CENSORSHIP BETWEEN AMBIGUITY AND EFFECTIVENESS:
RULES, TRUST AND INFORMAL PRACTICES IN ROMANIA (1949–1989)

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I present and discuss in detail the underlying formal organizational solutions and everyday informal practices contributing to the effective implementation of ambiguous censorship norms. Notwithstanding the persistent interest in the study of state censorship, the aspect that certain levels of coordination have to occur under invariably vague regulations is surprisingly neglected. Yet, given the role played by censorship in sustaining non-democratic regimes, the Soviet-type for instance on which the present analysis is centered, how the system internally managed to deal with uncertainties concerning censorship norms, and how the main actors coped with it, is surely a pertinent question.

The research was designed to address both formal and informal aspects of the censorship process. For assessing formal organizational solutions, I use mid-level theories developed in the vein of the structural contingency approach to organizational design, whereas for the study of informal practices, I draw on theoretical insights offered by the comparative political science literature and a conceptual typology of informal practices/institutions that I developed based on three typologies (Nee and Ingram 1998, Lauth 2000, Helmke and Levitsky 2006a). In terms of methods, I combine institutional analysis and historical ethnography, which involves processing data derived from official documents and subjective sources (interviews, memoirs, diaries and contemporary correspondence). The empirical analysis is based on a single case, that is, the Romanian censorship system in the state socialist period (1949–1989). Within the case, the focus on formal mechanisms is narrowed to the extreme end of the pre-publication procedure, the activity of local censors' offices namely. With regards to informal mechanisms, the analysis is focalized on positive interpersonal relationships between the actors of the censorship system, particularly those nurtured among the controllers and controlled, and the allied informal practices.

The intensive analysis of the Romanian case resulted that the effective implementation of the censorship policy was maintained by a complex set of formal organizational coordination and control mechanisms that were appropriately designed to meet critical contingencies (i.e. task uncertainty), as well as by various types of informal practices based on trust-centered interpersonal ties. The types of informal practices that furthered the formal scopes of censorship include the spread and clarification of information regarding censorship norms via peers and censors (complementary informal practices), censors sharing confidential directives (accommodating practices), as well as counseling and ensuring with controllers prior to official checking (substitutive practices). The fourth type comprises interactions that eventually undermined the effectiveness of the censorship policy, practices such as negotiations between the censors and editors-in-chief/authors, intervening through personalized networks on behalf of a publication, or taking a risk by turning a blind eye to problematic issues (competing of practices).

These findings complement accounts of the functioning and effectiveness of the Soviet-type censorship system primarily focused on macro institutional and organizational configurations. Furthermore, the results shed light on practices constituting the domain of "self-censorship", which is also claimed by the literature to represent an important factor contributing to the effectiveness of censorship. Finally, by focusing on positive interpersonal ties and related practices, the findings considerably alter the dominant narrative centered on negative relationships between the controllers and the controlled, yet they also show that many interactions based on positive ties had the same effects as their negative counterparts: raising the performance of the censorship system.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that no parts of this thesis have been accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions. This thesis contains no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference

Ágnes Kiss
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation invites the reader inside the Romanian censors' office, as well as to witness interactions of people playing various formal roles in the censorship system employed under the state socialist regime. The aim of this backward time travel is to explore the ground level organizational mechanisms and everyday practices that constituted fundamental components of the censorship system. More specifically, the focus is set on mapping and evaluating the impact of internal formal organizational solutions and informal practices on the effectiveness of censorship.

To make this journey instructive, the dissertation provokes the reader to adopt a rather unconventional perspective over the story of censorship. This angle involves the following: understanding the ambiguous wording of censorship norms as an administrative challenge besides representing an opportunity for political intervention; observing the main actors at work instead of focusing merely on the outputs of the censorship process; concentrating on the coordination and monitoring of controllers instead of the grip exerted on the domain of culture; and finally, considering instances of good interpersonal ties and cooperation between the producers of culture and controllers along tense relationships.

In this introductory chapter, I provide an overview of the research reported in the dissertation. The chapter proceeds in seven sections that keep up with the following logic: first, I elaborate on the starting points of my empirical and theoretical inquiry, such as the core concepts, research puzzle, research questions, and broad theoretical perspectives (1.1, 1.2, 1.3); second, I present the state of the art in research of the Soviet-type censorship systems through the

prism of the research questions and theoretical guidelines previously set (1.4); and finally, I discuss my own contribution (1.5, 1.6), and outline the structure of the dissertation (1.7).

Due to the multitude of topics that required rather detailed discussions, it seems useful to provide here a snapshot of the study. I will present it following the structure of the current chapter.

The first thematic group starts with clarifications concerning the concept of "censorship", and identifying ambiguity as an inherent feature of censorship norms regardless of times and type of political regime, a fact that eventually guides me to conclude that implementing vaguely worded censorship norms might represent an administrative challenge for regimes reclining upon severe censorship in order to maintain the *status quo* (1.1). Next, I project the research puzzle and the related central research question, that is: What were the mechanisms that sustained the effective operation of the censorship system under the circumstances of vague policy prescriptions? (1.2) This is followed by an outline of broad theoretical claims formulated in organizational studies and comparative politics that reflect to the research question, and suggest that organizational performance depends on properly designed formal mechanisms *and* informal mechanisms that further organizational goals (1.3). These approaches to explaining organizational performance set the course of the two main lines of inquiery, i.e. formal and informal aspects of censorship, for which theoretical frameworks are elaborated further on in separete chapters.

Having the general theoretical perspective set and the research question adjusted to capture the two domains, in the second thematic block, I review what we currently know about the internal organizational mechanisms of the Soviet-type censorship system and relevant informal practices (1.4). In a nutshell, the key problems identified in available case studies (Poland, Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania) are that extant explanations concerning the effectiveness of censorship focus

chiefly on macro institutional and organizational features, whereas those that have an inside look in various organizational settings are rather descriptive, and with very rare exceptions are not specifically designed to reflect on coordination and control mechanisms employed within the censorship apparatus. Even less attentively is treated the domain of informal practices. Issues pertaining to this domain are usually discussed either under the umbrella-term of "self-censorship" or are centered on the personality of the leaders of cultural and mass media organs. Moreover, in terms of narratives, the censorship-accounts tend to capture mainly the bad relationships and fight of the main actors. Besides these shortcomings however, the processed literature provides sufficient evidence to pursue an in-depth analysis of internal organizational processes and mechanisms, both formal and informal.

The final part of the introduction outlines the main arguments and findigs of the present research (1.5). The case regarded typical to the Soviet-type censorship systems and studied by the analytical tools of institutional analysis and historical ethnograpy is the Romanian censorship system (1949–1989). The analysis of internal organizational mechanisms is narrowed down to the functioning of the censors' office, and for its examination I employ mid-level theories developed in the vein of the structural contingency approach to organizational design. For identifying and evaluating informal practices, which on their own turn are narrowed down to the study of good interpersonal ties, I use a conceptual and theoretical framework derived from the comparative politics literature, as well as a revised typology of informal institutions/practices.

The main result of the analysis on the dimension of formal organizational mechanisms is that the effective implementation of the censorship policy was maintained by a whole arsenal of coordination and control mechanisms appropriately designed to meet challenges of the administration of the censorship system, although – as former censors tesitfy – not all formal tools were implemented in everyday activities according to their initial purposes. In the

domain of informality, the central finding is that, contrary to the dominant scientific narrative and personal commentary, the formal organizational configuration was "glued" by a considerable amount for good interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, rather counterintuitively, there were various types of informal practices based on the positive nexuses that actually contributed to the effectiveness of censorship. Of course, this is not to suggest that the gross of effectiveness depended on these mechanisms, but they undeniably furthered formal organizational goals, and the findings nicely complement and nuance extant account of the effectiveness of the Soviet-type censorship systems. Among other contributions to the literature, these issues are discussed in the penultimate section (1.6).

Finally, let me sketch the structure of the dissertation, which is presented in detail in the last section of this chapter (1.7). The dissertation proceeds in seven chapters. Chapter 2 is dedicated to issues of research design, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 contain the theoretical frameworks developed for the study of formal mechanisms and informal practices, respectively, whereas Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 comprise the empirical analysis following the same thematic logic. Chapter 7 concludes on the findings of the research.

1.1. The ambiguity of censorship norms. Political opportunity and administrative challenge

During the last decades, the scholarly orientation towards censorship became nuanced. Inspired by the Foucauldian approach to the quotidian operation of power, the concept of "censorship" was developed to capture, next to practices of state agencies, religious bodies or powerful private groups intervening into the free flow of information, various techniques of discourse regulation that can be detected in any kind of social control.[1] Arguing for this

[1] On these intellectual developments see Jansen (1991), Müller (2004), Post (1998).
The labels used for marking the traditional and novel conceptions of censorship are the "interventionist", "institutionalized" or "regulatory" censorship and "constitutive" or "structural" censorship, respectively. (Müller 2004, Freshwater 2004)

inclusive perspective, Jansen advances the idea that "[…] the term encompasses all socially structured proscriptions or prescriptions which inhibit or prohibit dissemination of ideas, information, images, and other messages through a society's channels of communication whether these obstructions are secured by political, economic, religious, or other systems of authority. It includes both overt and covert proscriptions and prescriptions." (Jansen 1991: 221)

This thesis adopts the traditional, legalistic approach to the phenomenon of censorship, which continues to constitute a vigorously expanding part of the field. So, "censorship" here is to be understood in a narrower sense: "[…] an authoritarian control over what reaches the public sphere by someone other than the sender and the intended receiver of a message, [which] operates on the basis of official regulation (if not legislation), institutionalization, and administration of the control procedures." (Müller 2004: 12) According to this definition, the regulatory activity takes place between the act of expression and the public release. Nevertheless, one has to consider another "classical" manifestation of interventionist censorship, namely, withholding information by limiting access to it. (Marx 2001) The authorities enacting censorship are often entangled, and the censoring forums can be represented by various public and private entities, such as the state, church, corporation, school, library and so forth. Out of these possibilities, the present research focuses on state-supported efforts to control information. To summarize, I understand censorship as exercised by the political authority by concealing information and obstructing the circulation of certain information or messages.

What is not particularly highlighted albeit implicitly part of the previously cited definitions is that the regulation is performed against a set of norms and values protected by the authority.[2]

[2] There are, of course, definitions mentioning this aspect too. See, for instance, the following: "Censorship is when *a person or group successfully imposes their values upon others* by stifling words, images or ideas and preventing them from reaching the public marketplace of ideas." (Emphasis added, Lehigh University, n.d.)

The subsequent argument develops the idea that censorship norms are inherently ambiguous, which – as both victims and analysts claim – opens up the possibility for authorities to manipulate them.[3] Nevertheless, – I add to this well rooted perspective – the similar feature of the censorship norms can represent a challenge on the level of concrete administrative procedures, which must be addressed by controlling forums, particularly those that are committed to employ severe censorship as a means of preserving the political regime, namely the authorities of totalitarian and authoritarian systems.[4] This second observation represents the starting point of my inquiry into the functioning of one of the notoriously harsh censorship systems, that is, the Soviet-type censorship that was installed in the Central and Eastern European state socialist regimes too in the aftermath of the Second World War.

To make it clear, though the existence of state censorship is intuitively associated with oppressive, intolerant governments, it is actually a very old business and a constant accompany of all political regimes, democratic and non-democratic alike.[5] Of course, there is a tremendous variation in the scope and application of monitoring, yet apparently power-holders have been always keen on having control over the content and distribution of information, therefore, some form of officially administered censorship can always be detected.[6]

[3] For "spurious" governmental interventions into the free flow of information see, for instance, the Article 19's *World Report 1988* about the state of freedom of expression and its corollaries in fifty countries. (Boyle 1988) A multitude of cases included in this volume illustrate the ways "national security", "public interest", "public order", "public morals", "public health", "heresy and blasphemy", "defamation and protection of reputation" are invoked and interpreted in order to restrict or block oppositional activities. (Boyle 1988: 293–302)

[4] Strict governmental control of the media features as a key institutional characteristic in the description of both of these regimes, although censorship is employed by authoritarian and totalitarian states to achieve totally different ultimate objectives, that is, demobilizing or mobilizing the society, respectively. (Linz 2000: 159–168, Mughan and Gunther 2000: 3–4)

[5] Currently, the most concise work supporting this claim is Jones' (2001) four-volume encyclopedia of censorship covering this subject from ancient times to the very recent past, and states from A to Z. As well, one can consult the reports of several international organizations monitoring on global level abuses against the right to freedom of expression and access to information, such as the Article 19 or the Reporters Without Borders.

[6] As there is no available typology of censorship practices in this respect, to substantiate this remark, I will offer here a brief characterization of "legitimate/democratic" and "nondemocratic" censorship, which was primarily derived from case studies and reports carried out within the framework of the Article 19 project and by

Being an inherently controversial act, one of the general public and scientific concerns with regard to censorship is related to the formulations of circumstances of legitimate intervention. Expressions such as protecting "national security", "public order", "public morals" or "reputation", combined with terms such as "offensive", "harmful", "objectionable" content or "necessary" conditions, are quite general in nature. It is important to observe that, regardless of times and the type of the political regime, these conditions appear invariably underspecified. Literally the same general and vague expressions were reflected in almost all nineteenth-century European censorship regulations, in the relevant documents of the Soviet-type state socialist countries and various authoritarian regimes of the last century, as well as in international legal documents and national legislations currently in force. (Boyle 1988: 293–302, Goldstein 2000: 12–14, Article 19 1993)

These extremely broad concepts are very hard, if not entirely impossible to define, and eventually there remains a lack of clarity of what it is actually being protected and how the instances of violation look like. Even if it is clarified enough in theory, once going beyond that, qualifying a particular written, oral or visual occurrence and establishing the nexus between this expression and the risk of harm is problematic. (See Mendel 2010) In fact,

Reporters Without Borders. Of course, "legitimate/democratic" and "nondemocratic" censorship have to be treated as ideal types, the actual practices being located somewhere on the continuum between these two poles. The utmost differences between the two types are rooted in their main purpose, namely, to protect individuals in the first case, and protecting the political *status quo* in the second. All further characteristics seem to stem from this distinction. In order to protect maximally the right for freedom of expression and access to public information, legitimate censorship presupposes an explicit system of censorship criteria, where the forbidden areas are clearly and narrowly defined, the censoring methods are direct (the prohibition of categories of statements based on their content or impact), pre-publishing censorship is generally not accepted, the institutions charged with censorship are independent from the political power, and finally, the sanctions for the violation of censorship rules are relatively low. Contrarily, censorship criteria in nondemocratic censorship are implicit, the borders of prohibited topics are blurred and subject to ad hoc interpretations favoring the political regime. The content restrictions are not just proscriptive (specifying what cannot be expressed), but may imply prescriptive elements too (specifying the qualities – content and style – expected in a written or creative work). States can make use of preliminary control; however, those which do not can still effectively practice censorship through indirect ways (for instance, regulating access to media by a discriminatory licensing system) and force compliance with extremely high, legal and extralegal direct sanctions (prison sentence, suspending the license for publishing, harassment, assassinating or kidnapping journalists etc.), as well as indirect sanctions (economic pressures). Finally, the censorship authorities are under the control of the current political power.

neither the protected interests, nor the indicators of violation can be narrowly defined and enacted; hence, the margins of appreciation remain always quite wide.

