng) 3(rus)	1(eng) 3 (rus)	- -	<b>17(eng)</b> <b>14(rus)</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	13	9	8	7	6	<b>43</b>
<b>Turkmenistan</b>						
<b>CentraAsia</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Neweurasia</b>	14 (eng) 5 (rus)	3 (eng) -	- -	- -	- -	<b>17(eng)</b> <b>5(rus)</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	19	3	-	-	-	<b>22</b>
<b>Uzbekistan</b>						
<b>CentraAsia</b>	1 (rus)	-	2 (rus)	-	2 (rus)	<b>5</b>
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-



<b>Neweurasia</b>	7(eng) 6(rus)	2(eng) 13(rus)	3(eng) 7(rus)	2(eng) 5(rus)	2(eng) 12 (rus)	<b>16(eng) 43(rus)</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	14	15	12	7	16	<b>64</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>207</b>

The data presented in the table indicate that there are 207 articles/entries on the web-sites that comply with the criteria of the research design, i.e. they are written by non-professional correspondents, cover political, economic and social issues of the five states of Central Asia, and are in English and Russian. However, as the table indicates there are some exceptions: there are no articles that would match the set criteria published on CentraAsia and EurasiaNet during the months of consideration for Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Therefore, for these two states only blog entries are considered. In case of Kazakhstan the reason for identifying the articles under consideration as ‘not in compliance with research design’ is largely explained by the fact that articles posted are either taken from other news agencies or are written by professional journalists. In addition, upon availability of information the location of the author affected the selection procedure, i.e. if it is clearly indicated that the author is located outside of Central Asia, then the article was not considered to be relevant for the research. The same reason explains absence of entries at CentrAsia and EurasiaNet for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan during certain months. In case of Turkmenistan the articles did not fit the research design criteria not only because they were not written by non-professional correspondents, but also because the topics covered did not include political, economic and social issues. The same reason explains absence of articles on EurasiaNet for Uzbekistan.

As for the blogging web-site – Neweurasia – the entries mainly were selected on the basis of topics covered. Thus, in cases when the record suggests that there are no entries, there is either nothing that covers the topics of interest for the research or that there are no any entries as such. Also it should be noted that since Neweurasia has entries in English and Russian languages,

whenever the content of the blogs is translated from one language to another, for the purposes of clarity and order only the original version was counted.

### **3.4. Content Analysis**

Once the number of articles and entries to be considered for the research was established, they were separated by topics. In the framework of the research design only the items covering political, economic and social issues were selected. As the result of preliminary overview of the headings of the selected entries the main thematical categories of political, economic and social issues were divided on smaller sub-categories. The sub-categories were formed upon availability of articles or entries on the same topic at least twice in the data reviewed.

The political issues category includes *corruption, government policy and activities, image of authorities and international relations* sub-categories. The corruption sub-category includes articles and blog entries about the corruption and related activities of the high-ranking officials as well as cases of petty corruption by the local institutions and their representatives. The government policy and activities sub-category includes wide variety of the posts reflecting upon the policies in different areas of internal affairs: legislature, regulation of political and economic activities. Image of authorities sub-category targets specificities of states' officials representation: the ways presidents and other higher officials and businessmen are pictured, their figurative images. International relations sub-category contains posts about different aspects of relations of individual states of Central Asia with the immediate neighbors and other states of the world as well as with the international institutions.

The economic issues category contains *poverty, financial crisis, and energy* sub-categories. The first one covers the issues related to economic situation in Central Asian states and the effects poverty of the wide ranged of Central Asian populations on the their everyday

lives and activities. Articles in financial crisis sub-category are concerned with different aspects in which financial crisis touched the citizens of the region. The energy sub-category includes articles and posts about use, sale or lack of electricity, water, gas and other energy resources in states of Central Asia.

The social issues category has five sub-categories: religion, status of women and children, mass media, medicare and education. Religion sub-category covers the issues of religious radicalism, religious movements and state policies concerning those. Status of women and children sub-category mainly includes the articles on social security provisions for these social groups and traditions and stereotypes about them present in societies of the region. Mass media sub-category is about media laws and regulations as well as performance of journalists and different media outlets. Medicare sub-category contains articles about medical service provided to the population by the state and the level of its effectiveness. The last sub-category covers the issues of educational system in specific states of Central Asia, including the state educational policies and conditions of the pupils.

Besides the issues covered in the three large categories mentioned above, there are topics that appeared less than twice throughout the data. They did not qualify under any of the sub-categories of the data and therefore were put into a separate section of *miscellaneous* items. Some of the issues in this section include language politics, pension funds and banking systems in states of Central Asia. The results of the data analysis are summarized in **Table 5**<sup>116</sup> below:

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<sup>116</sup> For the list of the articles and blogs used for compiling the data, please, see Appendix III

	POLITICAL ISSUES				ECONOMIC ISSUES			SOCIAL ISSUES					
	Corruption	Government Policies and Activity	Image of Authorities	International Relations	Poverty	Financial crisis	Energy	Religion	Status of women/ Children	Mass Media	Media-care	Edu-cation	Miscela-neous
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>													
CentrAsia (rus)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EurasiaNet (en)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NewEurasia(en)	2	8	3	7	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
(rus)	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
<b>KYRGYZSTAN</b>													
CentrAsia (rus)	3	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
EurasiaNet (en)	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
NewEurasia(en)	-	2	2	7	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	-
(rus)	-	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1
<b>TAJIKISTAN</b>													
CentrAsia (rus)	2	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	2	-	-	1	-
EurasiaNet (en)	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
NewEurasia(en)	-	6	2	4	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
(rus)	1	2	-	4	-	-	2	-	-	3	-	-	1
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>													
CentrAsia (rus)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EurasiaNet (en)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NewEurasia(en)	-	5	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1
(rus)	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
<b>UZBEKISTAN</b>													
CentrAsia (rus)	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
EurasiaNet (en)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NewEurasia(en)	1	4	2	1	-	-	1	1	1	5	-	-	-
(rus)	2	10	7	9	1	-	-	-	-	10	2	1	-
<b>Total on each topic</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total for each category</b>	<b>142</b>				<b>13</b>			<b>45</b>					<b>7</b>

Based on the findings reflected in the Table 6, it is possible to track the frequency of articles and blog entries appearing on every of the revealed topics during the five months under consideration. Moreover, the table illustrates which of the topics are covered on each of the web-sites considered. Finally, the total amount of articles on each of the topics identifies which of the categories and sub-categories have the most entries, i.e. the most popular topics of discourse online.

As it may be seen from the table most of the entries are revealed on the NewEurasia blogging web-site. The news web-sites – CentrAsia and EurasiNet – have articles that fit the research design criteria only for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The most widely covered issues concern politics – 142 items in total; next come social issues – 45 items, and economic issues – 13 – the last. Among the topics that appear the most among the selected articles are: government policies and activities (50), international relations (48), mass media (29) and image of authorities (27). Based on the distribution of these sub-categories among the main categories of the topics, it can be inferred that political issues receive the widest coverage in the content generated by non-professional correspondents and bloggers. This finding is significant, because political issues are considered as sensitive topic in authoritarian states of Central Asia. However, in order to make inferences it is necessary to examine how these issues are communicated and what kind of messages are being sent through them to the public.

Since the purpose of the research is to identify the effects of participatory journalism on press freedom which is measured by availability of diverse opinions, the next step in the analysis of the data is to evaluate how freely people express their ideas and views on certain issues. In order to assess this, content of each article and blog posting is scaled from 0 to 2. Assignment of

the values is designed as follows: 0 – mere reporting of an event; 1 – reporting of an event followed by an analysis, 2 – thorough analysis and criticism of the subject in focus. Results of scaling the content are summarized in **Table 6**:

**Table 6**  
**Content Evaluation Scale**

	<b>“0”</b>	<b>“1”</b>	<b>“2”</b>
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>			
<b>CentrAsia</b>	-	-	-
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	-	-	-
<b>Neweurasia (eng)</b>	12	7	8
<b>(rus)</b>	-	-	9
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>KYRGYZSTAN</b>			
<b>CentrAsia</b>	3	-	6
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	-	4	3
<b>Neweurasia (eng)</b>	5	3	8
<b>(rus)</b>	3	1	6
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>TAJIKISTAN</b>			
<b>CentrAsia</b>	2	1	5
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	2	-	1
<b>Neweurasia (eng)</b>	6	2	10
<b>(rus)</b>	-	-	13
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>			
<b>CentrAsia</b>	-	-	-
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	-	-	-
<b>Neweurasia (eng)</b>	3	2	12
<b>(rus)</b>	1	-	4
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>UZBEKISTAN</b>			
<b>CentrAsia</b>	-	1	4
<b>EurasiaNet</b>	-	-	-
<b>Neweurasia (eng)</b>	4	1	11
<b>(rus)</b>	2	-	41
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>141</b>

Based on the results of content analysis of the articles and blogs posted on the selected web-sites, in absolute numbers the total amount of the items that have diverse opinions and

criticisms about certain issues outweighs those that are neutral and informative in character. The results of the content analysis presented in the table make it possible to identify which of the selected web-sites contains the most of the articles in each scale category. Furthermore, Table 7 indicates the percentage of articles identified under specific scale out of total number of articles considered for each state. For instance, out of 36 articles considered for Kazakhstan, 47,2% turned out to be critical, etc.

**Table 7**  
**Percents of total for each scale category in each state**

	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	<b>Tajikistan</b>	<b>Turkmenistan</b>	<b>Uzbekistan</b>
Total of articles in each state	36	42	43	22	64
<b>Scaled “2”</b>	47,2%	54,76%	67,44%	72,72%	87,5%
<b>Scaled “1”</b>	19,4%	19,04%	6,97%	9,09%	3,125%
<b>Scaled “0”</b>	33,3%	26,19%	23,25%	18,18%	9,375%

As such the data provided in Table 7 cannot be used for cross-country comparison, because it indicates percents for each scale category out of total number of items for individual states. **Table 8**, however, represents the percentage of each state’s score for each scale out of total amount of items considered:

**Table 8**  
**Percents of each states part for each scale category**

	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	<b>Tajikistan</b>	<b>Turkmenistan</b>	<b>Uzbekistan</b>
Total of articles	207				
<b>Scaled “2”</b>	8,21%	11,11%	14,00%	7,72%	27,05%
<b>Scaled “1”</b>	3,38%	3,86%	1,44%	0,96%	0,96%
<b>Scaled “0”</b>	5,79%	5,31%	4,83%	1,93%	2,89%

Table 8 indicates that the biggest amount of articles that were scaled as critical were found among the posts on Uzbekistan (27,05%). Tajikistan (14%) and Kyrgyzstan(11,11%) come only second and third. Surprisingly, Turkmenistan has the smallest amount of articles that are neutral (1,93%), while Kazakhstan is heading the list with 5,79%.