This "natural" situation or, one might say, inherent feature of censorship norms creates the risk and possibility of arbitrary interpretation by state regulators, which is not rare in democratic systems either, but it is more than welcomed by regimes that practice extensive censorship for the protection of the political *status quo*, so the protection of particular institutional configuration or ideology. Indeed, given their general purpose of silencing political opposition, regulations of a great degree of ambiguity could and were applied at will in response to the needs of the regime. For instance, as Soviet "chief censor" Vladimir Solodin (serving about 30 years at Glavlit[7]) blatantly admitted it in an interview after the regime change, the vagueness of the regulation was a key factor in censoring any information the authorities deemed harmful to their political or economic interests:

> "When they write about us abroad, they love to claim that we had massive lists of what was allowed and forbidden, of off-limit themes. There was nothing of the kind. In the charter of Glavlit it was written that "Glavlit is required not to allow into print matter which consists of state secrets or other secrets protected by law, as well as matter which disinforms [sic!] public opinion." This formula of "disinforms public opinion" allowed us to put any material in this category and, when it was necessary, to forbid it. Therefore we never had any lists of forbidden themes."[8] (Richmond and Solodin 1997: 584)

Next to being considered a strategy of the state socialist political power to leave margins of appreciations exploited for its own aims, vague censorship norms are interpreted to be an effective means to induce uncertainty and fear and this way to encourage people to censor themselves.[9] (Ermolaev 1997, Takács 2005, Devlin 2011, Boyer 2003, Leftwich Curry

[7] Glavlit has been the one of the state censorship organs in the Soviet Union that was established in 1922 as the Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs (*Glavnoe upravlenie po delam literatury i izdatel'stva*, or Glavlit). Although the name has been changed several times, the acronym Glavlit continued to be used until 1991. (Ermolaev 1997: 3, 101, 182, 229)

[8] For the sake of accuracy, one can note that actually there were quite massive, periodically revised lists with general and more elaborated directives going to the censors about "off-limit" topics. (Ermolaev 1997: 6, 55–56, 143–144) This observation, however, does not refute the point for which Solodin's account was cited here.

[9] As it was argued, in terms of wording concerning the criteria of intervention, the legislation of different countries is rather similar. Likewise, vague wording and more or less hefty sanctions invariably result self-censorship. See in this sense the analyses concerning the 2005 media legislation in China (Article 19 2007), the

1980b) Broadly tailored rules, combined with an unpredictable enforcement regime and the possibility of harsh sanctions promote self-censorship because authors will tend to err on the side of extreme caution and alter questionable terms during the process of creation.

However, what constitutes an opportunity for limitless political interventions on the one hand, it might represent an administrative challenge on the other. This is because the same nebulously worded censorship norms are supposed to guide the work of the censorship apparatus too. Remember Solodin's reference to the Glavlit's provision of censoring information that "misinform public opinion"! Similarly ambiguous guidelines were included into the top secret instructions provided to Romanian censors in the 1950's: erase "manifestations of the class enemy" for instance, and information that "would contribute to the weakening and undermining of the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry, and to the repression of class struggle." [10] But the Czechoslovak Press Law (1967) is not clearer either in pointing to the suspension of "materials in conflict with the interests of society", provision that had to be jointly observed by editors and censors. (Schöpflin 1983: 18)

In order to see the administrative challenge in the implementation of these instructions, one has to consider first the hundreds (or thousands) of persons working at different organizations and constituting the censorship apparatus.[11] Second, it seems safe to argue that these people were supposed to share a common understanding of the censorship norms, because this is an indispensable condition for achieving high performance of the whole censorship system. In other words, the smooth and effective operation of the system required that each employee be

2010 media low in Hungary (Political Capital 2011), or the Federal Communications Commission's regulation of broadcast "indecency" in the USA after 2003 (Levi 2008).

[10] Central Historical National Archives, Bucharest, Fond Press and Prinintg Committee (Comitetul pentru Presă şi Tipărituri), henceforth ANIC F. CPT, D. 17/1952, ff. 1–7.

[11] Organizational components of the Soviet type censorship system are presented in section 1.4.2.

able to implement censorship guidelines in the most precise manner, otherwise diverging interpretations would have resulted in severe inconsistencies, thus, ineffective functioning.

The present analysis aims precisely to shed light on the fine-grained mechanisms through which the effectiveness of the Soviet type censorship systems was maintained under the circumstances of vaguely defined censorship norms. Though, as it was presented, ambiguous censorship norms are not a specific characteristic of the state socialist regimes, censorship there was a prime tool in maintaining control over the society and protecting the political *status quo*; consequently, ambiguity was an issue with which the system has had to deal internally in order to function effectively. Therefore, the present analysis implies a shift in perspective over the ambiguity of censorship norms: I am not interested to see how censorship rules were manipulated to serve the interests of the regime, but rather how challenges associated with ambiguity were met on organizational level and how ambiguity affected the activity of the individuals involved in the censorship process.

Notwithstanding the persistent interest in the study of censorship, the aspect that certain levels of coordination had to occur under the circumstances of vague regulations is surprisingly neglected in discussions of censorship in general and its Soviet type in particular.[12] Yet, given the role played by censorship in sustaining the regime, how the system internally managed to deal with uncertainties concerning censorship norms and how the main actors coped with it is surely a pertinent question.

1.2. Censorship between ambiguity and effectiveness

It is reasonable to expect that a policy succeeds if ends and means are clearly defined and execution is unequivocally regulated through clear operational rules. However, this does not seem to be the case with censorship, where the precise goals and norms for discriminating

[12] This is discussed in-depth in section 1.4.

between permitted and forbidden topics could not be comprehensively operationalized. This is due to the inherent ambiguity of censorship norms, the scope of control that in case of the Soviet-type censorship systems encompassed everything entering the public sphere, but also to the repeatedly revised ideological and political considerations, which together resulted in a vast and continuously changing domain of possible "ideological and political errors" that was not feasible to cover with precise and exhaustive instructions to be delivered to the executive (cultural and media organs) and controlling forums (the state and Party agencies in charge with checking cultural production). Nevertheless, the censorship system functioned quite effectively.

The puzzling issue here is the following: how could it be effective, given the totalitarian scope of control and the limited possibilities to translate censorship norms into precise working dispositions? The central organizing question that underpins this research is, therefore, what were the mechanisms that sustained the effective operation of the censorship system despite the shortcomings at the level of policy formulation?

1.3. Theoretical approaches to explaining organizational performance

For a comprehensive explanation of the central research question I build on theoretical insights offered by organizational studies and comparative politics that converge on observations regarding the relevance of interaction between formal and informal practices in explaining organizational/institutional performance. The main argument unfolded in this section is that organizational performance depends on both proper formal and informal mechanisms, the specificities of which are going to be further developed in the theoretical chapters of this dissertation. Before turning, however, to the arguments guiding this research to the domains of formality and informality, it seems useful to restate first the research

question according to these two dimensions, and clarify why it is necessary to integrate theoretical perspectives of the two related disciplines.

As both formal and informal mechanisms matter with regard to organizational performance, the main research question raised in the previous section can be broken down to the following two groups of questions:

1. What kind of formal mechanisms were employed in order to maintain effectiveness under the circumstances of vague guiding norms? Was the formal design of the censorship system appropriate for implementing the censorship policy?

2. What kind of informal mechanisms functioned within the censorship system and how did they relate to the effectiveness of the censorship?

Though political science has long relied on organizational studies in understanding, for instance, the working of the public bureaucracy, and concern towards organizational aspects of politics was amplified by the new institutionalist approaches, the developed theories are mostly about the generics of organization, and are not specifically designed to reflect on fine grained formal internal organizational features and mechanisms. (See Moe 1995) Despite their common roots and traditional connections, political science, mainstream organizational studies and public administration evolved separately, resulting in some kind of reciprocal neglect. Political science abandoned the field of organizations, organizational studies abandoned public organizations, whereas public administration became "ghettoized" in the attempt to delimitate itself from organizational studies. (Moe 1995, Kelman 2007) Migrating towards business schools, mainstream organizational studies developed an interest in performance issues (determinants of success, such as employee's behavior and responses to coordination mechanisms), whereas public administrations developed instead a focus on managing constraints, particularly the control of administrative discretion. (Kelman 2007)

Therefore, if it is to study organizational performance and details of internal mechanism, the most promising starting point is the field of organizational studies.

Conversely, with regard to the study of informal practices and institutions, the political science literature seems to be more advanced than organizational studies, at least in serving with models of formal and informal interactions. Whereas organizational studies (Porter and Powel 2006, Cardinal *et al.* 2010, Loughry 2010) commonly admit that informal networks and related practices may hinder or advance organizational goals, more elaborated typologies of formal and informal interaction are provided only by the political science literature (Nee and Ingram 1998, Lauth 2000, 2004, Helmke and Levitsky 2006a, 2012).

Concerning explicitly the dimension of formal organizational practices, organizational and management studies, particularly the structural contingency approach to organizational design, contribute to our understanding by presenting specific organizational means required in settings characterized by some uncertainty regarding task execution; hence, serve with a starting point for making assessments regarding the organizational aspects of the censorship policy. (Donaldson 2001, 2006, Luo 2010, Galbraith 1974, Van De Ven *et al.* 1976, Argote 1982, Ouchi 1979, Liu *et al.* 2010, Mintzberg 1993) The focus of the relevant theories is on coordination and control mechanism, which in case of censorship indicate the ways through which coherence across the work of different organizations and individuals was maintained under the conditions of underspecified task description. More specifically, empirical analysis is directed towards the tools employed in order to provide information to the main actors concerning the norms of censorship and tools that were meant to check for their compliance and induce them to meet requirements.

Taking a step further, there is consensus in the field that organizational actors also use informal devices in their work-related activities, and organizational performance depends on the interaction of formal and informal practices, wherein effectiveness is achieved through

informal practices that advance formal organizational goals. (Jones *et al.* 1997, Porter and Powel 2006, Waldstrøm 2001) The key explanatory factor in attaining coordination is the spread of information and (tacit) knowledge via "networking", not formally prescribed communication among organizational members and across organizations (Jones *et al.* 1997, Porter and Powel 2006, Waldstrøm 2001), or to use a term of more recent coinage, "communities of practice" that interlink different organizations (Wenger *et al.* 2002). The same networks provide the basis for social mechanisms of control, which consist of sanctions employed for misfeasance of informal obligations, but also of formal requirements. Both of these elements can contribute to efficient operation too, for they reduce the costs of coordination and control. (Jones *et al.* 1997)

From the perspective of this overview, here is the point where the political science literature having on its own research agenda the study of informality intersects with organizational and management studies and offers several typologies of formal–informal interactions. Currently, the most frequently cited typology is the one elaborated by Helmke and Levitsky (2006a, 2012), which depicts the following four possible relationships: complementary, substitutive, accommodating and competing. Thought the typology is not flawless, a fundamental point they make is that except for the practices (to be precise, they are talking about informal institutions) qualifying for the competing category, the other types either contribute to the effective maintenance of the formal system, or may generate outcomes that are "viewed as broadly beneficial."[13] (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 16–18)

These theoretical considerations with regard to the impact of informal activities on organizational performance direct the focus of analysis about censorship to informal patterns of behavior, informal ties and networks across the persons working at different organizations of the censorship system. The main task is to map the domain of informality, to identify

[13] A critical review of this model is provided in Chapter 4 (4.2.2).

different categories of practices, and to assess their impact on the functioning of the censorship system.

Including into the analysis the informal practices emerging within and across organizations involved in censorship is not just theoretically driven however, but the bulk of empirical research on the Soviet-type regimes point in this direction too, and affirm that informality has indeed to be accounted for when it comes to the functioning of these regimes. Scholars taking an inside look on the working of these regimes noticed that under the trappings of central planning, strictly hierarchical and excessively bureaucratized organizational life, the system frequently operated with vague regulations, as well as arbitrary interventions and sanctions, and emphasized that personalized networks, informal practices permeated and crossed virtually all institutions.[14]

A prominent focus of the research about informality in the state socialist regimes is oriented towards the functioning of economy, whereby formal structural features of the regime (for instance, central planning, shortage, closed distribution, system of state privileges) and organizational characteristics (such as, defective formal incentive schemes and monitoring mechanisms, but also informal organizational practices implying favoritism based on personal ties) are treated as causal variables for the emergence of various behavioral patterns, informal practices and institutions applied both in organizational and everyday life.[15] The activities ranged from semi-legal to completely illegal, and included "pulling strings", setting

[14] For informality in various contexts, such as economy, administration, workplace, culture and everyday life see Gregory (1990), Litwack (1993), Solnick (1998), Pearce *et al.* (2000), Ledeneva (1998), Wedel (1986), Pawlik (1992), Firlit and Chlopecki (1992), Jowitt (1992), Thelen (2005), Falk (2002), Horton (1993), Falkowska (1996), Darnton (1995), Lőrincz (2004), for instance.

[15] On the informal practices of the economic bureaucracy in the Soviet Union see, for instance, Gregory (1990), Litwack (1993) and Solnick (1998). On particularistic organizational practices (as opposed to universalistic organizational practices, which imply the application of general rules or propositions uniformly to all) that fueled shirking and sabotage in a Hungarian factory see Pearce *et al.* (2000). On the emergence and functioning of *blat* (exchange of "favors of access") in various daily activities and organizational context in the Soviet Union see Ledeneva (1998). For similar "arrangements" through private connections to obtain commodities and services, to settle problematic issues or to resolve bureaucratic impasses see Wedel (1986), Pawlik (1992), Firlit and Chlopecki (1992) for Poland, Jowitt (1992) for Romania or Thelen (2005) for GDR.

up non-formal insurance schemes, "arrangements" through private connections, manipulating data, bribery, pilferage, shirking and others.[16] For example, Paul R. Gregory describes the informal behavior patterns of the *khozyaistvenniki*, the line unit heads, those who, contrarily to the *apparatchiki*, were the true risk-bearers in the Soviet economic bureaucracy. (Gregory 1990: 54–77) *Khozyaistvenniki* had to produce results according to the plans designed by *apparatchiki* of functional units; however, amidst constant shortage and poor allocation this was impossible by observing formal rules. Consequently, a "good" enterprise manager routinely broke formal rules in order to detect resources and hijack supplies to his/her own company. For the success of these maneuvers the managers had to take care of his relations both in order to be able to "pull the wires" for obtaining the needed supplies, as well as to insure himself against reprimands, bonus losses, or persecution in case the transgressions were discovered. (*ibid*.)

Another emphatic locus for the emergence of informal practices belongs to the domain of culture severely restricted by censorship and propaganda. Generally grouped under the label of intellectual "resistance" or "opposition" to the regime, these informal practices refer to various underground activities like "flying universities"[17] or samizdat, but also the usage of encrypted texts to transmit certain information through official media channels, a practice frequently called "ambivalent discourse."[18]

Now let me summarize the main issues raised in this section. First, comparative politics and organizational studies literature indicate that in order to uncover the mechanisms sustaining the high performance of the censorship system one has to consider both formal and informal mechanisms, whereby inquiry into the domain of informality is also supported by extant

[16] *Ibid*.
[17] Informal organizations for underground education and academic work. The first one was founded in Warsaw, in 1978, and it was called the Society of Scientific Courses, dubbed as The Flying University. This served as model for similar ventures in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. See Falk (2003: 42–43).
[18] For underground activities and samizdat see Falk (2002), while for ambivalent discourse see, for instance, Horton (1993), Falkowska (1996), Darnton (1995), Lőrincz (2004), Deletant (2008).

empirical analyses of the state socialist regimes. Second, in what concerns formal mechanisms, the focus is narrowed down to organizational tools that were meant to ensure coherence across the censors' work as a response to the challenges imposed by ambiguous censorship norms. This implies a close and systematic look on internal technical solutions for transmitting information concerning forbidden issues and checking procedures concerning task execution. And finally, for informal practices, one has to explore the informal networks and relationships between the main actors involved in the censorship process, and assess the impact of their practices on the effectiveness of the censorship system.

1.4. On the functioning of Soviet-type censorship systems

This section aims to review extant explanations concerning the functioning and effectiveness of the Soviet-type censorship system from the angle of the research questions and theoretical guidelines put forth in the previous section. In other words, I will outline here what we know about the internal organizational mechanisms of the censorship system and relevant informal practices. The review is intended to highlight where the present research fits into the existing body of knowledge about censorship by outlining gaps and flows in the previous literature on the one hand, and by identifying particular mechanisms supporting the topic of my research on the other hand.

For an insightful picture of how the subject has been studied, it seems important to include into the presentation the prime methods of analysis and data sources used so far in the literature, as well as some general characteristics of the narratives. The narratival aspect is highly relevant because there is a dichotomous approach prevailing in the literature, namely, censorship stories interpreted in the "oppressors" vs. "victims" framework, which marks and considerably narrows interpretations concerning the interactions between these two

"camps".[19] Thought tense relationship between censoring authorities and people engaged in various creative processes is a positive fact, one of the problems with this polarized approach is that it invites further similar narratives, which eventually result in simplistic views about their relationships, as well as they various informal practices. I will start the analysis with these general remarks, and then I will turn to present specific aspects and observations related to the structure and processes of censorship, including the informal practices.

1.4.1 Sources, methods, narratives

The study of Soviet-type information control was started by Western observers as early as in the 1950's, and apparently this interest was intensified in the 1970's and 1980's.[20] For obvious reasons, local specialist engaged in studying censorship just after the regime change. Except for a switch in the usage of primary sources however, in terms of methods and narratives the research of censorship practices displays some rather constant characteristics.

In what concerns the sources, the difference between the analyses before and after the breakdown of the state socialist regimes is the availability of official documents. Given the closed borders topped with the highly classified methods of censorship, except for some documents of the Polish censors' office smuggled out from Poland in 1977, and published seven years later in English (Leftwich Curry 1984), there were no other accessible "objective" sources for reconstructing the organizational architecture, internal processes and mechanisms of the censorship system. Hence, the pre 1989 Western literature is primarily based on accounts of émigrés formerly working in the domains of mass-media and cultural production, a few descriptions originating from authors still living in countries concerned,

[19] On the roots and various effects of this binary approach see Šmejkalová (2011: 85–116).
[20] One of the earliest comparative study discussing Soviet-type media is Siebert's *et al.* (1956). For an extensive bibliography of works published in the 1970's and 1980's on Soviet censorship see Tax Choldin and Friedberg (1989: 215–229).

and in rare cases on short periods of fieldwork.[21] With the opening of the archives it became possible to have an inside look on the technical details of censorship and its targets in terms of content, and attention was directed to process the incredible amount of materials issued by organizations directly participating in the censorship process.[22]

With regard to methods, the majority of the empirical research results in descriptive studies of censorship practices of a single country (the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania etc.).[23] This is due to the logical primacy of case studies in acquiring detailed knowledge on particular topics (which is more than understandable in this case, given the confidential nature of censorship activities), the language barriers, and – I suppose – the general tendency of emphasizing the differences in the evolution of the concerned states. Moreover, a comparison on a general level would curtail the story of interesting details that make writings about censorship so attractive to read.

Besides, the available literature on censorship is fragmented along the lines of the affected sub-domains and time periods: mass media, book production, libraries, theater, fine arts and others.[24] This results from the specialized institutional structures at place and the magnitude

[21] For a comprehensive study on censorship in Poland and the Soviet Union based on interviews with émigrés see the project carried out by the Rand Corporation in the 1970's (Leftwich Curry 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1980d, Dzirkalis *et al.* 1982). For a valuable collection of émigré writers, journalists and scientist reporting on their first-hand experiences with Soviet censorship see Tax Choldin and Friedberg 1989, as well as Schöpflin's (1983) collection of various sources on censorship practices from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, GDR, Romania and Yugoslavia. For an outstanding example for analysis based on field-research see Leftwich Curry (1990) documenting the practice of journalistic profession in Poland.

[22] The Romanian case illustrates this shift well. In the recent past, a multitude of collections of documents and analyses based on archival documents appeared. See the collections of Costea *et. al.* (1995) and Corobca (2010) on library censorship, Maliţa (2006) on theater censorship, Mocanu (2001, 2003) on book censorship, and studies on the organizational architecture and targets of censorship, such as Ficeac (1999), Macra-Toma (2006), Diac (2006), Petcu (2005), Győrffy (2009), Plainer (2012) on mass media censorship, Lázok (2008) on book censorship, Şercan (2012a) on the censors' list of forbidden items, Zainea (2005) on the working of a local censorship office.

[23] Attempts to adopt a comparative perspective are rare and rather superficial (see Lendvai (1981), Schöpflin (1983)), or enlist the grand institutional features of state socialist media systems as opposed to the Western media systems (see, for instance, Gulyás 2001). I will return to these characteristics in the next sub-section.

[24] See references above to the censorship-related Romanian literature. As further illustration, one can cite again the conference-volume edited by Tax Choldin and Friedberg (1989) on Soviet censorship in which studies are preponderantly focused on specific fields censored, literature, theater, film production, scientific life and mass media namely. The same method in narrowing down the research topic can be observed in Mertelsmann's (2011) volume on Central and Eastern European censorship in the Early Cold War period.

of work performed by the assigned monitoring forums on the one hand, and a specific research interest in the content restrictions on the other hand.

A further very important common denominator of these studies pertains to the characteristics of the narratives. According to the enlightening introductory analysis performed by Šmejkalová for grounding her research on Czechoslovak state-controlled book production, the study of state socialist regimes is heavily imprinted by the Cold War era scholarship that was based on the pro- and contra-Soviet ideology resulting in dichotomous constructions such as "oppressors" vs. "oppressed", "oppression" vs. "resistance". (Šmejkalová 2011: 85–116) Though this binary approach characterizes the examination of all state socialist institutions, in the study of censorship, drawing a clear demarcation line between the camp of censoring officials and the authors is particularly appealing. (Šmejkalová 2011: 85) As Darnton put it, "[t]he trouble with the history of censorship is that it looks so simple: it pits the children of light against the children of darkness". (Darnton 1995: 40) That is, there is almost an automatic predisposition to adopt the "censor" vs. "author" perspective, because nobody would take a sympathetic view of someone defacing art or literary products (*ibid*.), let alone to assume a cordial relationship between censors and authors. To twirl a bit this picture according to the spirit of the dominant narrative, it is the "the stupid (or sometimes hyper-intelligent, but mischievous), destructive, almighty censor" against "the bright, inventive, constructive, persecuted author", and their interaction is reduced to persistent fight. (See also Šmejkalová 2011: 86)

The well-known collection of interviews entitled *Censorship in Romania* (Vianu 1998), conducted by Vianu with Romanian authors, illustrates this approach well. She repeatedly and explicitly asks respondents to reflect on their "fight" with the censors, as well as the tricks used to "cheat" them, especially by the method of using metaphors and coded language (called "lizards" in the Romanian cultural sphere), and she insists on this conceptual

framework even when interviewees point to rather contradicting issues, such as good personal relationships and experiences next to the bad ones.[25]

As closing remarks to the topic of narratival characteristics it is worth mentioning that the branch of the literature most heavily imprinted by the "resistance" discourse is that which handles the "unintended consequences" of official censorship. (Šmejkalová 2011: 95–96) This literature incorporates topics such as the emergence of the informal/second public sphere, the samizdat, the presence of ambivalent discourse in the official mass media and cultural life, and the related methods of cultural consumption, namely, the capabilities of the public to "read between the lines".[26] (*ibid.*) Following Šmejkalová's logic, one can continue by showing that the counterpoints of the "resistance" narratives are represented by the "oppression" side of the story, analyses that got impetus as internal working documents of the censorship system became available for research. The focus is on the legal framework and the organization of the censorship system, and specifically the censors' office where this applies; the agenda of censors (the domain of forbidden topics), and quantified data about its effects (how many titles on the list of forbidden works, library purges etc.). If not creating a dramatic

[25] See, for example, a short passage from the interview with Ion Negoițescu, who was a literary critic and historian, poet and novelist, subject to repeated political persecutions for his political views and sexual orientation:
"L.V.: What tricks did you use to cheat the censors?
I.N.: Speaking of the censors from the so-called Press Direction, *I did know two persons who valued good books*; they have been educated in the bourgeois society. *I do not remember having too many difficulties* because of the Press Direction, which was in fact official censorship. I did get in trouble with the Council of Culture, though. *They hated me* because of my nonconformism, and they tried to find fault with everything in order to delay or prevent the publication of my books. There, *I was taught lessons of rightousness and fals advice*. A *few heads of publishing houses liked me; others rejected me*. One of them even did both, depending on the "ideological breeze" coming from the Council of Culture. […]
L.V.: Is censorship one of the reasons why you left the country?" (Emphasis added, Vianu 1998: 22)
For other examples see the interviews with Marin Sorescu, Ileana Mălăncioiu, Ana Blandiana (Vianu 1998: 22, 86-87, 105, 137)

[26] It can be added that whereas the practice of ambivalent discourse is glorified as "resistance" and the "close reading" performed by audience a special virtue of cultural consumption, the related activity of the censors (deconstructing texts, searching for hidden meanings) most often is handled as a sign of their over-zeal, paranoia, malevolence or simple stupidity. (See, for instance, Pop 2012, Rad 2012)

scene of "libricide", many of the writings are tuned to sarcasm with regards to the purpose and content targets of censorship, and the skills of censors.[27]

1.4.2 The functioning of the censorship systems

Let me now turn to the second focus of this review, namely, the functioning of the censorship systems and explanations concerning its effectiveness. As previously mentioned, there are no synthetic in-depth studies on this subject, hence, the following remarks summarize observations formulated in case studies dealing with the censorship system from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Romania.[28] It seems insightful to start the presentation by clarifying certain differences and similarities between these states with regard to censorship practices.

If the focus was on the content restrictions, an analysis of the Soviet-type censorship systems results in considerable longitudinal and cross sectional variance. There were shorter or longer periods of thaw in each country, a collective experience being the post-Stalinist experimentation with some kind of politics of liberalization, when political repression and censorship norms relaxed.[29] There are no comprehensive analyses concerning cross sectional variance, but an "expert-survey" carried out in the mid 1970's in six CEE states estimated the severity of censorship as follows: "very harsh" censorship in Bulgaria, Romania, East Germany and Czechoslovakia, "relatively liberal" in Poland, and "not so harsh" in Hungary. (Kiezun 1991: 309)

[27] Again, the Romanian censorship-literature cited before is exemplary in this sense.

[28] Soviet Union: Dzirkals *et al.* (1982), Fox (1992), Plamper (2001), Lauk (1999), Ermolaev (1997). Poland: Leftwich Curry (1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1980d, 1984, 1990, 2011). Czeckoslovakia: Šmejkalová (2011), Schöpflin (1983: 7–31). GDR: Darnton (1995), Costabile-Heming (1997, 2000), Boyer (2003), Wilke (2011). Hungary: Bozóki (1996, 2003: 36–47), Hegedűs (2001), Takács (2009), Bart (2003), Nóvé (2011a, 2011b). Romania: Teodor (2012), Ficeac (1999), Coman and Gross (2006), Gross (1996), Petcu (2005), Zainea (2005), Şercan (2012a).

[29] For changes in the "political" and "puritanical" censorship interventions in the Soviet literature see Ermolaev (1997). He distinguishes 6 periods in the 1917 and 1991 timeframe and concentrates on the fluctuation in censorial preoccupation with the following topics: the Party and its leaders and supporters, the Soviet terror, the Red Army and partisans, peasants and collectivization etc. in the domain he calls political censorship, and curses, obscenities, eroticism and naturalistic details in the operation of puritanical censorship.