### **3.5. Interpretation of the Findings and Discussion**

The findings of the research prove the hypothesis that participatory journalism enhances press freedom in Central Asia by demonstrating through the content analysis that the amount of articles and blogs that contain analysis or criticism of the issues in focus is prevalent. By looking at the content of the articles and blog entries the study was able to identify the most popular topics of online discourse. It turned out that the ordinary people that have access to the Internet in Central Asia are most interested in discussing political issues, like government policies, corruption and international relations of their states.

The articles and blog entries considered in present study vary in their size, genre and language of writing. For instance, some of the articles had an informative character without analysis or critical view on the issue in focus. Others would contain both and sometimes are written in form of satirical essays that address behavior of specific persons or discuss certain events. In other words, the cyberspace in Central Asia opens a window of opportunities to express one's opinions and views on a wide range of issues and in any possible manner. Among the data examined in the research there were articles or blog entries that merely reported on certain subject, like the meeting of the heads of the governments of Central Asia at Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)<sup>117</sup>. Also there were articles that besides providing information on certain subject provided analysis of the issue and expressed an opinion about it. The main difference of such articles from the ones classified as critical is that they did not express views that would be strikingly different from the ones of the government line or mainstream media. For instance, certain articles on social issues have a lengthy discussion of media or educational system in a certain state, but there would be no single critical remark on the subject in focus. The most sophisticated form of criticism expressed is on the blogging web-site that contains satirical

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<sup>117</sup> For detailed review of the data, please, see Appendix III



stories on Uzbekistan that would either mock the president or indirectly hit the most sensitive issues in the state.

The results of scaling suggest that in absolute numbers out of 207 articles considered 141 are critical, i.e. 68, 11% of the research data support the hypothesis. In numerical terms the result is significant as it manifests that online activity of the ordinary citizens in authoritarian states of Central Asia is more likely to be free than to be constrained by any of the exogenous or endogenous factors. This finding is in line with the assumption expressed earlier in the paper that development of new technologies enables press freedom. In light of the present study, the new medium of communication – Internet – seems to allow for diversity of ideas and opinions.

Nevertheless, the findings derived for each state of Central Asia separately provide a better understanding of how well participatory journalism functions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. A brief overview of the findings for each state allows drawing a fuller picture.

There are no articles posted by non-professional correspondents on CentrAsia and EurasiaNet for **Kazakhstan**. Therefore, most of the information about participatory journalism in Kazakhstan is based on the content analysis of the Neweurasia.net blogging web-site. Government policies and activities is one of the most popular issues to be discussed in the blog on Kazakhstan with international relations and corruption themes coming next. 17 out of 36 items posted for Kazakhstan contain analysis and critical points on the issues discussed. This number constitutes 8,21% of articles with criticism out of 207 of total number of the items considered – surprisingly low for a state that does not have the worst scores of press freedom as assessed by press freedom indices. An explanation to this may lie in the fact that in 2008 Kazakhstan amended the Law on Media to include Internet as a medium of communication.

Thus, people posting online became subjects of the legislation concerning the responsibilities and liabilities of journalists. It could be worth studying whether the online content has changed in Kazakhstan during 2007 and 2008 in order to evaluate the effects of the legislature on cyberactivism of the state.

Posts about **Kyrgyzstan** are present on all three web-sites considered. The most popular topics of discussion are international relations and government policies. Out of 42 articles and blogs on Kyrgyzstan 23 had criticism, constituting 11,11% out of total amount of articles considered. For a state with underdeveloped infrastructure and numerous political and economic problems, participatory journalism seems to go forward at a steady gait.

**Tajikistan** is another state that was covered in all of the selected web-sites. The most popular topics discussed by Tajik public concern the issues of international relations and government policy and activity. Out of 43 articles and blogs on Tajikistan 29 express critical views about the issues in focus, making up for 14% out of the research data. Just like in Kyrgyzstan, despite the bad economic conditions, low Internet penetration and supposedly “not free” press, the people of Tajikistan widely use the new medium to share ideas and express opinions on a wide variety of issues. In fact, the press freedom indices in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan also rank them higher than the rest of the states in the region. Therefore, these two states may well represent the unique cases in the region when in spite of political and economic instability, the exercise of free speech in all media outlets, including Internet, is not violated.

**Turkmenistan**, quite unsurprisingly, has the least dynamic online activity. There are no articles contributed by non-professional correspondent to the news web-sites considered. Therefore, the findings on Turkmenistan are based on the data available at Neweurasia blogging web-site. The main reasons for such underperformance most likely lies in Turkmenistan’s lowest

level of Internet penetration in the region. In the online content available on Turkmenistan there is little diversity of the issues covered. One of the most popular topics of discussion is Turkmenistan's relations with other states and government policies and activities in different spheres. Unexpectedly, blogs with critical points and analysis on Turkmenistan constitute 7, 72% of the total amount of articles considered. These figures should be treated carefully, however. As James Pickett claimed in his study of citizen journalism in Central Asia, exactly because very few have access to Internet in Turkmenistan, Turkmen diaspora is quite active online.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, it could be that blogs considered are written by members of the diaspora. However, it is not impossible to establish this fact.

There are no articles that would fit the research design on **Uzbekistan** on EurasiaNet. However, some are present on CentrAsia and Neweurasia. Government policies and activities and mass media are the most popular topics of discussion in Uzbekistan. However, there is also a substantial amount of blog posts that contain interesting satirical representation of government authorities. Satirical stories which are very critical of government and its regime are posted in Russian language only. In total the posts on Uzbekistan constitute the biggest content among the five states of the region – 64. From this content, 27, 05% are articles that express discontent and criticism. This finding is the most unexpected in the research because Uzbekistan is ranked as second most repressive state in the region that exercises vigorous control over all media outlets. Like Kazakhstan, in 2008 Uzbekistan amended the law on media to incorporate the Internet into the list of mass communication media. Therefore, despite of relative accessibility of the medium to the general public, using it for expressing discontent was least likely out of fear of persecution.

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<sup>118</sup> James Pickett, "Citizen Journalism in Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities of the Growing Online Community" (2006): 6 [www.eurasia21.com/cgi-data/document/files/eurasia21\\_-\\_citizen\\_journalism\\_in\\_central\\_asia\\_-\\_Pickett.pdf](http://www.eurasia21.com/cgi-data/document/files/eurasia21_-_citizen_journalism_in_central_asia_-_Pickett.pdf)

With these considerations in mind, there could be several explanations to such figures in case of Uzbekistan. Firstly, as in Turkmenistan the worldwide Uzbek diaspora may constitute contributors of critical blogs to the web-sites. As the information about location of the bloggers is confidential, it is virtually impossible to track it. Thus, the research concedes that blogs could be written by people outside of Uzbekistan. Secondly, the anonymity that Internet-users enjoy could be another method Uzbek bloggers employ to escape repression. As it may be seen in Appendix III, all of the Uzbek blogs are posted under nicknames. An expanded discussion of the anonymity online will follow, however, in case of Uzbekistan it may be the primary explanatory factor for high scores of online freedom of expression.

The issue of the authors' identity plays an important role in the research as it may serve as an explanation of the amount of entries available and their features. The issue brings back to the discussion of the characteristics of the Internet as a medium of communication that frees its users from responsibility. As Lee Salter has pointed out, in authoritarian states the anonymity that the use of Internet provides allows speaking out freely without fear of persecution.<sup>119</sup> The findings of present research are in line with this assumption because the authors of the articles and blog entries on EurasiaNet and Neweurasia used either pseudonyms or nicknames. For instance, in case of EurasiaNet it was explicitly stated that the name provided is a pseudonym. Bloggers of Neweurasia mostly used nicknames, and only rarely the full last name and first name would appear, but there would be no way to check whether the name is real. Contributors of articles to CentrAsia provided first and last names and emails. However, it is impossible to identify whether the given names are of real people or they are pseudonym used for publishing content online. Hence, it may be inferred that in case of Central Asian cyberactivists the

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<sup>119</sup> Lee Salter "Democracy, New Social Movements, and the Internet. A Habermasian Analysis" in McCaughey, Martcha and Ayers, Michael eds., *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2003) 138

anonymity that may be exercised through the use of the Internet is an effective tool of enabling diversity of opinion and escaping responsibility.

All in all the findings of the research present an interesting insight on the development of online participatory journalism in five states of Central Asia. In absolute terms 68, 11% of the content analyzed in this research contains critical evaluation of the issues in focus. Provided an indicator of press freedom is diversity of opinion, the findings prove the hypothesis of the research that stated that online participatory journalism enhances press freedom.

The findings of the paper provide an explanation of the features and functions the notion of participatory journalism acquired in authoritarian states of Central Asia. By no means does the study compare it to that of the West. However, it adds to the body of knowledge on the practice of participatory journalism in authoritarian societies.

## Conclusion

The purpose of the paper was to examine the effects of online participatory journalism on press freedom in states of Central Asia. Departing from the assumptions outlined in the theoretical framework of the study about the functions of press and the effects technological advances may have on promotion of press freedom, the research assumed that online participatory journalism has effects on press freedom in authoritarian states of Central Asia.

By conducting content analysis of the web-sites that contain entries by non-professional correspondents and bloggers the research tested the hypothesis that participatory journalism enhances press freedom in Central Asia. The study mainly aimed to demonstrate how in the context of authoritarian regime, where there is no freedom of speech and expression, the use of the medium of communication that is hard to control may serve as an outlet of exposing different opinions and ideas.

The research commenced by identifying key concepts of the phenomenon. It discussed the notion of press freedom and outlined the main theories of press that set theoretical framework of the study. It proceeded with defining journalistic practice and highlighting its features. The discussion of participatory journalism and its several forms followed. Finally, the study turned to the theories that are concerned with the effects of technological developments on democratization of society and enhancement of press freedom. Internet, as a new medium of communication that enables practice of participatory journalism was discussed as a part of the chapter on theoretical framework.