However, by concentrating the attention on the organizational design of the censorship system, one can observe striking similarities and persistent stability over time both within the countries and across them. The thaw-periods are usually described as "relaxation of control", but I wish to emphasize that tightening or relaxing control does not imply radical changes in the structure of the censorship system. In other words, changes in cultural policies were brought to life through the same institutional configuration and organizational structures. Consider the fluctuations in the cultural policy pursued during Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, differences between the 1950's in Romania and Ceauşescu's first years in power, or Polish cultural policies under Gomulka and Gierek, without witnessing major structural changes, that is, the appearance or disappearance of basic institutions and organizations involved in censorship.[30]

Likewise, in a cross-country perspective, institutional and organizational structures display important similarities. These also represent the basic points of reference when it comes to explanations concerning the functioning and effectiveness of the censorship system. In short, these (usually intermingled) explanations encompass references to three interrelated components: the particular institutional configuration of the state socialist regimes, the very dense network of control, and self-censorship. In what follows, I briefly discuss each of these components.

Regardless of the achievements of the Sovietization process as a whole, the framework of control over mass media and cultural production was set up in a similar way in all concerned countries: nationalization of press and printing industry and the media and cultural institutions, as well as the related industries (ex. paper production), single news agency, centralized command and allocation of resources, replacing human resources and further

[30] Explicit references for no institutional shifts preceding or during the short liberalization period in Romania (the end of the 1960's) see Coman and Gross (2006: 19). Takács concludes the same in his thorough analysis about the organizational aspects of the Hungarian censorship system. (Takács 2009) For the Soviet Union see Ermolaev (1997), while for Poland Leftwich Curry (1980b).

centralized control of personnel, establishing the specialized organizational structures of controlling media and cultural production (including the activity of the secret police), and harsh system of sanctions for defying the censorship rules.[31] So, state ownership, centralized command, agencies in charge for monitoring mass media and cultural production, and sanctions represent the grand institutional-structural features through which censorship policies were accomplished.

The second element actually zooms on one of the previously mentioned components, the specialized organizational structures namely, and claims that pervasive control was achieved by a multitude of organs that were designed to form a web of interlocking structures. In all concerned states, this system was composed by the Party apparatus, central state institutions (news agency, ministries, state committees, and the censors' office where that applies), editorial offices and cultural institutions, the parent institution of publications, and professional organizations.[32] The overall media- and cultural policy was set by the Central Committee of the Party, and after cross departmental information exchange and agreement, specialized departments and their sub-sections disseminated directives on content to the executive fore (various state institutions, editorial offices, publishing houses etc.) and monitored execution through local branches and central offices. The multitude of organizations involved, including their internal hierarchical levels, functioned as a multi-level filter that ensured the possibility of corrections if a problematic representation or taboo topic skipped somebody's eyes.

A rather interesting difference between the organizational structures of censorship is related to the establishment of a special, all-encompassing censors' office. Imitating the Soviet model, a censors' office was set up in Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, but this was

[31] See these components most fully enlisted by Šmejkalová (2011: 116–159). One must note that these elements are usually pointed out as the main features of the state socialist media system. (See Gulyás 2001)
[32] For the most expansive lists of these components see Dzirkalis *et al.* (1982) dealing with the Soviet Union, and Takács (2009) about the Hungarian system. Each had their counterparts in the other states.

missing in GDR and Hungary.[33] It is worth underlining however, that the very existence of a designated censors' office has nothing to do with the tightness of censorship. Countries that did not have it liberalized to a great degree their media system (Hungary), but so did those states that had it up until the regime change (Poland, Soviet Union). On the other hand, there were countries that had no singular, all-encompassing censorship agency and remained closer to the prototypical Soviet model of cultural production, the GDR, for instance, that is, unified and orchestrated mass media responding directly to the latest political imperatives of the Party. Here the censorship tasks were split between various organizations. The responsibility for managing mass media production on a day-to-day basis fell to the Agitation Division of the Central Committee (for the Party (SED)- press), to the GDR state Press Office (for the non-SED press), and to the State Committees on Radio and Television. The latter three state organs received daily instructions and feedback from the Agitation Division, and referred all major decisions directly to the Secretary of the Agitation Division. (Boyer 2003) For censoring books there was the Head Administration for Publishing and Book Trade, working under the supervision of the Culture section of the Ideology Department that was ultimately linked to the Politburo, at least under Honecker.[34] (Darnton 1995) One should not forget however that these organizations (specialized state committees) and supervision-mechanisms were to be found in all states, including those having a specialized censors' office, which, to remind, were also under the command of the Communist Party.

The third element mentioned in the literature as contributing to the effective functioning of the censorship system is self-censorship, a phenomenon already mentioned in the

[33] The Main Adminsitration for Control of the Pres, Publications, and Public Performances (*Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk* – GUKPPiW) in Poland, General Directorate of Press and Printing/Committee of Press and Printing (*Direcţia Generală a Presei şi Tipăriturilor/Comitetul pentru Presă* şi Tipărituri – DGPT/CPT) in Romania, and the Central Administration for Supervision of the Press (*Hlavní správa tiskového dohledu* – HSTD)/Office for Press and Information and the Slovak Office for Press and Information in Czechoslovakia.

[34] Rather similar mechanisms where functioning in the Hungarian censorship system, which also did not have a distinct, all-encompassing censors' office. For a detailed presentation of the institutional and organizational structure of censorship in Hungary see Takács (2009).

introductory lines of this chapter as an accompany of ambiguous censorship norms combined with sanctions for violating them. Irrespective of its sources, which could vary from a disciplined respect for the instructions to opportunism or fear, it seems that controlling oneself governed the reality of professionals (publicists, writers, scientists etc.) as much as external censorship. Albeit "self-censorship" explicitly refers to the act when someone censors his/her own work, the term frequently appears also in the context of editorial censorship, especially when it comes to discuss the censoring responsibilities of editorial offices.[35]

Out of the previously presented three complex components characterizing the functioning of the Soviet-type censorship systems, the present research contributes by exploring the second and third ones, that is, the organizational functioning, and the domain of self-censorship, the latter actually representing the domain where several informal practices interfere. In order to highlight the field where I intend to fill the gap in the literature, it is important to emphasize that the particular institutional and organizational configuration merely set the framework of a comprehensive control, yet the very process of putting the constitutive organizations and employees to work is neither treated as a challenge successfully solved by these regimes, nor described in a comprehensive manner, though attempts to depict the formal functioning of the censorship are of prime concern for most of the studies touching the topic of censorship. With rare exceptions however, the analyses stop at the level of presenting the organizational chart of the censorship system, and do not undertake a close and systematic observation of state and Party agents at work in the fulfillment of their tasks. As it mentioned earlier, the chain of command was springing from the central organ of the Party and it was forwarded to media and cultural institutions and to the censors' office. By what means however? Through what

[35] Next to the duty of departmental editors or the editor-in-chief to get the paper in line with official expectations, where "self-censorship" practically implies intervening into other peoples writings, the umbrella term "self-censorship" is frequently used by analysts for characterizing a censorship system lacking a specialized censors' office, such as Hungary, or even Romania after 1977, when the Committee of Press and Printing was abolished. (See Hegedűs 2001, Ficeac 1999: 36, Takács 2005, Leftwich Curry 1980b: 25–29)

channels and in what forms were the vague censorship norms communicated and clarified to the executors? And by what means has been compliance checked? These issues are directly relevant to the present research topic, yet one can hardly find a research systematically handling the internal organization and processes, specifically the tools employed to keep stakeholders informed on censorship norms and supervise their activity.

The relevance of these questions is substantiated by considering that organizational structures and duties were not radically changed during the alternating freeze-thaw cycles, which is to say that not the institutional or organizational changes allowed for new ideas to circulate but this was calibrated within and by the same structures. Therefore, information processing regarding the changes in the censorship norms within these structures, the methods of transmitting instructions concerning the implementation might indeed be considered of prime concern from an analytical point of view.

In the remainder of this subsection I will present some mechanisms occasionally mentioned or described in more details in the literature, information that support the topic of my research on the one hand, and provide further evidence for the similarity across the cases, which ultimately grounds the broader implications of my findings. The backbone of the following review is constituted by two monographs, one about the Soviet and the other about the Polish media control system, studies signed by Dzirkalis *et al.* (1982) and Leftwich Curry (1980a, 1980b), respectively. The two monographs were completed within the framework of a comprehensive project carried out by the Rand Corporation in the late 1970's. This project purposefully shifted the attention "from the *message* to the *medium*", that is from the study of media outputs to the study of control processes. (Emphasis in original, Dzirkalis *et al.* 1982: 4) By my knowledge, these are the sole studies that specifically approach censorship as a problem of information processing across different organizations involved in censorship, moreover, these early analyses continue to represent the most detailed accounts that can be

utilized if one is interested in internal coordination and control mechanisms put to work in various elements of the Soviet-type censorship systems. [36]

Important to note that these analyses do not follow all routs of information processing (such as, from the Central Committee to local Party executives or from the CC towards all involved executive forums, as well as within these organizations), but are presented in details for instructions directed towards the editorial offices, and inside the censors' office, respectively. Furthermore, although the project aimed to comparability, the internal mechanisms of the censors' office are much richer for the Polish case. In what follows, I will subtract from these research reports data of interest, and include references to analogous mechanisms employed in other states.

According to the literature, a key instrument in transmitting expectations to media organs were – similarly in Poland, the Soviet Union, Hungary and GDR – the regularly held meetings at the Propaganda Department, where editors were instructed on the latest nuances of policy and were told what kind of coverage to stress in their newspapers and the related proper arguments, as well as what particular topics to avoid. (Boyer 2003: 527; Wilke 2011: 163–168, Bozóki 1996: 441; Nóvé 2011a, Takács 2005; Dzirkalis *et al.* 1982: 10–15; Leftwich Curry 1980a: 26–28) In the Soviet Union, there were even specialized workshops organized for newspaper department editors from all parts of the country. (Dzirkalis *et al.* 1982: 15) Further instructions were received regularly in print, at least in GDR, and in an *ad hoc* manner both in print and orally through phone calls.[37] (Wilke 2011: 163–168) But in Poland, editors-in-chief even received detailed censors' regulations from the Central Committee's Press Department. (Leftwich Curry 1980a: 26) Last but not least, one can mention the activity of special instructors from the Central Committee assigned to monitor

[36] Though less comprehensive than the Rand project studies, one has to mention here Wilke's (2011) research focused on identifying various forms of "press instructions" directed to the editorial offices in the GDR.
[37] Titles of written press instructions in GDR included circular letters, *Das Aktuelle Argument*, *Informationsdienst*, *Argumentationshinweise* etc. (Wilke 2011:164–165, 168)

individual press organs by regularly checking the newspapers. Apparently, in the Soviet Union, besides reading and providing regular feedbacks to the media organs, one of their functions was to give an advisory opinion to editors on whether a given topic or line of discussion is likely to be acceptable. In case of such requests, the instructors either resolved the question or referred to other Central Committee departments. (Dzirkalis *et al.* 1982: 16–17)

Let me move now to the information directed to the censors' office and the information processing within this organization. This was a highly centralized organization, divided vertically and horizontally. The censors' office had local branches and a senior group that exercised control over their work. Concerning the operation of the censors' office, the universally known tool for receiving instructions is the censors' "black book", called the *Perechen* in the Soviet Union, *Book of Instructions and Directives* in Poland, and *Book of dispositions* in Romania. This was a periodically updated list of forbidden issues. For other means of transmitting information we have the most detailed data for the Polish case, so the GUKPPiW's internal functioning in the 1970's. (Leftwich Curry 1980b: 29–51)

The Polish central censorship office had a specific division called *Instruction, Evaluation, and Control Group* (IECG). (*ibid.*) The IECG activities reported by Leftwich Curry can be grouped and summarized as follows. First, the IECG sent out various instructions and background materials. These included novel regulations attached to the *Book of Instructions and Directives*, the *Censors' Information* and the *Censors' Instruction Notes*, which contained commentary and interpretations concerning instructions, guidelines distributed to editors-in-chief, ideological analyses of various publications carried out by the Central Committee, but they also prepared reviews of censorship decisions. These reviews were enclosed into periodic reports prepared for Party officials and top level GUK directors as a basis of their evaluations of the media, but they were circulated to the censors as well.

Leftwich Curry considers that they have served two purposes: on the one hand, they represented "teaching tools to demonstrate how censors are expected to work", but they were also aimed to "chill" censors, as they could see that their mistakes can be reported to the entire GUKPPiW staff. (Leftwich Curry 1980b: 33) Second, the IECG organized regular training courses and meetings for censors, but local censors had been visited too by representatives of the national censors' office. Personal contacts with their superiors are also mentioned by Leftwich Curry as regular and important sources for censors' decisions, especially in times of stress. Finally, IECG checked for what has been censored during the process of post-publication censorship. Censors received feedbacks to their work in which errors in judgment were pointed out and explanations attached.

Though mentioning it only casually, Ermolaev's much briefer description of the internal mechanisms of Glavlit indicates nearly the same organizational tools to keep Soviet censors informed. Based on archival research, he outlines that next to the *Perechen*, additional help to censors was provided by the *Systematized Instructions of Glavlit,* a collection of major censorial directives, a booklet called *Instructions to the Railit Worker*, but censors systematically received various other kinds of documents, such as bulletins, circular letters and orders coming from their superiors and Party committees. (Ermolaev 1998: 6, 55) Without elaborating on it, he also mentions that „systematic courses, conferences, and lectures were conducted to raise the censors' qualification and ensure a uniform interpretation of Perechen' and other directives." (Ermolaev 1998: 144) Yet again, one can spot very similar organizational elements in studies handling the Romanian censorship system: a special department for instructions and control, various kinds of written instructions, training sessions, and activity reports submitted by censors, evaluations of the censors' work, and communication with senior officials on problematic issues. (Ficeac 1999: 47–50, 55, 93–98, Zainea 2005: 209–210, 215, 221–223, 234, 241–244)

To summarize, the organizational mechanisms enlisted here clearly indicate that serious attempts have been made on formal level to coordinate and control monitoring activities, that is, to instruct individuals (i.e. editors and censors) about the interpretation of censorship norms and check for their compliance. Moreover, it seems that there were many analogous mechanisms employed in different states. One of the shortcomings of these accounts is that they are highly descriptive and without a theoretical perspective on the appropriateness of these organizational mechanisms, particularly with regard to the challenge imposed by the ambiguity of censorship norms. Furthermore, even the most detailed accounts outline merely the channels of information transmission without an in depth analysis of specific documents and events (meetings, for instance); hence, fail to provide sufficient details about the specific purpose, form and content of these organizational tools that would allow for further analysis.