In order to identify the most suitable method of measuring diversity of opinion online the research examined political, economic, legal and human rights environment in the states of Central Asia. The level of the Internet penetration was reviewed in order to make inferences about accessibility of the medium among the different layers of population. With this

information in mind the research reviewed the indices of the press freedom by Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders that claim to include the measurement of the Internet freedom. By spotting methodological problems these indices have in measuring freedoms online, the research turned to content analysis of the online sources that aimed to evaluate the actual level of diversity of opinions expressed in the Internet.

The findings of the content analysis suggest that there is diversity of opinions in the online discourse of Central Asia. Firstly, the range of online discourse topics includes variety of political, economic and social issues. The style of writing online varies from short stories to proper essays, report-like coverage and satirical tales. Secondly, a substantial amount of entries (68, 11%) contained thorough analysis and critical evaluation of the persons, events or phenomena in focus. Such articles were also prevalent in individual state's content ranking scales. Therefore, not only did the research get findings on the level of online press freedom of the whole region and separate states, but also it allowed for a comparative cross-national evaluation of the extent to which participatory journalism enhances freedom of the press. In addition, it demonstrated how the level of Internet penetration affects online activism in certain states of the region. The increasing role of anonymity online as a widespread practice to avoid censorship and repression in authoritarian states also constitutes one of the major findings of the study.

The findings of the research proved the hypothesis. Thus, based on the study of the content of three web-sites that were posted during March 2008 and March 2009 and contain articles and blogs by non-professional correspondents from the states of Central Asia it was established that there is diversity of opinion, i.e. press freedom in Central Asia. Nevertheless, in light of the conditions in which the practice of the notion takes place, the research identifies that

participatory journalism in Central Asia is an indicator rather than a contributor of press freedom. In other words, it is unlikely to have an effect on the overall level of press freedom in states of the region; however, it may be viewed as a way to communicate alternative views and criticisms to the public.

The present research did not aim to assess the effects of participatory journalism on the mainstream media or whole media system of the states under consideration. Moreover, it did not view the notion of participatory journalism as constituent of the press.

Suggestions for further research would include expanding the time frame of the content for study. As it was mentioned earlier in certain countries the changes in online content may be associated with passing certain legislature that may affect the ordinary Internet-users. The scope of the research may also be extended by including more web-sites for consideration, i.e. increasing the content to be studied.

The present research was not able to establish identity and location of the news contributors and bloggers. Therefore, further research in the field may focus on attempts to reveal information about the cyberactivists by contacting and interviewing them.

Last but not the least suggestion concerns the method employed in the study. Since content analysis was not used for the purposes of measuring press freedom before, it would be worth investigating the viability of this method for other states of the world.



# APPENDIX I

## Section I

### Freedom House Press Freedom Index Methodological Questions

Political environment questions <sup>120</sup>:

1. To what extent are media outlets' news and information content determined by the government or a particular partisan interest? (0–10 points)
2. Is access to official or unofficial sources generally controlled? (0–2 points)
3. Is there official censorship? (0–4 points)
4. Do journalists practice self-censorship? (0–4 points)
5. Is media coverage robust, and does it reflect a diversity of viewpoints? (0–4 points)
6. Are both local and foreign journalists able to cover the news freely? (0–6 points)
7. Are journalists or media outlets subject to extralegal intimidation or physical violence by state authorities or any other actor? (0–10 points)

Economic environment questions

1. To what extent are media owned or controlled by the government, and does this influence their diversity of views? (0–6 points)
2. Is private media ownership transparent, thus allowing consumers to judge the impartiality of the news? (0–3 points)
3. Is private media ownership highly concentrated, and does it influence diversity of content? (0–3 points)
4. Are there restrictions on the means of journalistic production and distribution? (0–4 points)
5. Does the state place prohibitively high costs on the establishment and operation of media outlets? (0–4 points)
6. Do the state or other actors try to control the media through allocation of advertising or subsidies? (0–3 points)
7. Do journalists receive payment from private or public sources whose design is to influence their journalistic content? (0–3 points)
8. Does the economic situation in a country accentuate media dependency on the state, political parties, big business, or other influential political actors for funding? (0–4 points)

Legal environment questions

1. Do the constitution or other basic laws contain provisions designed to protect freedom of the press and of expression, and are they enforced? (0–6 points)
2. Do the penal code, security laws, or any other laws restrict reporting, and are journalists punished under these laws? (0–6 points)
3. Are there penalties for libeling officials or the state, and are they enforced? (0–3 points)
4. Is the judiciary independent, and do courts judge cases concerning the media impartially? (0–3 points)

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<sup>120</sup> Freedom House, "Press Freedom index 2008. Methodology"

[http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana\\_page=348&year=2008](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana_page=348&year=2008) (accessed 15 April 2009)

5. Is freedom of information legislation in place, and are journalists able to make use of it? (0–2 points)
6. Can individuals or business entities legally establish and operate private media outlets without undue interference? (0–4 points)
7. Are media regulatory bodies, such as a broadcasting authority or national press or communications council, able to operate freely and independently? (0–2 points)
8. Is there freedom to become a journalist and to practice journalism, and can professional groups freely support journalists' rights and interests? (0–4 points)

## Section II

### Freedom House Freedom on the Net Index methodology questions<sup>121</sup>

#### A. Obstacles to Access (0–25 points)

1. Does the government block access to digital media or particular Web 2.0 applications permanently or during specific events? (0–6 points)

Does the government place limits on the amount of bandwidth that access providers can supply?  
Does the government use control over internet infrastructure (routers, switches, etc.) to limit connectivity?

Does the government centralize telecommunications infrastructure to facilitate control of content and surveillance?

Does the government block protocols and tools that allow for instant, person-to-person communication

(VOIP, instant messaging, text messaging, etc.), particularly those based outside the country (e.g., Facebook)?

Does the government block protocols and Web 2.0 applications that allow for information sharing or building online communities (video-sharing, social-networking sites, comment features, blogging platforms, etc.)?

Is there blocking of certain tools that enable circumvention of online filters and censors?

2. Do infrastructural limitations restrict access to internet and other ICTs? (0–6 points)

Does poor infrastructure (electricity, telecommunications, etc.) limit citizens' ability to receive internet in their homes and businesses?

Is there widespread public access to the internet through internet cafés, libraries, or other venues?

Is there a high degree of internet and mobile-phone penetration?

Is there a significant difference between internet penetration and access in rural versus urban areas?

Are broadband services available in addition to dial-up?

3. Is access to the internet and other ICTs prohibitively expensive or beyond reach of certain segments of the population? (0–3 points)

In command economies, does the state set the price of internet access prohibitively high?

Do financial constraints, such as high costs of telephone/internet services, make internet access prohibitively expensive for large segments of the population?

<sup>121</sup> Karlekar, Karit Deutsch and Cook, Sarah G. *Access and Control: A Growing Diversity of Threats to Internet Freedom, Freedom on the Net. A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media*, Freedom House (1 April 2009) :14-19

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=383&report=79&group=19>

Do low literacy rates (linguistic and “computer literacy”) limit citizens’ ability to use the internet?

To what extent are online software, news, and other information available in the main local languages spoken in the country?

☐ Each country is ranked on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being the best and 100 being the worst.

☐ A combined score of 0–30 is Free, 31–60 is Partly Free, and 61–100 is Not Free.

☐ Under each question, a lower number of points is allotted for a more free situation, while a higher

number of points is allotted for a less free environment.

☐ Unless otherwise indicated, the subquestions listed are meant to provide guidance as to what issues should be addressed under each methodology question, though not all will apply to every country.

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4. Are there legal, regulatory, or economic obstacles that prevent the existence of diverse business entities providing access to digital technologies? (0–6 points)

Note: Each of the following access providers are scored separately:

1a. Internet-service providers (ISPs) and other backbone internet providers (0–2 points)

1b. Cybercafes and other businesses that allow public internet access (0–2 points)

1c. Mobile-phone companies (0–2 points)

Is there a monopoly in place or do users have a choice among access providers, including some that are privately owned?

Is it legally possible to establish a private access provider or does the state place extensive legal or regulatory controls over the establishment of providers?

Are registration requirements for establishing an access provider unduly onerous or are they approved/rejected on partisan or prejudicial grounds?

Does the state place prohibitively high fees on the establishment and operation of access providers?

5. To what extent do national regulatory bodies overseeing digital technology operate in a free, fair, and independent manner? (0–4 points)

Are there explicit legal guarantees protecting the independence and autonomy of any regulatory body overseeing internet and other ICTs (exclusively or as part of a broader mandate) from political or commercial interference?

Is the appointment process transparent and representative of different stakeholders’ interests?

Are decisions taken by the regulatory body seen to be fair and apolitical and to take meaningful notice of comments from stakeholders in society?

Are efforts by access providers and other internet-related organizations to establish self-regulatory mechanisms permitted and encouraged?

Does the allocation of digital resources, such as domain names or IP addresses, on a national level by a government-controlled body create an obstacle to access?

B. Limits on Content (0–35 points)

1. To what extent does the state censor internet and other ICT content, particularly on political and social issues? (0–8 points)

Is there significant blocking or filtering of internet sites, web pages, blogs, data centers, or text messaging content, particularly those related to political and social topics?

Are other procedures—judicial or extralegal—used to order the removal of content from the internet, either prior to or after its publication?

Are certain contentious issues, such as official corruption, the role of the armed forces or the political opposition, human rights, religion, or foreign news sites systematically targeted for online censorship?

Do state authorities block or filter information and views from inside the country—particularly concerning human rights abuses, government corruption, and poor standards of living—to prevent them from reaching the outside world, for example by intercepting e-mail, text messages, etc.?

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2. To what extent is censorship of internet and ICT content transparent, proportional to the stated aims, and accompanied by an independent appeals process? (0–4 points)

Are there national laws, independent oversight bodies, and other procedures in place to ensure that decisions to censor content are legitimate and proportional to their stated aim?

Are state authorities transparent about what content is blocked or filtered (both at the level of public policy and at the moment the censorship occurs)?

Do state authorities block more types of content than they publicly declare?

Do independent avenues of appeal exist for those who find content they produced to have been subjected to censorship?

3. Do online journalists, commentators, and ordinary users practice self-censorship? (0–4 points)

Is there widespread self-censorship by online journalists, commentators, and ordinary users in both state-run online media and privately run websites?

Are there unspoken “rules” that prevent an online journalist or user from expressing certain opinions in ICT communication?

Is there avoidance of subjects that can clearly lead to censorship or harm to the author?

4. To what extent is the content of online sources of information determined or subtly manipulated by the government or a particular partisan interest? (0–6 points)

To what degree do the government or nonstate actors subject online news outlets to editorial direction or pressure?

Do authorities issue official guidelines or directives on coverage to online media outlets, blogs, etc.?

Are the funding, ownership, and management of websites transparent?

Do government officials or other actors bribe or otherwise put economic pressure on online journalists, bloggers, website owners, or service providers in order to influence the online content they produce or host?

Does the government employ, or require access providers to employ, individuals to post progovernment remarks in online bulletin boards and chat rooms?

5. To what extent are sources of information that are robust and reflect a diversity of viewpoints readily available to citizens, despite government efforts to limit access to certain content? (0–4 points)

Are people able to access a range of local and international news sources via the internet or text messages, despite efforts to restrict the flow of information?

Does the public have ready access to media outlets or websites that express independent, balanced views?

Does the public have ready access to sources of information that represent a range of political and social viewpoints, including those of vulnerable or marginalized groups in society?  
To what extent do users employ proxy servers and other methods to circumvent state censorship efforts?

6. To what extent are individuals able to use the internet and other ICTs as sources of information and tools for mobilization, particularly regarding political and social issues? (0–6 points)

Are internet sources (news websites, blogs, etc.) a primary medium of news dissemination for a large percentage of the population?

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To what extent does the online community cover political developments and provide scrutiny of government policies, official corruption, or actions by other powerful societal actors?

To what extent do online media outlets and blogs represent diverse interests within society, for example through websites run by community organizations or religious, ethnic, and other minorities?

To what extent are online communication or social-networking sites used as a means to organize politically, including for “real-life” activities?

Are mobile phones and other ICTs used as a medium of news dissemination and political organization, including on otherwise banned topics?

7. Are there economic constraints that negatively impact users’ ability to publish content online or online media outlets’ ability to remain financially sustainable? (0–3 points)

Is there a high degree of ownership concentration within the online services and advertising industry?

Are connections with government officials necessary for online media outlets to be economically viable?

Are users required to pay varying fees for different degrees of access and publication rights (i.e., are there limitations on “net neutrality”)?

Do users have access to free or low-cost blogging services, web hosts, etc. that allow them to make use of the internet to express their own views?

Does the state limit the ability of online media to accept advertising or investment, particularly from foreign sources, or does it limit advertisers from conducting business with disfavored online media?

C. Violations of User Rights (0–40 points)

1. To what extent do the constitution and other laws contain provisions designed to protect freedom of expression, including on the internet, and are they enforced? (0–6 points)

Does the constitution contain language that provides for freedom of speech and of the press generally?

Are there laws or legal decisions that specifically protect online modes of expression?

Are online journalists and bloggers accorded the same rights and protections given to print and broadcast journalists?

Is the judiciary independent and do the Supreme Court, attorney general, and other representatives of the higher judiciary support free expression?

Is there implicit impunity for private and/or state actors who commit crimes against online journalists, bloggers, or other citizens for their online activities?

2. Are there laws that assign criminal penalties or civil liability for online and ICT activities? (0–4 points)

Are there specific laws criminalizing online expression and activity such as posting or downloading information, sending an e-mail or text message, etc.? (Note: this excludes legislation addressing harmful content such as child pornography or activities such as malicious hacking.)

Do laws restrict the type of material that can be communicated in online expression or via text messages, such as communications about ethnic or religious issues, national security, or other sensitive topics?

Are restrictions of internet freedom narrowly defined, closely circumscribed, and proportional to the legitimate aim?

Are vaguely worded penal codes or security laws applied to internet-related or ICT activities?

Are there penalties for libeling officials or the state in online content?

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Can an online outlet based in another country be sued if its content can be accessed from within the country (i.e., do the laws encourage “libel tourism” and similar practices)?

3. Are individuals prosecuted or punished by other legal means for posting or accessing information on the internet or disseminating information via other ICTs, particularly on political and social issues? (0–6 points)

Are writers, commentators, or bloggers subject to imprisonment or other legal sanction as a result of posting material on the internet?

Are citizens subject to imprisonment, civil liability, or other legal sanction as a result of accessing or downloading material from the internet or for transmitting information via e-mail or text messages?

Does the lack of an independent judiciary hinder fair proceedings in ICT-related cases?

Are penalties for “irresponsible journalism” or “rumor mongering” applied widely?

Are online journalists, bloggers, or others regularly prosecuted, jailed, or fined for libel or defamation (including in cases of “libel tourism”)?

4. Does the government place restrictions on anonymous communication or require user registration? (0–4 points)

Are website owners, bloggers, or users in general required to register with the government?

Are users able to post comments online or purchase mobile phones anonymously, or must they use their real names or register with the government?

Are users prohibited from using encryption software to protect their communications?

Are there laws restricting the use of encryption and other security tools, or requiring that the government be given access to encryption keys and algorithms?

Can the government obtain information about users without legal process?

5. To what extent is there state surveillance of internet and ICT activities without judicial or other independent oversight, including systematic retention of user traffic data? (0–6 points)

Do the authorities regularly monitor websites, blogs, and chat rooms, or the content of e-mail and text messages?

Where the judiciary is independent, are there procedures in place for judicial oversight of surveillance, and to what extent are these followed?

Where the judiciary lacks independence, is there another independent oversight body in place to guard against abusive use of surveillance technology, and to what extent is it able to carry out its responsibilities without government interference?

Is content intercepted during internet surveillance admissible in court?

6. To what extent are providers of access to digital technologies required to aid the government in controlling and monitoring the access of their users? (0–6 points)

Note: Each of the following access providers are scored separately:

1a. Internet-service providers (ISPs) and other backbone internet providers (0–2 points)

1b. Cybercafes and other businesses that allow public internet access (0–2 points)

1c. Mobile-phone companies (0–2 points)

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Are access providers legally responsible for the content transmitted via the technology they supply, and are they prosecuted for opinions expressed by third parties via such technology?

Are access providers legally required to filter the content accessed or transmitted by their users?

Are access providers required to monitor their users and supply information about their digital activities to the government (through either technical interception or manual monitoring, such as user registration in cybercafes)?

Are access providers prosecuted for not doing so?

Does the state attempt to control access providers through less formal methods, such as codes of conduct?

7. Are bloggers, other ICT users, websites, or service providers subject to extralegal intimidation, physical violence, or technical attacks by state authorities or any other actor? (0–8 points)

Are individuals subject to murder, injury, harassment, threats, abduction, expulsion, arbitrary detention, or torture as a result of online activities, including membership in certain online communities?

Do armed militias, organized crime elements, insurgent groups, political or religious extremists, or other organizations regularly target online commentators?

Have online journalists, bloggers, or others fled the country or gone into hiding to avoid such action?

Are websites or blogs subject to targeted “technical violence,” such as service attacks, hacking, etc., as a result of their content?

Have cybercafes or property of online commentators been targets of physical attacks or the confiscation or destruction of property?

## APPENDIX II

### Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index Methodological Questions<sup>122</sup>

Estimated number of:

1. Journalists working in the country.
2. National news media outlets operating in the country.
3. Independent or opposition news media (not including media outlets in exile).

#### PHYSICAL ATTACKS, IMPRISONMENT AND DIRECT THREATS

How many journalists, media assistants or press freedom activists:

4. Were murdered?
  5. Were murdered, with the state involved?
  6. Were arrested or sent to prison (for more than two days)?
  7. Were briefly arrested (for a few hours)?
  8. Are currently in jail and serving a heavy sentence (more than a year) for a media-related offence?
  9. Were physically attacked or injured by representatives of the state (such as police, soldiers, political leaders or ruling party militants)?
  10. Were personally threatened with death by representatives of the state (such as police, soldiers, political leaders or ruling party militants)?
  11. Were physically attacked, injured or personally threatened with death by other people?
  12. In all the above cases, did the authorities do their best to punish those who seriously violated press freedom? Give examples of efforts they made and give a score from 0 (no efforts) to 5 (strong efforts).
  13. Did the authorities take steps to prevent those who seriously violated press freedom from being prosecuted (such as prematurely ending investigations, attempting to postpone a trial indefinitely)? Give examples.
- Were any journalists (yes/no):
14. Illegally imprisoned (no arrest warrant, in violation of maximum period of detention or without trial or court appearance)?
  15. Tortured or ill-treated? (distinguish between the two).
  16. Kidnapped or did any disappear?
  17. Forced to leave the country because of pressure?
- Were there (yes/no):
18. Armed militias or secret organizations regularly targeting journalists (such as terrorist action, bomb attacks, murders, kidnapping or direct threats)?
  19. Journalists who had to be accompanied by bodyguards or use security measures (such as bulletproof jackets or armored vehicles) while doing their work?

#### INDIRECT THREATS, PRESSURES AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Was/were there (yes/no):

20. Surveillance of journalists with the state involved (such as phone-tapping or being followed)?
21. Journalists from privately-owned media outlets forced to stop working because of harassment, threats or political pressure?

<sup>122</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "Questionnaire for Compiling the 2008 Worldwide Press Freedom Index" [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=29011](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=29011) (accessed 20 April 2009)



22. Problems of access to public or official information (such as refusal by officials or selection of information provided according to the media outlet's editorial line)?
23. Restricted access to any regions of the country (such as an official ban or strict official control)?
24. Foreign journalists deported or prevented from entering the country?

#### CENSORSHIP AND SELF-CENSORSHIP

25. How many media outlets were censored, seized or ransacked with the state involved or had their operating license withdrawn?  
Was there (yes/no):
26. An official prior censorship body systematically checking all media content? This does not mean a media regulatory body but a government or military office that inspects all content of public or privately-owned media and can order any item not to be published or broadcast.
27. Routine self-censorship in the privately-owned media? Give a score from 0 (none) to 5 (strong self-censorship).
28. News that was suppressed or delayed because of political or business pressure? Give examples.
29. Does the media report the negative side of government policies?
30. Does the media report the negative side of actions of powerful companies or their owners?
31. Does the media undertake investigative journalism?