Except for a few particular aspects, even less systematically and attentively are treated the informal aspects of censorship, more precisely, the informal relationships between the chain of persons involved and their related practices. Almost an exclusive focus is dedicated to the role and activities of the editor-in-chief, while the remainder of the interest is centered on the overzealous deeds of the state censors and Party officials, and their *ad hoc* interferences. Apparently, the personality and personal relationships of the editor-in-chief was of utmost importance in tailoring the content of their publication, and also in negotiating allowances for the paper and staff they managed (Dzirkalis *et al.* 1982: 43–59, Boyer 2003: 529, Bozóki 1996: 441-443, Hegedűs 2001, Leftwich Curry 1990: 98–103). Through friends and cronies, editor-in-chief could appeal to their Party contacts to broaden the journals latitude, alter or completely reverse censors' decisions, and to protect their staff. Conversely, editors-in-chief lacking such ambitions, acted as the harshest political censor of their publication.

But a careful reading of various accounts on censorship practices, especially testimonies of first hand experiences, results in the identification of a plethora of other activities that can be

deemed as informal. Starting with the censors and censees relationship, next to tense relations and hostile reactions, interactions that "were hard for anyone but a martyr or a humorist to endure", there are plenty references to the various kinds of persons composing the censoring body, "some embittered, some mild, some intelligent, some dull", including "courteous and modest officials", "eager and very agreeable fellows", "mild and not terribly nasty", "very liberal and hardworking" persons too, "good people" representing the "hand of providence".[38]

As for informal practices, Leftwich Curry mentions, for instance, that Polish journalist used to check informally in advance with their editors about whether it is a publishable topic or approach, yet apparently they also influenced their colleagues' political work by giving them private counsel in the spirit of the "unspoken ethical code" of protecting each other from censorial harassment. (Leftwich Curry 1990: 115) It seems however that inquiring in advance about the acceptability of a piece of work was not reduced to the branch of publishers, but crossed organizational boundaries too. As former Polish and Soviet censors consonantly testify, authors used to contact them as well with this end in mind, although – and this remark is included here to substantiate the informal nature of these events –, according to the formal control procedure, censors had no direct contacts with the authors, for they had in-between the editorial offices or publishing houses.[39] It is also documented that some Polish, Hungarian and Soviet authors contacted censors with the request to endorse the publication of their work against the decision of the editor-in-chief or other controlling forums, or just to expedite the

[38] See Dušan Hamšik (editor-in-chief at *Literární novinyi*) about Czechoslovak censors (Schöpflin 1983: 14); Leonid Finkelstein's (writer, member of editorial board of the sournal *Znanie-sila*) and Boris Zaks' (journalist, member of the editorial bord of *Novyi mir*) estimation about Soviet censors (Tax Choldin and Friedberg 1989: 63, Zaks 1989: 158); Constantin Cubleşan (writer, editor at various literary journals, editor at the Dacia Publishing House) about several Romanian censors (Cubleşan 2012: 67).

[39] Solodin (Glavlit censor already cited) is quite eloquent in this sense: "Concerning relations, as a rule I had very nice relations with the major writers, which continue to this day. Many would consult with me during their work. I would tell them what would pass and what wouldn't. I was often the first unofficial censor." (Richmond and Solodin 1997: 583–584)
Polish censor K-62 also mentions a case when after receiving the first official feedback, the author contacted the office and rewrote the text together with the censor. The story ends with the remark: "In general, towards the more renowned citizens, the attitude of the censors was, how shall I put is, more elegant." (Schöpflin 1983: 109)

control and publication process.[40] Positive appreciation and sincere apologies for rejection addressed by Czechoslovak censors to the editors guide us again to suspect them slipping on the terrain of informality.[41]

Concerning the origins of these positive ties we have the most detailed picture for the relationships evolving between Polish journalist and the political elites, information that can be subtracted from a comprehensive analysis performed by Leftwich Curry with the aim to show how despite constant political interference Polish journalists managed to practice their profession, and act as independent forces in their society. (Leftwich Curry 1990) From the perspective of this literature review, the relevant information are those referring to the multitude of contexts in which journalists and professional officials dealt with political leaders. According to her analysis, many editors and journalists had family or childhood connections with political leaders, but repeated professional interactions could gain in time private overtones for their relationships. (Leftwich Curry 1990: 21, 174–178) Besides public and confidential formal meetings, journalists met "censors and other political figures" at various social events, including those organized by journalists, where they were invited in order to "lobby with them." (Leftwich Curry 1990: 149) These were the informal ties through which journalists managed to protect their professional interest, that is, gathering information, influence agenda setting, as well as protecting their own and each other's writings from censorial interventions.

Although most of the previously presented information appear only as incidental remarks in the works cited, they suffice for substantiating a systematic scrutiny of informal relationships

[40] For Polish editors activating their contacts to political elites with this aim see Leftwich Curry (1990: 156, 167–168), while for Hungarian authors contacting Party officials in charge with censorship against editorial decisions see Schöpflin (1983: 154–156). For Soviet authors activating their personal contacts to Glavlit censors in order to speed up the control procedure see Igor Birman's (economist, researcher) testimony in the volume of Tax Choldin and Friedberg (1989: 65). His contact from Glavlit was a censor in charge with controlling the Ekonomika publishing house, who happened to be one of his former students at the Economics Institute. (*ibid*.)
[41] Information provided by Dušan Hamšik, editor-in-chief at *Literání novinyi*, Czechoslovakia. Hamšik mentions for one of the cases that the censor was a former high school colleague. (Schöpflin 1983: 12, 13)

and related censorship practices. One can observe that, on the one hand, references to positive personal relationships and voluntary interactions clearly counterpoint accounts born in the spirit of the prevailing dichotomist approach to the functioning of censorship (separated camps of authors and "censors", clearly identified "victims" vs. faceless "torturers", constant "fight" etc.) On the other hand, they definitely add new insights into the story of self-censorship, which, as it was mentioned, represents one of the key elements serving the effectiveness of the Soviet-type censorship systems. Different practices in different countries point to the fact that self-censorship of authors and editorial offices was based not only on knowledge accumulated through personal experiences and guesses about the vague censorship norms, but it also implied a more active search for information, which was realized through informal information exchange between peers and censoring officials.

To summarize the main findings of this review, let me first reiterate the starting points of this exploration. The empirical puzzle being of how the effective functioning of the Soviet-type censorship systems was maintained under the conditions of ambiguous censorship norms, political science and organizational studies set the focus of analysis on internal formal coordination and control mechanisms and informal practices of the actors involved in the censorship process. The discussion of existing approaches and explanations concerning the functioning and high performance of the censorship, as well as identifying particular formal-technical mechanisms and informal practices relevant from the point of view of the research question, revealed that, on the one hand, extant analyses display some rather important shortcomings, while on the other hand, they provide sufficient information for grounding a systematic research on how coordination and control was realized.

I identified the following key problems. First, existing explanations to the performance of censorship fail to deliver a full account because they focus preponderantly to macro

institutional and organizational features. Second, even those studies that tackle internal organizational mechanisms and processes, with rare exceptions are not specifically designed to reflect on coordination and control mechanisms. Consequently, they do not treat this topic systematically and comprehensively, moreover, they do not have an analytical perspective over these issues that would allow for evaluating the employment of particular organizational tools. Third, there is a strong tendency to treat censorship stories as the fight of two camps, which considerably reduces research interest in studying the relationships and practices of the main actors involved.

Next to these problems however, the processed literature offers considerable evidence for an in-depth micro-level analysis of internal organizational processes and mechanisms, both formal and informal. On the one hand, various descriptive analyses show that serious efforts have been made in order to coordinate the work of the censorship apparatus by making use of different channels of information transmission for specifying vague and changing censorship norms. On the other hand, testimonies of first hand experiences point to divers informal practices, from which several counterpointing the dominant narrative in the literature. Though not interpreted in the conceptual framework of coordination and control, one can safely assume that the journalists' "unspoken ethical code" urging them for counseling each-other, as well as informal talks between censors and authors also contributed to the coordinated understanding of censorship norms, and eventually to "self-censorship", which is the third important phenomenon contributing to the effectiveness of censorship according to the literature.

Based on the presented findings, I propose a complementary account on the effective functioning of the Soviet-type censorship systems by treating systematically fine-grained internal organizational mechanisms and informal practices. The research contributes to extant explanations by studying micro-level organizational factors, uncovering various types of

informal practices, and by the integrated formal-informal perspective itself. These findings provide important insights into how the effectiveness of the censorship system was maintained on ground-level by daily work-related formal and informal mechanism.

1.5. Main arguments and findings

Though the present research is primarily empirically-driven, the study makes extensive use of theoretical concepts and models developed in the field of organizational studies and comparative politics. Insights of organizational studies were employed unaltered, whereas the various conceptual approaches to informality in political science literature and various models concerning the formal and informal interaction required more critical considerations. I will present first the theoretical insights and findings, then the results of the empirical analysis performed on the case of the Romanian censorship system (1949–1989).

From the field of organizational studies the structural contingency approach to organizational design was selected, because these theories specifically reflect on the fit between the challenges faced by the organization and the organizational structure. The approach implies that one has to start the analysis by observing the critical contingencies with which the organizations under scrutiny must deal in order to be effective, then turning to see whether or not these challenges are considered by the organizational design. This is precisely the way I proceed with the analysis of censorship, whereby the critical contingency is represented by the task uncertainty characterizing the censorship job. The theoretical bases for evaluating concrete organizational solutions employed within the censorship system are provided by mid-level structural contingency theories that discuss proper coordination and control mechanisms under task uncertainty.

Conversely, the critical review of the literature dealing with informality and the formal and informal interactions implied identifying the strengths and shortcomings of various

approaches to informality and that of the extant models. Concerning the conceptual approach, I argue that, for purposes of empirical research, the broader term of "informal practice" should be used instead of the more commonly employed "informal institution" conceptual framework, which primarily implies the study of consistently enforced informal rules; consequently, it excludes all instances that do not attain the status of institutions, although might have comparable impact on policy outcomes. The literature review also resulted a working definition to "informal practices", which guided data collection. The definition encapsulates the following elements: acts that function through different types of personal ties and make use of informal norms and particularistic considerations and obligations; furthermore, they take place in formally not codified settings and have various relationships to formal rule requirements and organizational goals.

The critical analysis of the three models of formal and informal interaction used in political science (Nee and Ingram 1998, Lauth 2000, Helmke and Levitsky 2006a) resulted in a novel conceptual/descriptive typology that seems to better accommodate salient forms of informal instances. Based on empirical testing and methodological considerations developed by Collier *et al* (2012), I conclude that the most frequently cited twofold typology developed by Helmke and Levitsky (2006a, 2012) is problematic. In short, they propose to classify informal institutions along the following dimensions: the degree of convergence between formal and informal institutional outcomes, and the effectiveness of the relevant formal institutions. The problem is that Helmke and Levistky seem to mix two different forms of typologies, namely, the conceptual and explanatory types. In a conceptual typology (for which their model actually qualifies), the categorical variables should capture the core attributes of the phenomenon under analysis, here the informal institutions. The second variable, however, which concerns the effectiveness of formal institutions, operationalized through expected sanctions for the violation of formal rules, cannot be said to represent a core

attribute of informal institutions. Consider just the case of competing informal institutions or practices, which can emerge regardless of the severity of sanctions. In the domain of censorship, the institution of samizdat comes immediately to one's mind, which was flourishing in the Soviet Union, for instance, in spite of the harsh Criminal Code. Yet, according to their typology, competing informal institutions can occur just under ineffective formal institutions.

Consequently, I argue that the dimension regarding the formal institutional effectiveness introduced by Helmke and Levitsky should be disregarded and to turn back to a conceptual typology based on the crucial and empirically readily identifiable categorical variable, that of compatibility between the formal and informal rules, as it was proposed by Nee and Ingram, and Lauth. The revised conceptual typology contains the similar labels used by Helmke and Levitsky: complementary, substitutive, accommodating and competing, yet the types are redefined according to relevant insights offered by all three typologies under scrutiny. Both complementary and substitutive informal rules are compatible with formal rules and contribute to the effective functioning of formal institutions. However, substitutive informal institutions work in parallel to formal ones (as suggested by Lauth). This distinguishes them from complementary informal institutions that "fill in gaps" of formal institutions. In case of accommodating informal institutions the formal and informal rules are at odds, yet the effectiveness of the relevant formal institution increases (as suggested by Nee and Ingram). The same incompatibility is displayed in the case of competing institutions, nevertheless, in this case the formal institutional performance decreases.

I consider that the same typology can be applied to informal practices too. Obviously, there are no informal rules at work to assess their compatibility with the relevant formal rules. Yet it is still possible to ascertain the compatibility of practices with formal rule requirements. Having the formal rules established, one can assess whether the informal practices

complement, substitute for, accommodate to or compete with formal organizational requirements.

Let me now turn to present the empirical findings of this research. The empirical analysis is a case study on the censorship mechanisms from Romania (1949–1989). For uncovering administrative arrangements, I employed a rather conventional approach for institutional analysis, whereas for uncovering everyday experiences and routines of organizational life, I made use of the methodological approach and techniques of organizational ethnography. The data are derived from both official and unofficial/subjective sources, that is, internal documents issued by organizations involved in censorship, and interviews, memoirs, diaries, personal correspondence of persons having first-hand experience with the censorship process, including writers, personnel of editorial offices and publishing houses, and censors.

The study of the formal functioning was narrowed down to the last linchpin in the censorship process, which was the censors' office (General Directorate of Press and Printing, 1949–1977), and even within this organization the focus was sharpened to the activity of censors working in the provinces. In short, the analysis was directed to see how local censors were instructed (coordination) and checked (control). The analysis of the documents circulated within the GDPP uncovered a multitude organizational means designed to ensure the coherence across the individual work of its employees, as well as their discipline, many of these having their analogous counterparts in other states. What it is even more important, these formal means of coordination and control employed met to surprising degrees theoretical provisions. Moreover, the relevance of their employment was partly validated by interviews conducted with censors.

Unlike the case of other policy domains where central planning and the hierarchical organizational principle proved to be disastrous (for instance, the economy), one can observe that this organizational structure fitted the needs of an effective censorship perfectly, because

it increased the information-processing capabilities of the organization: information regarding forbidden topics was centralized and then distributed through channels adjusted to the requirements of the tasks to be executed.

Hence, routine tasks of the censors and clearly definable issues such as concrete "state secrets and other information that were not indicated to be publicly available" were coordinated by rules periodically transmitted in various forms of directives, whereas standards concerning the more ambiguous domains of censorship such as the political and ideological expectations were set by promoting good practices. This is represented, for instance, by the rather detailed review of the censors' work on national level, entitled *Notes*, received periodically by the operative staff of the GDPP/CPP. Besides these impersonal methods of coordination, one can observe an emphatic reliance on different personal and group coordination methods by feedback, precisely what it is requested upon high levels of task uncertainty. Novel information concerning the underdefined and changing domain of "political and ideological mistakes" was introduced by detailed written assessments issued by superiors or via verbal communication upon personal request for solving particular issues. Further instructions were regularly received during the instructors' visit to the local censors' office and at the national or regional meetings of censors.