#### PUBLIC MEDIA

- Was/were there (yes/no):
32. A state monopoly of TV?
33. A state monopoly of radio?
34. A state monopoly of printing or distribution facilities?
35. Government influence on the state-owned media's editorial line?
36. Unjustified sackings of journalists in the state-owned media?
37. Fair opposition access to state-owned media? Give a score from 0 (no access at all) to 5 (free and fair access)?

#### ECONOMIC, LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRESSURE

- Was/were there (yes/no):
38. Unjustified and improper use of fines, summonses or legal action against journalists or media outlets?
39. Cases of violating the privacy of journalistic sources (such as prosecution, search of premises or investigations)?
40. Use of withdrawal of advertising (government stops buying space from some papers/broadcasters or pressures private firms to boycott media outlets)?
41. Undue restriction of foreign investment in the media?
42. A licence needed to start up a newspaper or magazine?
43. Serious threats to news diversity, including narrow ownership of media outlets? Give a score from 0 (no threat) to 5 (very serious threat).
44. A government takeover of privately-owned media, either directly or through firms it controls?

## APPENDIX III

### List of articles and blogs studied for research

#### Kazakhstan

[www.neweurasia.net](http://www.neweurasia.net) (eng) (accessed 20 April 2009)

1. Arseny, *Statistical Truth*, posted on 3 March 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/03/statistical-truth/> (economic progress of Kazakhstan in comparison with other states) classified – miscellaneous, coded-0
2. Adam Keshner, , posted on 5 March 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/05/party-changes-name-not-too-well/> (strategy of the opposition), classified – government policy; coded – 2
3. Zhanna Zhukova, *Mittal Separates Kazakh Oil Assets*, posted on 13 March 2008 (discussion of holding company activity), classified – corruption, coded – 2
4. Arseny, *Turkish Saga Continued*, posted on 18 March 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/18/turkish-saga-continued/> (information about the pressure of the authorities on Turkish businessmen revealed), classified – corruption, coded – 2
5. Lena B-v, *Opposition to Launch Drive for Signatures Campaign*, posted on 19 March 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/19/opposition-to-launch-drive-for-signatures-campaign/> ( financing of opposition parties), classified – government policy, coded – 0
6. Arman, *Australian Bank Pulled Out of Kazakhstan*, posted on 20 March 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/20/australian-bank-pulled-out-of-kazakhstan/> (intentions of Australian bank in Kazakhstan), classified – international relations, coded – 0
7. Arseny, *China's Territorial Claims*, posted on 24 March 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/24/chinas-territorial-claims/> (overview of relations with China), classified – international relations, coded – 0
8. Askhat, *"Alash", a new magazine for the young patriots*, posted on 26 March 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/26/alash-a-new-magazine-for-the-young-patriots/> ( magazine published by youth in reaction to skinhead movement on Russia) classified – international relations, coded – 0
9. Arseny, *Second sentence to Aliiev, 20 years*, posted on 27 March 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/27/second-sentence-to-aliev-20-years-more/> (sentencing and a brief history of two anti-governmentalists) classified – government policy, coded – 0
10. Zhanna Zhukova, *Religious Communities Cautious Over Law*, posted on 12 June 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/12/religious-communities-cautious-over-law/> (restrictions on religious communities for national security, violation of human rights and freedom of conscience) classified – religion, coded-1
11. Adam Keshner, *Petrodollars, English Teachers*, posted on 16 June 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/16/petrodollars-english-teachers/> ( how authorities spend huge money on English teachers, when the rest of the population is below poverty line), classified – government policy, coded – 2

12. Adam Keshner, *General prosecutor reaches out to Austria*, posted on 17 June 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/17/general-prosecutor-reaches-out-to-austria/> ( extradition of Rahat Aliev, relations with Austria) classified - international relations, coded – 0
13. Lena B-va, *Sputnik lost*, posted on 18 June 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/18/sputnik-lost/> (reasons for loss of a satellite) classified – government policy, coded – 0
14. Ben, *Highway to prosperity*, posted on 22 June 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/22/highway-to-prosperity/> (trade corridor infrastructure project with China) classified -international relations, coded – 0
15. Zhanna Zhukova, *Freedom House blames Kazakhstan*, posted on 23 June 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/23/freedom-house-blames-kazakhstan/> (authoritarian capitalism and effects of Russia) classified -international relations, coded – 1
16. Neweurasia, *US Representatives: “Nazarbayev for Nobel Peace Prize!”*, posted on 27 June 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/27/us-representatives-nazarbayev-for-nobel-peace-prize/>( sarcastic discussion of the nomination of the president for Nobel prize for not using nuclear weapons)classified- image of authorities, coded – 1
17. Arman, *No Elections, President Says*, posted on 4 September 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/09/04/no-elections-president-says/> (president’s decision of no early parliamentary elections), classified – government policies, coded- 1
18. Adam Keshner, *Shell + KMG*, posted on 22 September 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/09/22/shell-kmg/> (organization of joint venture between Dutch Shell and Kazakh KMG), classified -international relations, coded – 0
19. Mursya, *Kazakhstan: National Search Engine Debated by the Bloggers*, posted on 18 December 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/12/18/kazakhstan-national-search-engine-debated-by-the-bloggers/> (possibility of opening KZ search engine, government policies), classified – government policies, coded-1
20. Ben, *That’s the spirit*, posted on 28 December 2008, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2008/12/28/thats-the-spirit/> (diamond-encrusted credit card launched by Eurasian bank) classified – miscellaneous, coded- 0
21. Adam Keshner, *Banking news update*, posted on 2 March 2009, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/02/banking-news-update/> (nationalization of banks), classified – government policies, coded – 2
22. Arseny, *Who will get BTA?* posted on 4 March 2009, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/04/who-will-get-bta/> (nationalization of BTA bank) classified – government policies, coded – 2
23. Arseny, *Blogosphere’s crisis chronicles*, posted on 11 March 2009, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/11/blogospheres-crisis-chronicles/> ( overview of the effects of fin crisis on economy of KZ) classified – crisis, coded – 0

24. Arseny, *Filtering of the blogs expands*, posted on 18 March 2009, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/18/filtering-of-the-blogs-expands/> (control of blogosphere, LiveJournal, etc. in Kazakhstan), classified – media, coded – 2
25. Arseny, *Underdog billionaires*, posted on 19 March 2009, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/19/underdog-billionaires/> (overview of the richest people of KZ) classified - image of authorities, coded – 0
26. Arseny, *Blogs serve the politics*, posted on 25 March 2009, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/25/blogs-serve-the-politics/> (use of blogs by politicians) classified – media, coded – 1
27. Arseny, *Career, Amended by Crisis*, posted on 31 March 2009, available at <http://kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/31/career-amended-by-crisis/> (rise and power of a businesswoman), classified - image of authorities, coded-2

[www.neweurasia.net](http://www.neweurasia.net) (rus) (accessed 17 April 2009)

28. Marso, *Дело о рейдерстве становится на контроль* [The case of raiding is put under control] posted on 4 March 2008, available at <http://ru.kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/?p=520> (discussion of how cases of corruption are investigated) classified – corruption, coded – 2
29. Gulnaz, *Хаос с общественным транспортом* [Chaos with public transportation] posted on 17 March 2008, available at <http://ru.kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/?p=527> (government in Karaganda, public transport operation failures) classified – government policies, coded -2
30. Ksenia, *Как разворовывают Экибастуз* [How Ekibastuz is plundered] posted on 19 March 2008, available at <http://ru.kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/?p=532> (description of different cases of stealing), classified – corruption, coded – 2
31. Slagamova, *На пересечении Абая и Абая...* [On the crossing of Abay and Abay...] posted on 21 June 2008, available at <http://ru.kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/?p=595> (changing street names), classified – government policies, coded -2
32. Adam Keshner, *Азартные игры* [Gambling] posted on 4 September 2008, available at <http://ru.kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/?p=634> (state policies on gambling) classified – government policies, coded -2
33. Adam Keshner, *Разоблачения, аресты...* [Denunciations, arrests...] posted on 8 September 2008, available at <http://ru.kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/?p=636> (reporting on denunciation of officials) classified – corruption, coded – 2
34. Adam Keshner, *МВД завело дело на политиков* [Ministry of Internal Affairs files a suit on politicians], posted on 24 September 2008, available at <http://ru.kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/?p=643> (oppositionists are accused in covering up a criminal) classified – government policies, coded -2
35. Abat Nagimetov, *Война - не мать родна* [War is not good] posted on 29 September 2008, available at <http://ru.kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/?p=646> (unauthorized use of author's name online) classified – media, coded -2
36. Marat, *Про Нурбанк и Алиева* [About Nurbank and Mr. Aliev] posted on 30 September 2008, available at <http://ru.kazakhstan.neweurasia.net/?p=647> (how ownership of the bank affects price of its stocks) classified – miscellaneous, coded -2

## For December 2008 and March 2009 blogs in Russian are dubbed in English

### Kyrgyzstan

[www.centrasia.ru](http://www.centrasia.ru) (rus) (accessed 18 April 2009)

- 1) Z. Maminova ([maminova\\_zu@rambler.ru](mailto:maminova_zu@rambler.ru)) *Минпром Киргизии защищает бастующих рабочих Майлуу-Суйского электролампового завода от произвола российского криминального мини-олигарха В.Столповских* [Ministry of Industry of Kyrgyzstan protects the workers of the Mayлуу-Suy electric bulb plant on strike from tyranny of Russian criminal mini-oligarch V. Stolpovskih] posted on 4 March 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1204635060> classified – miscellaneous, coded -0
- 2) Dyikan Muraev, *Угроза таджикской экспансии в Кыргызстан* [Threat of Tajik expansion to Kyrgyzstan], posted on 14 March 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1205496120> (reasons for Tajik expansion from the eyes of local resident) classified – international relations, coded -2
- 3) Ashirbek Mambetaliev ([mambetaliev\\_a@mail.ru](mailto:mambetaliev_a@mail.ru)), *Нужно ли Кыргызстану новое агентство по борьбе с коррупцией?* [Does Kyrgyzstan need a new agency for fighting corruption?], posted on 26 June 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1214478720> (criticism of reform of authority agencies), classified – corruption, coded -2
- 4) Damira Zainitdinova ([dama\\_59@mail.ru](mailto:dama_59@mail.ru)), *В Бишкекском "Манасе" задержана сигаретная контрабанда, летевшая в Ангию* [ In Bishkek's "Manas" cigarette contraband that was heading to England is detained], posted on 2 December 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1228234680>, (illegal cigarettes for contraband are registered on MFA of Kyrgyzstan), classified – corruption, coded -0
- 5) Damira Zainitdinova ([dama\\_59@mail.ru](mailto:dama_59@mail.ru)), *МИД Киргизии как... основной экспортер товаров народного потребления* [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan as...main exporter of public consumption goods], posted on 3 December 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1228321380>, (discussion of cigarette contraband by MFA of Kyrgyzstan), classified – corruption, coded -2
- 6) Oleg Pankratov ([217140@rambler.ru](mailto:217140@rambler.ru)), *На веб-портале Правда.kg заработал интернет-форум* [Web-portal Pravda.kg started a new internet-forum], posted on 18 March 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1237409880> (information and link of the forum), classified – media, coded -0
- 7) Shadykan Imangaziev ([imangaziev@inbox.ru](mailto:imangaziev@inbox.ru)), *Секта "Нурчулар" в Киргизии. "Ислам должен быть объявлен государственной религией Турции". Но только ли Турции?* ["Nurchular" sect in Kyrgyzstan. "Islam should be recognized as the state religion of Turkey." Yet of Turkey only?] posted on 26 March 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1238081940> (discussion of religious movement in Kyrgyzstan), classified – religion, coded -2
- 8) Urkash Mamytov ([golden\\_man@inbox.ru](mailto:golden_man@inbox.ru)), *Невезучий Кыргызстан "созрел", похоже, для новой революции. Увы "не тюльпановой"* [Unlucky Kyrgyzstan seems to be "ripe" for a new revolution. Alas not for "tulip" one], posted on 28 March 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1238235480> (failures and corruption of present government), classified – government policies, coded -2

- 9) Zuleyha Sultanova ([sultan\\_zu@inbox.ru](mailto:sultan_zu@inbox.ru)) *Арба государственного управления Киргизии (мини-эссе) [Bullock cart of the government of Kyrgyzstan (mini-essay)]*, posted on 29 March 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1238317020> (small critical essays about different spheres of activity of the government), classified – government policies, coded – 2

[www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org) (eng) (accessed 19 April 2009)

- 1) Arslan Mamatov (pseudonym), *Kyrgyz nationwide protests to bear an Islamic stamp*, posted on 4 December 2008, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav120408a.shtml>, (emergence of Muslim Union in Kyrgyzstan), classified – religion, coded – 1
- 2) Arslan Mamatov (pseudonym), *Corrupt traffic cops to blame for road deaths?* posted on 8 December 2008, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav120808.shtml> (criticism of road police), classified – corruption, coded – 2
- 3) Arslan Mamatov (pseudonym), *Water shortage ratchets up social tensions* posted on 22 December 2008, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav122208.shtml>, classified – energy, coded – 1
- 4) Arslan Mamatov (pseudonym), *NGOs assail proposed legal changes as “threat to democracy”* posted on 10 March 2009, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav031009a.shtml> (on amendments that would hinder international distribution), classified – government policies, coded – 2
- 5) Abdujalil Abdurasulov, *Victims still seeking justice for infant HIV outbreak*, posted on 12 March 2009, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav031209a.shtml> (criticism of medicare), classified – medicare, coded – 2
- 6) Umid Erkinov (pseudonym), *Is China a hidden power in Bishkek?* posted on 18 March 2009, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav031809.shtml> (increasing role of China in Kyrgyzstan), classified – international relations, coded – 1
- 7) Umid Erkinov (pseudonym), *High gas cost could become a political issue*, posted on 25 March 2009, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav032509b.shtml>, classified – international relations, coded – 1

[www.neweurasia.net](http://www.neweurasia.net) (eng) (accessed 23 April 2009)

- 1) Asel, *Kyrgyzstan, commodities market and WTO*, posted on 2 March 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/02/kyrgyzstan-commodities-market-and-wto/> (discussion of Kyrgyzstan’s membership in WTO), classified – international relations, coded – 1
- 2) Akbalta, *Kyrgyzstan ignores Taiwan*, posted on 9 March 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/09/kyrgyzstan-ignores-taiwan/> classified – international relations, coded – 2



- 3) Ayan Dane, *Ban on alcohol and tobacco advertising*, posted on 14 March 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/14/ban-on-alcohol-and-tobacco-advertising/> (parliament wants to ban ads of alcohol) classified – government policies, coded – 1
- 4) Asel, *Kyrgyzstan has become an MCC client*, posted on 14 March 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/15/kyrgyzstan-has-become-an-mcc-client/> (Kyrgyzstan enter Millenium Challenge Corporation), classified – international relations, coded – 2
- 5) Elena Skochilo, *Brother of the President Became His Body-Guard Brother of the President Became His Body-Guard*, posted on 4 June 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/04/brother-of-the-president-became-his-body-guard/> (acts of the government and its image), classified – image of authorities, coded – 2
- 6) Elena Skochilo, *Bakiev met Medvedev*, posted on 7 June 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/07/bakiev-met-medvedev/> classified – international relations, coded – 0
- 7) Oscar, *Let's start a new education system for the future of Kyrgyzstan*, posted on 21 June 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/21/let%E2%80%99s-start-a-new-education-system-for-the-future-of-kyrgyzstan/> , classified – education, coded – 2
- 8) Elena Skochilo, *Bishkek Hosts a Meeting of SCO Culture Ministers*, posted on 23 June 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/23/bishkek-hosts-a-meeting-of-sco-culture-ministers/> classified – international relations, coded – 0
- 9) Elena Skochilo, *Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization Visited Bishkek* , posted on 26 June 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/26/secretary-general-of-the-collective-security-treaty-organization-visited-bishkek/> , classified – international relations, coded – 0
- 10) Elena Skochilo, *New Rules of Kyrgyz Orthography*, posted on 27 June 2008, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2008/06/27/new-rules-of-kyrgyz-orthography/> classified – education, coded – 0

### No entries in September and December

- 8) Maksud, *University or Marriage*, posted on 2 March 2009, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/02/university-or-marriage/> (education in th city Osh), classified – education, coded – 2
- 9) Elena Skochilo, *No Rest For the Kyrgyz Internet*, posted on 2 March 2009, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/02/no-rest-for-the-kyrgyz-internet/> (government control of the media) classified – media, coded – 2
- 10) Gavin, *Does President Bakiyev know what he really wants?* posted on 5 March 2009, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/05/does-president-bakiyev-know-what-he-really-wants/> (discussion over Manas airbase and relations with the US), classified – international relations, coded – 2

- 11) Elena Skochilo, *Three events of the week*, posted on 7 March 2009, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/07/three-events-of-the-week/>, classified – media, coded – 1
  - 12) Elena Skochilo, *The Opposition's Smoking Gun*, posted on 14 March 2009, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/14/the-loss-of-the-kyrgyz-opposition/> (discussion of the imprisonment of the former foreign affairs minister) classified – government policies, coded – 2
  - 13) Elena Skochilo, *A Head for the Renew of the Kyrgyzstan*, posted on 27 March 2009, available at <http://kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/2009/03/27/a-head-for-the-renew-of-the-kyrgyzstan/> ( image of president, government) classified – image of authorities, coded – 0
- [www.neweurasia.net](http://www.neweurasia.net) (rus)
- 14) Casio, СДПК “попадает” на 16 с половиной миллионов сомов [SDPK “is caught” on 16,5 millions of soms], posted on 10 March 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=373> (to be paid for activity of one its members), classified – government policies, coded – 2
  - 15) Casio, Правый руль - “крайний” ? [ Is the right-hand stirring to be blamed?], posted on 11 March 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=374> (government policy concerning the type of cars imported), classified – government policies, coded – 2
  - 16) Asel, Зачем НАТО Кыргызстан? [Why does NATO need Kyrgyzstan?], posted on 23 March 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=379> classified – international relations, coded – 0
  - 17) Asel, Увидеть Германию и ...? [To see Germany and to...?], posted on 23 March 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=380> (discussion of the president's behavior), classified -image of authorities, coded - 2
  - 18) Bektour Iskender, “Бакиев здоров”, – говорит пресс-служба [“Bakiev is healthy,” – reports press-service], posted on 24 March 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=381> (Rumors about Bakiev's death in Germany) classified – media, coded – 1
  - 19) Mirsulzhan, Филантропический разум Бакиева [Bakiev's philanthropic mind], posted on 9 June 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=426> (proposal of Bakiev to create a global social fund), classified - image of authorities, coded -2
  - 20) Mirsulzhan, Несовременная инновация соцфонда (pension fund) critical [Non-modern innovation of social fund], posted on 10 June 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=427> (innovations in pension fund structure), classified - miscellaneous, coded -2
  - 21) Elena Skochilo, Милиция обыскала офис оппозиционной газеты “Де-факто” [Police searched the office of the oppositional newspaper “De-facto”], posted on 16 June 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=430> , classified – government policies, coded – 2
  - 22) Elena Skochilo, США намерены расширить и укрепить военную базу “Манас” [USA intend to expand and strengthen military base “Manas”], posted on 18 June 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=431>, classified – international relations, coded – 0



- 23) Elena Skochilo, Отец погибшего журналиста обвинил в убийстве своего сына президента Узбекистана [ The father of the dead journalist accused president of Uzbekistan in murder of his son], posted on 21 June 2008, available at <http://ru.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=433> (letter to president), classified – media, coded – 0

**No entries in September and December  
March 2009 (all the news are dubbed in English)**

### **Tajikistan**

[www.centrasia.ru](http://www.centrasia.ru) (rus) (accessed 25 April 2009)