Besides, the GDPP/CPP also operated a fairly sophisticated control system that made possible a close supervision of individual censors. Bureaucratic control mechanisms included the recruitment process (input control), very detailed activity reports (process control) and post-publishing censorship performed by instructors (output control), regular controls at the workplace of censors, as well as a system of rewards and sanctions.

Interviews with censors partially validate and partially contradict conclusions arrived at by the analysis of the formal organizational mechanisms. The importance of personal coordination methods is underscored by pinpointing the visits of instructors to local offices,

as well as the personal horizontal information exchange between colleagues and with the editorial staff. Contrarily, neither the written feedbacks, nor the large-scale group meetings for instance were recognized by censors as important information sources. The same can be assessed with regard to controlling mechanisms too. Apparently, censors were not particularly impressed by sanctions meted out for "stupid" mistakes, and the recruitment was also not flawless. However, not being recognized as important organizational mechanisms, does not mean that it had no effect at all on the work or skills of censors; moreover, the overall impression of censors was that their activity was systematically and sufficiently monitored. Consequently, even by taking account of the contradictory evidence, on can conclude that from an organizational perspective the formal organizational mechanisms and processes were indeed properly designed for meeting the challenge of task uncertainty.

Now let me turn to the domain of everyday informal practices. An important characteristic of the formal censorship system was that many decisions were confidential, generating a sense of unpredictability and arbitrariness within the circle of editorial offices and publishing houses. To alleviate uncertainty related to the censorship norms and procedures, and to avoid possible retribution, people used personal networks to obtain information and influence decision making. The personal networks that span across formal organizational boundaries (editorial offices, censors' office, Party offices) provided a fertile ground for the emergence of various informal practices, which however had a double and exactly the opposite outcomes: activating relationships based on mutual respect or trust could slacken the borders between permitted and forbidden topics, but they could also reinforce the censorship norms.

Due to the nature of the relationship, the "command" could be easily transubstantiate into "forewarning", "notifying" or "help" interpreted mutually as benevolent gestures. Yet, and here comes the presentation of the first type of informal practices (1.), in the course of these interactions the editorial personnel received directions that were entirely in line with those

that could have been also transmitted and enforced through formal channels. In other words, certain informal practices simply supplemented or replaced the formal means of censorship; consequently, they can be considered complementary or substitutive informal practices. The similar effects had the information exchange between peers in publishing. These practices implying the spread of information concerning censorship norms could ultimately contribute to the self-censorship of authors and editorial offices, therefore, raised the effectiveness of censorship.

2. Out of their own initiative, authors and editors used to contact trusted censors with manuscripts before submitting it for checking and adjusted the writings according to the proposed changes. A rather similar practice consisted in approaching the person in charge with checking to get advance approval for publishing on a questionable topic. Obviously, editorial offices could have requested information or approval through formal channels too, so these informal practices had their formal counterparts. This makes them to be evaluated as substitutive informal practices. Although the bargaining over the manuscript could be exploited to bend the borders of censorship in favor of the editorial office (see this at the competing practices), these informal procedures also replicated formal control and ultimately contributed to the effective functioning of censorship.

3. In order to "alleviate" editorial work, that is, to overcome superfluous work of journalists or not to hinder work at typographies, "good censors" told them in advance about forbidden topics, names and works, in spite of the clear commands not to share these information. It is readily observable that these practices involved violating internal working dispositions of the censors' office, yet it clearly fostered organizational aims. Hence, these practices qualify for the accommodating category of informal practices.

4. Last but not least, due to informal contacts sometimes the norms of censorship could be loosed, and as a consequence, certain manuscripts could be published or were protected from

interdicting their circulation. On the one hand, this implied discussions, negotiations between the editors and the "good censors" (from the point of view of editorial personnel), and the commonly known activity of pulling strings on the other, that is, targeting the proper persons who could intervene on behalf of the texts. Acquiring information on secretly prepared decisions was equally important, because countermeasures could be taken before the final verdict was born. These practices qualify for the competing category of informal practices as they imply resisting formal rules and procedures in a clear attempt to divert expected formal outcomes.

To conclude, all four different types of informal practices can be identified in the domain of censorship, out of which one undermined it, whereas the others furthered the formal scopes of the censorship system. One can observe that there were differences in the level of awareness with regard to the effects of these pursuits. Informal warnings coming from controlling officials or peers (complementary practices) and leaking out confidential information (accommodating practices) were intended to help and definitely not to strengthen the censorship. Moreover, it left the players with the impression that it is a felicitous activity run at the back of power-holders. Contrarily, counseling and ensuring with controllers (substitutive practices) may have implied a more conscious alignment to the formal expectations. Nevertheless, all these practices were voluntarily employed within the coercive controlling system as a response to uncertainties related to the censorship norms and control procedures, and regardless of the intentions they contributed to the effective functioning of the formal system.

From a theoretical point of view it is important to remark that these activities could not have been described in terms of consistently enforced informal rules, and as a consequence, a conceptual framework of informal institutions would have missed to capture them. Furthermore, the actors followed different informal routes based on practical considerations,

and their activities had opposite impacts on the workings of the same formal institution, which is inconsistent with the concept of informal institutions.

1.6. Contribution to the literature

By shifting the perspective on the ambiguity of censorship norms as a political opportunity to a way of regarding it an administrative challenge, the present research contributes to an understanding of how the effective functioning of the Soviet-type censorship system was maintained on a micro organizational level and everyday practices. Despite the fact that the question of how the control apparatus managed to harmonize its internal functioning under the conditions of vaguely worded guidelines, as well as how the key actors involved in the censorship process handled uncertainty are central to our understanding of how the censorship system worked, this perspective has been largely ignored or superficially elaborated by extant empirical analyses.

Although basic institutional features of the state socialist regimes and the very dense network of controlling agencies definitely determine the possibility of a pervasive monitoring over mass media and cultural production, they merely set the framework of control, and key questions related to the actual implementation of the censorship policy remain unanswered. Likewise, the factor of self-censorship frequently mentioned in the literature unquestionably adds to the effectiveness of the censorship system, yet it appears to be an umbrella-term for various activities that was not the subject of a close scrutiny yet.

My research addressed these issues and related gaps in the literature by bringing together theoretical insights and empirical data concerning ground level formal and informal mechanisms that ensured coordination and control under the conditions of task uncertainty. The explanatory power of my analysis is raised on the one hand by the novelty of this approach, namely, accounting both for formal and informal practices, and by employing well

defined analytical frameworks for identifying, interpreting and evaluating mechanisms belonging to these two domains. Techniques of data collection and analysis also display an innovative approach, as conventional methods of organizational and institutional analysis were combined with ethnographic methods. It is worth pointing out that the study of the "hidden" or below-the-surface aspects of organizational life is usually challenged by the availability and reliability of information, nevertheless, this was successfully solved in this research by the combination of a wide variety of subjective sources, created both after (interviews and memoirs) and simultaneously with the events (personal diaries and contemporary correspondence). Furthermore, collating official and unofficial sources allowed for cross-check the reliability of particular information, as well as to test and nuance my own interpretations.

Ethnographic work on the everyday interactions of the persons involved in the censorship process revealed the multifaceted relationships between the controllers and controlled and stable patterns of practices based on these informal nexuses. Looking beyond the stereotypical relationships between the "oppressors" and "victims", and their "fight", or techniques to "cheat", "outsmart" or "appease" censors, the analysis exposed positive informal relationships and cooperative behavior of the censoring officials and producers of culture. Hence, the findings of my research considerably alter the dominant narrative about the functioning of censorship as well.

I seems important to note that my study accommodates well into the stream of research that goes beyond the cold-war paradigm that presents the functioning of the state socialist regimes in antagonistic binary categories (i.e. state vs. society, us vs. them, oppression vs. resistance etc.) or conceives oppressive policies to be implemented by a top-down *fiat*. I consider Kligman and Verdery's (2011) book, *Peasants Under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949–1962*, exemplary for this kind of scholarly ambition.

In this book, Kligman and Verdery (2011) examine of how collectivization was localized in village social relations, thus their attention is focused on the micro-levels of the collectivization process. As the authors pinpoint, this is important because collectivization represented the social engineering project that was the most crucial in creating the Party-state and its subjects. Downwards and upwards influences, interactions between the Party agents, Securitate and peasantry eventually reshaped the Soviet blueprint, and lead to the formation of the Romanian Communist Party-state with its accompanying subjectivities and social relations. From the perspective of my own research topic and methods applied, it is reinforcing that Klingman and Verdery's study implied a scrutiny of the intricate relationships and interactions of (mostly ill-trained and unconvinced) local Party cadres and villagers, and the Party's efforts to create its cadres by continuous instruction and surveillance. Second, to accomplish their project, they employed methods of historical ethnography based on mixed primary sources, official documents and extensive interviews. And finally, as they emphasize, the inquiry implied to "recuperate" the Party cadres from a long tradition of demonization in both the scholarly literature and popular imagination.

Turning back to the implications of my own research, it is safe to argue that the theoretical approaches employed, as well as the empirical findings offer a proper framework for identifying and evaluating formal and informal censorship mechanisms in other state socialist countries. But proving that a scrutiny of the micro-foundations of censorship results substantial and interesting insights about the functioning of censorship has broader relevance than understanding the functioning of the state Soviet-type censorship systems. One might be inspired by the present analysis to have a close look on mechanisms that mediate policy implementation under other types of non-democratic regimes too, that is, within different institutional and organizational configurations.

Finally, the research brings a theoretical contribution to the literature of informality in political science both in what concerns conceptualizations and models of interactions between formal and informal interactions. The increased analytical power of the conceptual framework and refined typology is demonstrated by empirical evidence drawn from the case of the Romanian censorship system.

1.7. Structure of the dissertation

The following chapter, Chapter 2 namely, presents elements of the research design such as the combined methodological approach, the methods of data collection and analysis (2.1), the case selection and narrowing strategies (2.2), the primary sources (2.3), and finally, implications and limitations resulting from the research design (2.4).

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical foundations for data collection and analysis of the formal working of the censorship system. It contains arguments for employing the conceptual framework of structural contingency approach to organizational design and clarifies its core tenets and concepts (3.1), as well as for considering task uncertainty a critical contingency of censorship (3.2). The subsequent section brings together structural contingency theories reflecting on the challenge of task uncertainty, and presents particular organizational mechanisms needed under these circumstances (3.3). The last section summarizes theoretical claims and concrete steps to be taken in empirical analysis (3.4).

Chapter 4 is dedicated to issues of informality. First, I discuss conceptualizations of informality in political science, and develop an argument for employing the term "informal practice" (4.1). Second, I present and compare available typologies of formal and informal interactions, than turn to a more detailed critical review of Helmke and Levitsky's model, and finally craft a revised conceptual typology of informal institutions/practices (4.2). Again, the

last section provides a summary of the key theoretical points that guide the present empirical research (4.3).

Having established the theoretical framework, the next two chapters contain the empirical analysis. Chapter 5 starts with the presentation of the grand design, so the main institutional components of the Romanian censorship system (5.1), and the changes occurred in its functioning (5.2), as well as an in-depth analysis of the coordination and control mechanisms employed within the censors' office, which includes a scrutiny of the everyday usage, attitudes and behavior of censors concerning these mechanisms (5.3). The chapter ends with a section dedicated to conclusions (5.4).

Chapter 6 presents the informal ties and practices occurring in the Romanian censorship system. I start with the profile of the key actors involved into the censorship process, more exactly, the profile of the "good editor-in-chief" and the "good censor" as conceived by the editorial personnel, as well as the "good report", a strategic tool used by editors-in-chief in their dealings with controlling forums (6.1). Subsequently, I present certain characteristics of the informal information exchange and positive informal nexuses harnessed by the main actors, ties that span across formal organizations and fostered informal practices (6.2). In the next section, I supply further examples of informal practices, this time however grouped according to the typology of informal practices. I depict instances when competing informal practices stretched the boundary between forbidden and permitted topics on behalf of the publication, and conversely when complementary, accommodating and substitutive informal practices reinforced censorship norms (6.3). The chapter too ends with concluding remarks (6.4).

In the last chapter, that is Chapter 7, I bring together the main areas covered by the dissertation (7.1), briefly reiterate the theoretical and empirical findings (7.2) and discuss

their broader implications (7.3). I close the dissertation with acknowledging the limitation of the present research (7.4) and suggestions for further research (7.6).

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter presents the research design and outlines the specific procedures used in conducting this study. It proceeds in four parts. In the first part, I discuss the methodological approaches on which my empirical research rests: an institutional analysis and an ethnographic approach. The discussion includes the rationale for the combination of these two approaches, specifications concerning the type of ethnographic work I pursue (organizational ethnography, neopositivist ethnographic approach, historical setting), and explanations and illustrations concerning concrete techniques of data collection and analysis corresponding to the two methodological approaches. The second section presents the case selection strategy, the typical case study method namely, and related consideration based on which Romania was selected to represent the population of "Soviet-type censorship system." This section also contains arguments for particular focuses and narrowing aspects employed within the case study. The third part contains a detailed description of the primary sources used to access data, sources that are classified according their nature into two major groups: official and subjective (unofficial or private) sources. Next to information such as the size, availability, or time period covered by various documentary sources, the discussion includes assessments concerning the reliability/trustworthiness of information offered by particular genres of subjective sources (interviews, memoirs, diaries, and personal correspondence) and the methodological benefits deriving from their combined usage. The final section accounts for the strengths and weaknesses, the utility of findings and constraints on generalizability resulting from the research design.