- 1) Maysara Kalonova, *Таджикистанские женщины - зачем мы рождаем детей?* [Tajik women: Why are we giving birth to children?], posted on 20 June 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1213972620> (problems of treatment of children in Tajik families), classified –status of women and children , coded -2
- 2) Sangak Sanginov, “Этнические чистки» на таджикский лад [“Ethnic cleanings” in Tajik style], posted on 5 December 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1228470600> (how the government views Uzbekistan, failures), classified – international relations, coded – 2
- 3) Mahamadtoir Zukhurov, *Мадам, мсье, приготовьте деньги – мы на таджикской границе* [Ladies and Gentlmen, have your money ready we are on the Tajik border], posted on 8 December, 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1228751820> (poverty and corruption in the borderline areas), classified - corruption, coded – 2
- 4) Khariton Sherbakov, *Исламизация Таджикистана: прошлое, настоящее, будущее* [History of Islam in Tajikistan: past, present and future], posted on 3 March, 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1236082740> (History of Islam in CA, history of Tajik Islam Revival party), classified - religion, coded – 0
- 5) Saidshamol Tajiddinov, *Чуть-чуть беременные. Таджикские женщины рожают без отцов* [A bit pregnant: Tajik women give birth without husbands], posted on 8 March, 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1236488280> (what happens to women that are left by labor migrants at home), classified – status of women, coded –1
- 6) Musamirsho Gulamshoev, *Дети на продажу. Из-за нищеты и безвыходного положения таджички вынуждены продавать даже своих детей* [Kids for sale. Tajik women have to sell their kids cause of poverty], posted on 9 March, 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1236615900> (statistics, prices, facts about kids sale, state authorities do not care), classified - poverty, coded – 1
- 7) Lutfi Zabiroy, *Частное обучение в Таджикистане – потянем ли?* [ Private education in Tajikistan: will we manage it?], posted on 12 March, 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1236842460> (how and why private schools are organized, how they operate), classified - education, codes –2
- 8) Grigoriy Volynin, *Таджикистану предстоит принять "непростые практические решения"* [Tajikistan will have to take uneasy practical decisions],

posted n 6 March, 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1237183140> ( how Tajikistan copes with financial crisis, borrowing and investments from int'l organizations and cooperation with neighbors), classified – poverty/financial crisis, coded –1

- 9) Khusan Kholboev, *Рельсы и шпалы "Бекабада". Кто поможет голодным таджикским пограничникам?* [ *Who will help hungry Tajik border guards?* ], posted on 31 March, 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1238485800> (corruption on borderline), classified - corruption, coded – 2

[www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org) (eng) (accessed 1 May 2009)

- 1) Kambiz Arman (pseudonym), *Tajikistan: IMF catches Dushanbe in creative accounting scandal*, posted on 10 March 2008, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav031008.shtml>, (Tajikistan provided fraudulent information about its financial situation to IMF to get credits), classified –international relations, coded – 2
- 2) Konstantin Parshin (freelance journalist based in Tajikistan), *Tajikistan: Government harbors Hydro-Power dreams*, posted on 4 June, 2008, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav060408.shtml> (Situation about Roghun Hydro-Power station), classified - energy, coded – 0
- 3) Konstantin Parshin (freelance journalist based in Tajikistan), *Tajikistan: Dushanbe braces for shock, as remittances set to fall of cliff*, posted on 12 December, 2008, available at <http://eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav121608.shtml> (cut of quotas of labor migrants in Russia, financial crisis), classified - international relations, code – 0

[www.neweurasia.net](http://www.neweurasia.net) (eng) (accessed 26 April 2009)

- 1) Vadim, *Electricity crisis solved in Dushanbe*, posted on 3 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/electricity-crisis-solved-in-dushanbe/> , classified - energy, code – 0
- 2) Vadim, *Hunger to replace energy crisis*, posted on 4 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/hunger-to-replace-energy-crisis/> (government actions about the energy and hunger crisis), classified – government policies, code – 0
- 3) Vadim, *Timid outshoot of Tajik opposition*, posted on 14 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/timid-outshoot-of-tajik-opposition/> classified – government policies, code – 2
- 4) Vadim, *Rally in Khorog*, posted on 17 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/rally-in-khorog/> classified – government policies, code – 0
- 5) Vadim, *Another rally in Khorog to be organized by SDPT*, posted on 18 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/another-rally-in-khorog-to-be-organized-by-sdpt/> classified – government policies, code – 0
- 6) Vadim, *Who killed the Russian journalist?* posted on 30 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/media-and-internet/who-killed-the-russian-journalist/> classified – international relations, code – 1
- 7) Vadim, *Execution of migrants by Russian neo-nazists recorded on video was real*,

- posted on 5 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/execution-of-migrants-by-russian-neo-nazists-recorded-on-video-was-real/>, classified – international relations, code – 0
- 24) Vadim, *Food Crisis in Tajikistan*, posted on 10 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/food-crisis-in-tajikistan/>, classified – government policies, code – 2
- 25) Vadim, *Odd protest in Dushanbe*, posted on 13 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/odd-protest-in-dushanbe/>, classified – government policies, code – 2
- 26) Vadim, *Discontent in Khorog*, posted on 19 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/discontent-in-khorog/>, classified – government policies, code – 2
- 27) Vadim, *The conflict resolved in Khorog*, posted on 23 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/the-conflict-resolved-in-khorog/>, classified – government policies, code – 0
- 28) Vadim, *Electricity and damned cut-offs*, posted on 2 September 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/electricity-and-damned-cut-offs/>, classified – energy, code – 1
- 29) Vadim, *Tajikistan independence and dependence*, posted on 10 September 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/tajikistan-independence-and-dependence/>, classified – international relations, code – 2
- 30) Vadim, *Only nine hours of life*, posted on 12 September 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/electricity-only-nine-hours-of-life/>, classified – energy, code – 2
- 31) Vadim, *Electricity crisis everywhere except Dushanbe*, posted on 20 September 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/electricity-crisis-everywhere-except-dushanbe/>, classified – energy, code – 2
- 32) Vadim, *Rahmon in UN*, posted on 25 September 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/rahmon-in-un/>, classified – image of authorities, coded – 2
- 33) Vadim, *Real number of people to face the food crisis*, posted on 28 September 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/real-number-of-people-to-face-the-food-crisis/>, classified – international relations, code – 2
- 34) Vadim, *Santa Clause is in the Republic of Tajikistan*, posted on 26 December 2008, available at <http://tajikistan.neweurasia.net/2008/12/26/santa-clause-is-in-the-republic-of-tajikistan/> (Image of the president Rahmon), classified – image of authorities, coded – 2

#### Nothing for March 2009 (one article that didn't match the criteria)

[www.neweurasia.net](http://www.neweurasia.net) (rus) (accessed 27 April 2009)

- 35) Rahmon, *Таджикская пресса. Она бездыханна!* [*Tajik press. It is breathless!*] posted on 11 March 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=209>, classified – media, coded – 2

- 36) Aminov Khurshed, *МВФ потребовал от Таджикистана вернуть деньги... Фонд обманули [IMF demanded Tajikistan to return the money...the Fund was fooled]*, posted on 13 March 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=210> classified – corruption, coded – 2
- 37) Rahmon, *Душанбе – Ташкент – Душанбе: нерешенные вопросы! [Dushanbe-Tashkent-Dushanbe: unresolved issues!]* posted on 15 March 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=211> (relations with Uzbekistan, airways) classified – international relations, coded – 2
- 38) Ravshan, *Таджикская пресса не мертва, она просто больна... душевно [Tajik press is not dead, it is ill...mentally]* posted on 16 March 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=214> (criticism of the Tajik mainstream press) classified – media, coded – 2
- 39) Rahmon, *В разгар энергокризиса зимой 2008 Таджикистан экспортировал производимую электроэнергию - данные Госкомстата [In the heat of the energy crisis Tajikistan exported produced electric energy – State Statistical Committee data]*, posted on 23 March 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=217> (statistics about use and sale of energy), classified – energy, coded – 2
- 40) Ravshan, *Таджикистан-Иран-Афганистан... Куда идем? Зачем? [Tajikistan-Iran-Afghanistan... Where do we go? What for?]* posted on 29 March 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=219> (language politics, should Tajik language be made closer to Iranian or Afghan) classified – miscellaneous, coded – 2
- 41) Aminov Khurshed, *Энергокризис? Да. Но впереди светлое будущее... Ждуйте!!! [Energy crisis? Yes. But bright future is ahead... Wait!]* posted on 14 June 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=248> (energy crisis, Rogun HES, relations with Russia and UZ), classified – international relations, coded – 2
- 42) Mirsulzhan, *Привлечение студентов к сбору хлопка – умалишенное издевательство государством [Attraction of the students to the cotton-picking – mad humiliation by the government]*, posted on 30 June 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=255> (forcing student and farmers to pick cotton, classified – government policies, coded – 2
- 43) Vadim, *Отключение электричества – беда дехкан [Electricity shut downs – peasants' trouble]*, posted on 16 September 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=264> Отключение электричества – беда дехкан (how energy crisis affects peasants' enterprise), classified – government policy, coded – 2
- 44) Vadim, *После пожара насос не нужен! [A pump is not needed after the fire]*, posted on 20 September 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=266> classified – energy, coded -2
- 45) Vadim, *Предупреждение «Старшего Брата» [“Big Brother's” warning]*, ], posted on 12 December 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=285> note of protest to Tajik MFA from Russia about articles on labor migrants treatment) classified – international relations , coded -2
- 46) Vadim, *Ответ таджикской прессы «старшему брату» [Response of the Tajik press to the “Big Brother”]*, posted on 25 December 2008, available at

<http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=286> (response to letter from Russia to Tajik MFA) classified – media , coded -2

- 47) Vadim, *Наши мигранты в России тоже не без греха*[*Our migrants in Russia are not sinless*] posted on 30 December 2008, available at <http://ru.tajikistan.neweurasia.net/?p=287> (crimes committed by Tajik citizens in Russia) classified – international relations , coded -2

## Turkmenistan

Nothing on [www.CentrAsia.ru](http://www.CentrAsia.ru)

Nothing on [www.EurasiaNet.org](http://www.EurasiaNet.org)

[www.NewEurasia.net](http://www.NewEurasia.net) (eng) (accessed 28 April 2009)