2.1. Methodological approaches, data collection and analysis

Documenting fine-grained formal and informal mechanisms that sustained the effective functioning of the censorship system under the circumstances of ambiguous censorship norms, calls for the combination of two methodological approaches. On the one hand, for uncovering administrative arrangements with regard to this specific aspect of censorship, the analysis requires a rather conventional approach to institutional analysis, which implies describing the organizational architecture, identifying, categorizing and evaluating written organizational rules and regulations. On the other hand, for getting acquainted with everyday experiences and routines of organizational life involved in the execution of the censorship policy, and the domain of informality, the research demands the employment of an ethnographic methodological approach. (See Schatz 2009, Ybema *et al.* 2009, Eberle and Maeder 2011) Given the setting or "field" in the focus of my analysis, work-related activities and processes situated in organizational context namely, the narrower analytical framework that proved to be appropriate was organizational ethnography. (Ybema *et al.* 2009: 4)

Insights offered by each of these two methodological approaches are crucial for a complete understanding of the each other's main research-subject. Understanding why and how people manage their day-to-day situations in a particular organizational context is obviously not achievable without learning relevant formal functional aspects of the system. *Vice versa*, making assessments concerning the implementation of formal rules is not possible without a perspective on actual practices, as formal rules merely highlight how people ought to act rather than telling about how people actually take actions. In what follows, I will describe in details data collection and processing methods employed in the present research corresponding to the two methodological approaches, with an additional excursion concerning the research field of organizational ethnography.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, data collection and analysis of the formal mechanisms was guided by theoretical claims formulated structural contingency theories. The selection criteria for relevant organizational mechanisms were the following: they specify or refine censorship norms and enable coordination, and permit of control. Subsequently, organizational means identified were separately analyzed. They were categorized according to the selection criteria (coordination, control, and combined functions), and special attention has been paid to the specific coordination methods applied: impersonal or personal. Furthermore, the analysis of these organizational means involved a description of their general scope and usage (structure, frequency, problems concerning their application etc.), but also a close scrutiny and interpretation of the particular requirements attached to their employment.

To illustrate this last point, I present here a part from the analysis of one of the most obvious means of control, the internal activity reports submitted by local branches of the censors' office to the specialized division of the central office. After inspecting a few reports, one can immediately observe that they had to be prepared after a well-specified model. Press-interventions, for instance, had to be documented with the following data: quotation from the original text and the related reference material, justification for the intervention, solution (deletion or changes), the modified text, and the name of the censor who executed the intervention. One can infer from these requirements the following: first, supervisors kept track of each censors' work separately; second, by asking for the reason of intervention it was tested the censor's knowledge of the censorship norms, and filter out the possibility that they might want to act out of instinct instead of consciously following instructions. This interpretation is fully supported by another organizational tool analyzed, the feedback of supervisors, which represents a personal coordination method. For the sake of this illustration, suffices here to mention that interventions were rated as "good", "unjustified"

and “missed”, and even if the modification was confirmed, the spotted erroneous argument was brought into the censors’ attention, hence, serving with further clarifications about the censorship norms. Furthermore, the feedback contained personalized remarks about the delegates’ work.

Let me now turn to the other component of the research, the one performed according to ethnographic methodology. As previously mentioned, the present research qualifies as organizational ethnography. Before presenting the concrete techniques of data collection and analysis, it seems appropriate to introduce briefly this research-field, and specify what distinguishes organizational ethnography from other ethnographical research on the one hand, and what organizational ethnography offers compared to other approaches to the study of organizations on the other.

According to the overview offered by Ybema *et al.* in the introductory and closing chapter to the volume entitled *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life* (2009), what distinguishes organizational ethnography from other ethnographies specialized on different aspects of human life (religion, professions and occupation, social movements and others) is it in its focus: organizations and organizational processes, more precisely various phenomena (human relationships, work, politics, culture, economics etc.) situated in organizational context. (Ybema *et al.* 2009: 4, Yanow and Geuijen 2009: 255) Due to the wide variety of forms and scopes of organizations, studies referred to as organizational ethnography cover a wide spectrum of organizational settings: commercial or public, political or bureaucratic, territorially-based or virtual, hierarchically-led or network-shaped and others. Likewise, with regard to their topic and theoretical perspectives, relevant studies can examine a multitude of phenomena: organizational design or change, power relations, the role of agency and context, social or other identities, culture etc. (Yanow and Geuijen: 253–281)

The settings and research topics of organizational ethnography are very similar to that featuring in organizational studies scholarship. (Yanow and Geuijen 2009: 255) Therefore, the obvious question is what distinguishes organizational ethnography from other approaches to the study of organizations, and, more importantly, how does it contribute to our understanding of organizational life? These are summarized by Ybema *et al.* (2009) in seven key points: 1. distinctive set of methods, that is, combined fieldwork methods (observation, interviews, critical analysis of texts etc.) for generating data; 2. complexities of organizational life are not reported in abstract terms, but in detailed or "thick" descriptions that place the reader "on the scene" and confer trustworthiness to interpretations; 3. revealing un-noticed, tacitly known and/or concealed aspects of organizational life; 4. context sensitive and actor centered analysis, that is, combining an orientation toward subjective experience and individual agency in everyday life with sensitivity to the broader social, institutional contexts in which these emerge or are embedded. (Ybema *et al.* 2009: 6–7) The last two points are directly relevant to my research that is oriented to unfold precisely these aspects of organizational life executing the censorship policy. The further three characteristics apply to the constructivits-interpretivist wing of ethnographical research: 5. studying the organizational actors' own sense- or meaning-making process; 6. uncovering the multiplicity of voices and interpretations that create and recreate the stages and stories of organizational life; and finally, 7. inquiring about the researchers' own meaning-making process, called reflexivity and positionality. (Ybema *et al.* 2009: 7–9)

The value and power of ethnography lies in its capacity to get closer to the ground, in unfolding hidden aspects of organizational life, particularly the informal dimensions of organizing and organizations, gaining insights into the actors' intentions and self-understandings, and identifying cross influences between micro-scale processes and the

broader institutional contexts. To summarize, this kind of research "can lead to a fuller, more grounded, practice-based understanding of organizational life." (Ybema *et al.* 2009: 2)

Moving towards the description of my own research, I want to signal first that despite the fact that I study discrepancies between formal procedures and informal practices, front stages and back stages of organizational life, so I handle organizational life as being complex, multilayered and multivocal, my ethnographic approach is not interpretivist but neopositivist. (See Kubik 2009: 30–36, Schatz 2009: 12–14, Ybema *et al.* 2009: 7–9) I do not attempt to decipher the actors' sense of social reality or their diverging interpretations, and the "constructed realities", rather I search for data and information which I consider that correspond to an objective reality, such as the nature of the relationship between the persons and the actual activities they were engaged.

Second, my work does obviously not rest on direct observations performed on the scene, which is the prime method of ethnographic data collection according both to Ybema *et al.* (2009), and Eberle and Maeder (2011: 53) dealing specifically with methodological aspects of organizational ethnography. Yet my work seeks intimate knowledge of relationships between actors engaged in specific work-related processes from organizations that no longer exist. The authors just cited completely ignore the possibility to study past organizational life (except for admitting that particular historical circumstances might have an influence on phenomena studied "in live"),[42] based on already settled disciplinary approaches in history and anthropology/ethnography, anthropological history and historical anthropology/ethnography namely, one can conclude with certainty that a historical perspective is surely not at odds with ethnographic methodology; consequently, it can be

[42] See also the annotated bibliography compiled by Yanow and Geuijen (2009), and included into the Ybema *et al*. (2009) volume, which contains no entries for organizational ethnography studying past events.

employed in organizational ethnography too.[43] Furthermore, qualifying the method of participant observation as the quintessence of ethnography cannot be sustained either, as there are plenty of non-participatory ethnographic studies written from both on interpretivist and positivist epistemological stances.[44]

As observing in real time was not an option in my research, the challenge was to identify sources that allow for getting as close as it is possible to the field. Events, attitudes and practices are reconstructed from written and oral accounts of first-hand experiences (discussed at greater length in section 2.3), the analysis resulting in "sufficiently thick" descriptions, as relevant from the point of view of the research question. (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2009: 60)

The techniques of empirical investigation are combined; they consist of interviews and a "close reading" of various written materials which record subjective experiences, such as memoirs, diaries and personal correspondence. The term "close reading" actually covers various analytic methods used by interpretive methodologies, such as discourse analysis, critical content analysis, conversation analysis, "textual ethnography" etc. (See Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006, Ybema *et al.* 2009) Here is simply to denote a close attention to details concerning perceptions, attitudes, events and interactions.

In accordance with the increasingly salient feature of the ways ethnography is being done in the field of organizations according to Ybema *et al.*, I did not try to capture the entire

[43] On the differences in the research programs of anthropological history and historical anthropology see Kalb *et al.* (1996). On the history of anthropological history, so its detachment from the field of social history, influences received from other disciplines such as social anthropology and ethnography, as well as from disciplines within the domain of historiography, such as the history of mentalities, history of the family, *Alltagsgeschichte* (history of everyday life), history of popular culture, see Van Dülmen (2004). Apparently, there is still certain urge to stress the benefits of exchange between historical and anthropological research. Precisely with this aim, diverse inquiry into "the problem of agency and subjectivity *vis-á-vis* the powers of the law or the state" pursued by anthropologists and historians are collected in the volume entitled *Exploring the Boundaries Between History and Anthropology* edited by Tagliacozzo and Willford (2009). (Tagliacozzo and Andrew Willford 2009: 4)

[44] This is well illustrated in the matrix elaborated by Kubik that contains examples drawn mostly from comparative politics and categorized along the dimensions of ontological/epistemological approach and the research technique of participant/nonparticipant observation. (Kubik 2009: 29)

organizational system and functioning, rather I followed in the available narratives the persons and specific practices. (See Ybema *et al.* 2009: 5) More precisely, I traced the personal relationships of the informant, especially those overlapping with formal ties and crossing organizational boundaries, and their allied practices.

The concrete analytical process involved reading and coding published texts and interview transcripts, which was similar in many aspects to the coding-process employed in grounded theory methods. (Strauss and Corbin 1998) First, information related to the censorship process were identified, such as references to preparation of particular works, organizations and monitoring procedures, persons involved in the censorship process and others. These were broken down to discrete parts, and then clustered into subcategories and categories, such as "relationship" (emerging out of references to positive or negative, formal or more personal ties), "source of information concerning censorship norms" (formal or informal), "actors and interactions" (interaction between peers, between censors, and between censors and editors), "censorship practices" (formal processes, informal practices).

However, the central organizing concept, namely informal mechanisms, which represents the prime theme of the research, was established in advance by theoretical insights, as well as the conceptual relationships between categories (such as between informal ties and informal practices). Likewise, labeling and characterization of types of practices composing the category of informal practices was theoretically set in advance. Therefore, the present analysis certainly does not qualify for grounded theory methodology.

Still, on the one hand, borrowing the logic of multilevel systematic coding was helpful in identifying, processing and presenting relevant information. On the other hand, generation of potential themes and subcategories indeed arose from the text, which is especially visible in the process of recognizing different informal practices. Recoding was continued until saturation – yet another methodological guideline provided by grounded theory methodology

–, that is, until no new patterns of practices emerged. The term "(theoretical) saturation" denotes that no new properties or dimensions emerge from the data, and the analysis has accounted for much of the possible variability; in other words, any new data would only add, in a minor way, to the variations of major patterns. (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 158, 212, 292) This observation is to underline that data collection and processing was not conceived in a way to fill out boxes in a theoretically prepared matrix, but first groups of practices were identified, which were subsequently placed into the typology.

By way of conclusion, I would like to highlight three interrelated analytic benefits that derive from combining different methodological approaches. First, the combination of the methods of conventional institutional analysis and neopositivist ethnographic approach is complementary in the sense that describing the formal functioning offers a baseline against to which assess the emergence of informality, and conversely, the scrutiny of everyday practices provides information about the actual enforcement of formal requirements. Second, the combination of the two approaches results an interpretive perspective that is closer to the everyday realities of censorship processes. Third, the resulted narrative substantially differs from analyses based merely on official documents, as well as from extant biased representations of the relationships between different actors involved in censorship and their practices.

2.2. Case selection

The present empirical analysis is based on the intensive study of a single case, that is, the Romanian censorship system in the state socialist period (1949–1989). The case selection strategy qualifies for the "typical case" study method, which means focusing on a case (one or more) that exemplifies a stable, cross-case relationship. (Seawright and Gerring 2008: 299)

Here, the Romanian case is meant to represent the population of state socialist countries employing "Soviet-type censorship system".

Choosing Romania might seem surprising, because it differed in many aspects from the other Eastern and Central European states, for instance in its nationalist third way or sultanistic characteristics of the Ceauşescu-regime, which decisively influenced the severity and the targets of censorship, implying prescriptive elements concerning the "protochronist" interpretation of the Romanian history and culture, or the personality cult of the "ruling dynasty." At the moment of the collapse of the regime, a much severe censorship was practiced there compared to the other socialist "sister countries." Nevertheless, as it was shown in the section dedicated to the literature review on the formal functioning of the Soviet-type censorship system (1.4.2), the formal institutional structures and organizational configuration of these countries resembled to a great degree in a cross-case perspective, including even certain detailed internal organizational solutions and processes. So, Romania was selected of the possible cases based on a set of common descriptive characteristics. But its representativeness for the population is retroactively enforced by findings of the present analysis, for instance, the very similar methods of coordination employed within the censors' office from Poland and Romania, but also by findings regarding informal relationships and practices. Based on these, I consider that Romania can be safely handled as a typical case of Soviet-type censorship.

Pragmatic reasons also played a role in case selection. Sources to analyze the formal functioning of the censorship system are more or less accessible in Romania, and there is a relatively large pool of sources for studying relevant informal practices too. Last but not least, I possess the necessary level of language skills to process different genres of texts which often border (or are intended to be) literary creations, the memoirs for instance.

Within the case, the object of the study was narrowed from multiple perspectives. The study of formal mechanisms was limited to one organizational component of the censorship system, the censors' office namely, whereas the study of informal mechanisms was focused on exploring informal practices derived from positive interpersonal relationships.

With regards to formal mechanisms of coordination and control, the focus was narrowed down from two related perspectives. On the one hand, the analysis only covers the internal functioning of the censors' office, the GDPP/CPP (1949–1977), and within the limits of available data its successor organization, CSCE (from 1977 onwards). On the other hand, I only study the coordination and control of censors working in the provinces.

By focusing on the GDPP/CPP I neither intend to suggest that they represented the linchpin of the whole censorship system, nor that their internal administrative solutions were responsible for the effectiveness of the whole censorship system. They represented however the last organizational step in the monitoring procedure, so final approval for print or public presentation came from these offices. This status confers sufficient reasons to pick this office for illustrating attempts of coordination and control within the organizational architecture of the censorship system. The second step of narrowing, zooming on the local censors namely, is justified by the fact that this locus inherently represents challenges of nation-wide coordination. It can be regarded even as a least likely setting for successful operation of the censorship machinery, because censors' offices from the provinces were set geographically far from the center, and hence coordination and control through immediate and direct interaction could have not been employed as a rule. Moreover, apart from licensing new periodicals, censors from the provinces had to accomplish all the tasks of the GDPP/CPP at the local level.