- 1) Lunaric, *Simplifying the complicated*, posted on 3 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/simplifying-the-complicated/> ( state policy and exchange rate) classified – government policies, coded-1
- 2) Lunaric, *Calik is still there*, posted on 4 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/calik-is-still-there/> classified – image of authorities, coded-2
- 3) Maciula, *The End of Prosecutor General's Career*, posted on 4 March 2008, available at <http://turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/04/the-end-of-prosecutor-general%e2%80%99s-career/> classified – image of authorities, coded-2
- 4) Maciula, *Cockroaches and websites' credibility*, posted on 7 March 2008, available at <http://turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/07/cockroaches-and-websites%e2%80%99-credibility/> classified – media, coded-2
- 5) Lunaric, *Presidential Orders Neglected?* posted on 10 March 2008, available at <http://turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/10/presidential-orders-neglected/> (execution of presidential order-fixing the bridge), classified – government policies, coded-2
- 6) Maciula, *A breakthrough in the Turkmen-Azerbaijani talks*, posted on 12 March 2008, available at <http://turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/12/a-breakthrough-in-the-turkmen-azerbaijani-talks/> classified – international relations, coded – 0
- 7) Lunaric, *Presidential Orders Neglected? II*, posted on 13 March 2008, available at <http://turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/2008/03/13/presidential-orders-neglected-ii/> classified – media, coded-2
- 8) Maciula, *The Meeting of Two Khans*, posted on 13 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/the-meeting-of-two-khans/> (comparing Uzbek and Turkmen presidents to khans) classified – image of authorities, coded – 2
- 9) Maciula, *A Central Asian Gas OPEC*, posted on 14 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/business-and-economics/a-central-asian-gas-opec/> classified – international relations, coded – 2
- 10) Maciula, *Afghan warlord accused of massacres of the Turkmen*, posted on 19 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/afghan-warlord-accused->



[of-massacres-of-the-turkmen/](#) (relations with Afghanistan, Turkmen minorities)  
classified – international relations, coded – 0

- 11) Maciula, *Shall we get to know Turkmenistan's greatest secret?* posted on 20 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/shall-we-get-to-know-turkmenistan%e2%80%99s-greatest-secret/> classified – government policies, coded-2
- 12) Maciula, *Better times for businessmen?* posted on 22 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/business-and-economics/better-times-for-businessmen/> classified – government policies, coded-2
- 13) Maciula, *Fewer families with many children in Turkmenistan*, posted on 26 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/fewer-families-with-many-children-in-turkmenistan/> (reasons for less children in families in Turkmenistan, economic, social issues) classified – miscellaneous, coded – 2
- 14) Maciula, *A courtesy call?* posted on 28 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/a-courtesy-call/> (Relations with Turkey, energy resources) classified – international relations, coded – 1
- 15) Peter, *Caspian Quandary*, posted on 7 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/business-and-economics/caspian-quandary/> (Turkmen gas trade relations) classified – international relations, coded – 0
- 16) Peter, *Tightening the Net*, posted on 7 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/media-and-internet/tightening-the-net/> (Internet policies), classified – media, coded – 2
- 17) Peter, *Turkmenistan Jails Another Dissident*, posted on 25 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/turkmenistan-jails-another-dissident/> classified – government policies, coded-2

#### **Nothing for September 2008, December 2008 and March 2009**

[www.neweurasia.net](http://www.neweurasia.net) (rus) (accessed 30 April 2009)

- 18) Lunaric, *Наступление Германии на Туркменистан* [Germany's coming to Turkmenistan], posted on 8 March 2008, available at <http://ru.turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/?p=106>, classified – international relations, coded – 0
- 19) Abdulgamid, *Туркменский Facebook – Мертвая Зона* [Turkmen Facebook – dead zone], posted on 20 March 2008, available at <http://ru.turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/?p=114>, classified – media, coded – 2
- 20) Abdulgamid, *Сенсационное исследование* [Sensational research], posted on 26 March 2008, available at <http://ru.turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/?p=118>, classified – government policies, coded-2
- 21) Abdulgamid, *Щедра на хакеров туркменская земля* [Turkmen soil is generous on hackers], posted on 27 March 2008, available at <http://ru.turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/?p=119> (hacker attacks by Turkmens) classified – media, coded – 2
- 22) Abdulgamid, *Ухудшение туркмено – иранских отношений* [Worsening of the Turkmen-Iranian relations], posted on 27 March 2008, available at <http://ru.turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/?p=120> (energy, relations with Iran), classified – international relations, coded – 2

## No records for June, September and December and March 2009

### Uzbekistan

[www.centrasia.ru](http://www.centrasia.ru) (rus) (accessed 4 May 2009)

- 1) Zamira Razakova, *В Ташкент пришла весна... Почему я рада назначению госпожи Г.Каримовой* [Spring has come to Tashkent, why am I happy about appointment of Ms. G. Karimova], posted on 30 March 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1206888420> (criticism of the minister of finances Azimov, delay in pensions and allowances), classified – government policies, coded – 2
- 2) Askar Khodiev, *Инцидент в Чепе. Опять стрельба на таджикско-узбекской границе* [Incident in Chep. Shootings on the Tajik-Uzbek border again], posted on 21 September 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1221966300> classified – international relations, coded – 1
- 3) Toshtemir Burkhonov, *Кормушки... на постах. Как попасть в Шахимардан* [Feedboxes on the check points. How to get to Shahimardan], posted on 22 September 2008, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1222105440> (corruption on the border check point between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan), classified – corruption, coded – 2
- 4) Sadi Ayni, *Финансовая педагогика в Самаркандском медицинском институте* [Financial Pedagogy in Samarqand Medical Institute], posted on 12 March 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1236838080> (corruption in education system, costs of entry exams), classified – corruption, coded – 2
- 5) Amanullo Ubaidulloev, *"Бремя девственности". Такого кина нам не надо* ["Burden of Virginity" we do not need such movies], posted on 18 March 2009, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1237370280> (criticism of the movie about a cultural tradition and the role of girl's virginity in Uzbek marriages), classified – miscellaneous, coded – 2

No articles on [www.EurasiaNet.org](http://www.EurasiaNet.org)

[www.Neweurasia.net](http://www.Neweurasia.net) (eng) (accessed 5 May 2009)

- 1) Libertad, *Uzbekistan allows US to use its airbase in Termez*, posted on 7 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/297/> , classified – international relations, coded – 0
- 2) Libertad, *Uzbek government to free GM joint venture from taxes*, posted on 8 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/uzbek-government-to-free-gm-joint-venture-from-taxes/> classified – government policies, coded – 0
- 3) Mansurhon, *Welcome, Navruz! The Ocassion of the People of the Happiest Country in the World!!!* posted on 22 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/culture-and-history/welcome-navruz-the-ocassion-of-the-people-of-the-happiest-country-in-the-world/> (president's speech for Navruz holiday), classified – image of authorities, coded – 2

- 4) Libertad, *Islamic trends in Fergana valley*, posted on 23 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/islamic-trends-in-fergana-valley/> classified – religion, coded – 2
- 5) Mansurhon, *Where are you now, ladies of pleasure?* posted on 23 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/culture-and-history/where-are-you-now-ladies-of-pleasure/> (prostitution in Uzbekistan), classified – corruption, coded – 2
- 6) Mansurhon, *A Red Herring To Hide Failures...* posted on 26 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/a-red-herring-to-hide-failures/> (government policies concerning the levels of income and pensions) classified – government policies, coded – 2
- 7) Mansurhon, *Center for Political Studies – caprice of President's daughter or a real think-tank?* posted on 28 March 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/center-for-political-studies-%e2%80%93-caprice-of-president%e2%80%99s-daughter-or-a-real-think-tank/> (president's daughter sets up a think tank), classified – image of authorities, coded – 2
- 8) Libertad, *Water shortages in Kyrgyzstan can cause serious problems in Uzbekistan*, posted on 5 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/water-shortages-in-kyrgyzstan-can-cause-serious-problems-in-uzbekistan/> (effects of water deficit in Kyrgyzstan on Uzbekistan), classified – energy, coded – 0
- 9) Mansurhon, *Was the conference really international?* posted on 12 June 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/media-and-internet/was-the-conference-really-international/> classified – media, coded – 2
- 10) Libertad, *September 4 - Alisher Saipov's birthday*, posted on 4 September 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/category/uzbekistan/page/3/> (murder of a journalist), classified – media, coded – 1
- 11) Libertad, *Former Uzbek SNB officer seeks political asylum in UK*, posted on 7 September 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/former-uzbek-snb-officer-seeks-political-asylum-in-uk/>, classified – government policies, coded – 2
- 12) Libertad, *Child labor is banned, but what about students' labor?* posted on 26 September 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/child-labor-is-banned-but-what-about-students-labor/> classified – status of children, coded – 2
- 13) Akmal, *CPJ warns: Blogging may harm your health*, posted on 5 December 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/media-and-internet/cpj-warns-blogging-may-harm-your-health/>, (imprisonment of journalists posting online), classified – media, coded – 2
- 14) Libertad, *2009 - Year of development and improvement of villages in Uzbekistan*, posted on 9 December 2008, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/2009-year-of-development-and-improvement-of-villages-in-uzbekistan/> classified – government policies, coded – 0
- 15) Musafirbek, *Ruslan Sharipov Writes To President Obama*, posted on 10 March 2009, available at <http://neweurasia.net/politics-and-society/409/> (Uzbek journalist dissident is threatened in USA) classified – media, coded – 2
- 16) Yelena, *Uzbekistan is an enemy of the Internet*, posted on 12 March 2009, available at <http://neweurasia.net/media-and-internet/uzbekistan-is-an-enemy-of-the-internet/> (cyber dissidents in Uzbekistan), classified – media, coded – 2



[www.neweurasia.net](http://www.neweurasia.net) (rus) (accessed 30 April 2009)

- 17) Alisher Taksanov, *Нечего на зеркало пенять, или реплики об узбекской прессе* [No need to find the guilty one, or replicas about the Uzbek press], posted on 26 March 2008, available at <http://ru.uzbekistan.neweurasia.net/?p=207> (censorship, media control), classified – media, coded – 2
- 18) Provincialka, *Как найти работу в Узбекистане?* [How to find a job in Uzbekistan?], posted on March 27, 2008, available at <http://ru.uzbekistan.neweurasia.net/?p=206> (low salaries for state jobs), classified – poverty, coded – 2
- 19) Alisher Taksanov, *Демократизатор для правозащитников* [Democracy maker for human rights activists], posted on 27 March, 2008, available at <http://ru.uzbekistan.neweurasia.net/?p=209> (satirical criticism of militia), classified – government policies, coded – 2
- 20) Alisher Taksanov, *Объяснительная для правосудия* [Explanatory note for the justice], posted on 28 March, 2008, available at <http://ru.uzbekistan.neweurasia.net/?p=213> (satirical criticism of government policy towards human rights activists), classified – government policies, coded – 2
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