Though it would have been interesting to provide at least a brief account for coordination and control mechanisms working inside the other agencies involved into the censorship procedure

as well (such as the functioning other central state institutions, the Head Administration of Book Production and Distribution (*Centrala editurilor şi difuzării cărţii*) for instance, editorial offices, publishing houses, specialized departments of the Party etc.), this had implied extra efforts and time I did not possess in carrying out the present research project. Moreover, internal official documents for these (types of) organizations are still not available in the archives in the amount, coherence and depth the GDPP/CPP is documented.

Nevertheless, on the one hand, a focus on the censors' office can be considered justified from a methodological point of view. On the other hand, actors of other agencies feature in the analysis when discussing the domain of informal practices.

Concerning the study of informal mechanisms, the analysis is specifically focus on positive interpersonal relationships between the actors of the censorship system, particularly those nurtured among the controllers and controlled, and the related informal practices. The option for this narrowing aspect is fairly straightforward: this is the most neglected aspect of the censorship process, and this domain definitely represents more puzzling issues with regard to its functioning and impact on the effectiveness of censorship than the negative relationships and corollary activities.

2.3. Primary sources

The evidentiary base for this analysis includes information gathered from two types of primary sources: official documents and subjective (private or unofficial) sources.[45] The second group constitutes of personal reflections, written or oral accounts of those who witnessed the events related to the censorship process. The formal design takes shape out of a wide variety of documents, like legal norms, internal orders, circular letters, reports, minutes of meetings, lectures and discussions, statistical tables, and so forth. Likewise, the primary

[45] Primary sources are grouped and enlisted in the Appendix.

sources used for examining everyday practices and issues belonging to the domain of informality are of different genres, such as diaries, personal correspondence, memoirs and interviews. These testimonials create a valuable evidentiary base for claims concerning the sphere of informality and everyday activities, the study of which is usually hindered precisely by the paucity of proper sources.

Gathering information from sources of different nature and of different categories allows for obtaining complementary data, but also for cross checking the reliability of particular information. The importance of collating official documents and information obtained from subjective sources is not validated only by depicting discrepancies between formal rules and actual practices, but also because legal norms or official reports may give a distorted image even on the level of formal architecture of the system, as – characteristically to the functioning of the regime – certain organizational elements were not properly implemented or did not work at all. For instance, after abolishing the censors' office at the end of the 1970's, certain managing committees composed of representatives of different controlling forums were set up to guide and check the media and cultural institutions. Interpreted by analysts as a gesture to decentralize and enhance closer monitoring, subjective sources testify that these committees actually did not work.[46] Conversely, one of the most deeply ingrained assumptions concerning the censors' activity, namely, there was an institutional link between the censors' office and the secret police, is clearly refuted by official documents at least at the lowest hierarchical levels of the two organizations.[47]

In what concerns the subjective sources, combining sources of information created *post facto* (interviews and memoirs) and simultaneously with the events (personal diaries and contemporary correspondence) counterbalances problems of recall, but it also corrects *post hoc* rationalization biases and those derived from the pressures of current political and

[46] See chapter 5.2.
[47] See chapter 5.1.

mainstream academic discourse prone to stigmatizing the "censors" and collaboration with them. Interviewees are often motivated to conceal (or deny) proscribed behavior or depicting them as accidental situations, in this case, for instance, the cooperative attitude between the editorial offices and censorship forums. Issues of "collaboration" were hotly debated after the regime change, ranking people within the exclusive categories of "resistant" and "collaborator". Furthermore, being a "censored author", a victim of the regime, qualifies the author both professionally and morally. A piece of work disliked by the Communist authorities must have been something "good", and the censored work is conceived as clear indicator that the author did not conform to the standards imposed by the regime, which is a credit going to the author again. Consequently, there is a tendency to emphasize the bad experiences. Yet contemporaneous records provide conclusive evidence of close informal cooperation.

Many times, the lack of internal consistency of these sources was challenging, but piecing together scattered information eventually resulted in establishing patterns of mechanisms and interactions. In what follows, I describe in more details the two types of sources from which the evidence for this analysis was produced.

Official documents

For the analysis of the formal design of the censorship system I use primarily legal norms and other types of official documents. These are available in state archives and in recently published collections of documents that focus on different fields affected by censorship, namely, libraries, theater and literature.[48]

Particularly for the working of the censors' office I use archived internal documents from 1949 to 1977, which can be accessed at the Central Historical National Archives, the vast Fond of Press and Printing Committee, and at the National Archives – Mureş County Branch,

[48] Costea *et al.* (1995), Ficeac (1999), Maliţa (2006), Mocanu (2001, 2003), Corobca (2012)

a fond containing the documents preserved from the activity of the local censors' office responsible for Mureş county for the period between 1962–1977, as well as a few dossiers to be found at the Covasna County Branch.[49] The material from the Mureş County Branch is exceptional in the sense that most of the local censorship materials were moved to Bucharest, selected and rearranged during the archival process performed in the 1980's to be included into the previously mentioned Fond. About half of the documents was destroyed (Ficeac 1999: 37), and some dossiers from the Fond of Press and Printing Committee are still classified in spite of the legal norms in force and of being recorded in the catalogue[50]

A consistent analysis would imply to identify similar mechanisms based on similar types of sources up until the end of the studied period. There are, however, serious problems with the accessibility of documents issued by the institutions that undertook the job of censorship in 1977, the Council for Socialist Culture and Education (CSCE). There are no traces in the national archives of these documents yet, and apparently in certain counties they were submitted to the archives by the institutional inheritor at the beginning of 2013.[51] This means that it will take a couple of more years until they become available for researchers. There is however a published collection of documents concerning theater censorship (Maliţa 2006), which contains documents issued by various organs of the CSCE (without any reference to the location of the originals). I also consulted the Fond of Central Committee of the RCP

[49] Central Historical National Archives (Arhivele Naţionale Istorice Centrale), Bucharest, Fond Comitetul pentru Presă şi Tipărituri (ANIC F. CPT).
National Archives – Mureş County Branch (Direcţia Judeţeană a Arhivelor Naţionale Mureş), Târgu-Mureş, Fond Comitetul pentru Presă şi Tipărituri Tîrgu-Mureş (henceforth ANDJM F. CPT).
National Archives – Covasna County Branch (Direcţia Judeţeană a Arhivelor Naţionale Covasna), Sfântu Gheorghe, Fond Comitetul pentru Presă şi Tipărituri – Direcţia Generală a Presei şi Tipăriturilor (henceforth ANDJ Covasna F. CPT).

[50] One must be aware that the year indicated on the dossier frequently does not coincide with the date of issue of the documents included, so the document might be either older or younger.

[51] Formally, it is rather hard to decipher who the legal inheritor of this institution is, though it is a common knowledge that currently is the Directorate for Culture and National Cultural Heritage (Direcţia Judeţeană pentru Cultură şi Patrimoniul Naţional) functioning on county level under the Ministry of Culture. For instance, in Cluj county, the CSCE material was stored (in precarious conditions) for more than two decades in the basement of the Tawn Hall of the municipality of Cluj-Napoca, being submitted to the local archives at the beginning of 2013. (Verbal communication by Cubleşan, deputy director of DJCPN Cluj, in April 2013).

where I have found a few dossiers concerning the activity of CSCE in the sections of Organization, and Agitation and Propaganda, respectively (1977–1989). Furthermore, I went through 28 dossiers comprising reports, correspondence, activity plans, minutes of the (theater) visioning committee and other documents of the Covasna county CSCE (1977–1989).[52] Unfortunately, the available documents do not offer sufficient information concerning the specific coordination and control of CSCE employees.

With regard to official documents issued in the period of state socialism, a major worry is the degree to which they are shaped by ideological concerns. But, to remind, my primary aim when consulting these documents was to identify the means of coordination and control employed within the system of censorship, therefore, the main question was about the function fulfilled by different types of documents circulated within the system. Furthermore, contrarily to the stereotypes regarding the content and style of "the Communist report", the censors' reports and the feedbacks for instance, are far from contain just stock-phrases, rather there is a big amount of useful information, frequently written in a very personal tenor.

Subjective (personal, unofficial) sources

My inquiry in the domain of informality started with an ill-fated survey designed to be conducted with former censors concerning their everyday task execution. The more or less enthusiastic respondents were rather intrigued by my questions, kept diverting from the pathways I was trying to dictate and repeatedly brought into my attention that I might miss more important issues than formal attempts to check their performance for instance. The side-stories proved to be so enlightening in formulating new lines of inquiry that I dropped the survey-like questions in favor of semi-structured interviews. So, between November 2009 and February 2010, I conducted interviews with nine former employees of the GDPP/CPP

[52] Digital copies received from József Lőrincz, who accessed them before being subjected to the official archiving process.

and 13 representatives of mass media and different cultural institutions from the provinces (adding two more interviews later), that is editors-in-chief, journalists and directors. Due to changes of one's workplace, that includes the transfers of the censors too (for instance, to editorial offices), I had the opportunity to have a glance on the functioning of many different institutions (newspaper and radio editorial offices, publishing house, library, theatre, museum) before and after 1977, when the firs censors' office was abolished.[53] At the time of the interviews, the most astonishing information got from the respondents was about the good relationships between the local censors and editorial offices.

Being more and more interested in the nature of the relationships between the agents of censorship and their practices, I searched for further testimonies, the result being that I discovered a rich and still expanding pool of subjective sources. The largest part of these sources has been published since the end of the 1990's, hence, some of them being available for a relatively long time now. For the purposes of this analysis, I processed more than 50 interviews, a corpus of autobiographical materials that comprises memoirs and other personal accounts having an autobiographical orientation of 25 persons, 4 diaries and personal correspondence.

Together with my own interviews, the informants cover the whole spectrum of the actors involved into the censorship process: employees of editorial offices, publishing houses and other cultural institutions, Party officials and state officials and (freelance) authors. I must also note that there is a great degree of overlapping with regard to these statuses.

[53] Data was obtained regarding the practices of the following institutions: the Romanian (*Orizont*, *Drapelul Roşu*), Hungarian (*Szabad Szó*) and Serbian (*Banatske Novine*) newspapers, the publishing house (*Editura Facla*) and German radio editorial office from Timişoara; the Hungarian newspaper (*Vörös Lobogó*) from Arad; the Hungarian newspaper (*Megyei Tükör*) and the Covasna county's Library from Sfântu Gheorghe; the Hungarian (*Hargita*) and the Romanian (*Informaţia Harghitei*) newspapers from Miercurea Ciuc; the Hungarian (*Brassói Lapok*) and the German (*Karpatenrundschau*) newspapers from Braşov; the Hungarian (*Igazság*) newspaper and journal (*Korunk*) from Cluj, and the German theatre playing group from Sibiu. Except for the cultural journal *Orizont* and *Korunk*, and the literary weekly *Karpatenrundschau* the previously mentioned periodicals represent Party newspapers.
Regarding the local censorship offices, members of the following local collectives were contacted: Arad, Timişoara, Sfântu Gheorghe, Braşov, and Miercurea Ciuc.

One of the most useful source of information is represented by Bányai's (2006) collection of interviews comprising 17 structured interviews (with a question dedicated to censorship) conducted by her with leaders and employees of Hungarian institutes founded in Bucharest at the end of the 1960's and the beginning of the 1970's. The other collection comprises seven structured interviews with former journalists of the Romanian central daily of the Party and the Union of Communist Youth (questions about everyday activities in editorial offices), conducted by Boboc in 2005 and and published online in 2010.[54] And of course, there is the well-known collection of interviews made with 26 Romanian authors, conducted and edited by Vianu (1998), the sole publication available in English within this genre.[55]

Memoirs can be considered very similar to the interviews as both are personal accounts and depending on memory. Consequently, they carry similar methodological problems in terms of reliability when it comes to establish "true" facts. In case of memoirs, however, the less external control is counterbalanced by no influence of the interviewer and more detailed and informed descriptions that a spontaneous discussion would allow.

Within this group of sources I processed in details several writings. One of them are the memoirs of Cseke (2009), editor-in-chief at the Hungarian newspaper of the Union of Communist Youth between 1968–1979, then deputy editor-in-chief at the Hungarian central Party daily.[56] The other memoir, remarkable for its dimensions, was written by Ianoşi (2012), a well-known esthetician in Romania, who happened to work for a few years at one of the Central Committee's department of the Party charged with censorship (1956–1965, Department for Literature and Arts), but he remained in contact with censorship as an author, as well as an expert issuing reports on manuscripts upon the request of publishing houses. The third memoir is not that informative as the previous two, but it is exceptional for its

[54] *Scînteia* (Bucharest) and *Scînteia Tineretului* (Bucharest). Interviewees report on their experiences at other editorial offices too.
[55] Actually, out of the 26 texts, one represents entries from Macovescu's diary. (Vianu 1998: 1–4)
[56] *Ifjúmunkás* (Bucharest) and *Előre* (Bucharest).

author: Dumitru Popescu (2006). He was one of the most influential figures in press issues (journalist and editor-in-chief at central Party newspapers, director of the news agency Agerpres, chief ideologist, member of the Politburo 1969–1989, president of the CSCE 1971–1976 etc.), called not incidentally within media circles "Popescu Dumnezeu" (Popescu the God). Other memoirs consulted belong to András Kovács (1999) (editor-in-chief at *Igazság*, 1949–1970, editor at *A Hét* 1970–1985), János Varró (manuscript, 1987) (editor at *Editura Dacia*, 1970–1987), Ernő Gáll (1995) (editor-in-chief at *Korunk*, 1957–1984), Géza Domokos (1997) (director at the *Kriterion* (Bucharest) publishing house, 1969–1990) and others.

I included into the section of autobiographical materials shorter writings too, studies and published conference proceedings of authors and editorial personnel about their own experiences. It is representative in this sense a recently published conference-volume coordinated by Rad (2012) that cumulates the personal accounts of 11 individuals.

Finally, let me now turn to the brief presentation of personal records produced concomitantly with the events, the diaries and personal correspondence. These are much rare compared to the previously presented sources. Primarily it was processed the personal diary of E. Gáll (2003), with detailed entries that cover the 1977–2000 time period. Further diaries processed belong to G. Domokos (2004) covering the year 1988, George Macovescu (2006) (writer, Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1972–1978, head of the Writers' Union of Romania from 1978 until 1982 etc.) on the 1962–1982 time period, and Paul Goma (2009) (writer, known for dissident activities) on the last two decades of the state socialist regime.

A valuable insight into the functioning of the system was provided by the personal correspondence of E. Gáll (2009). These letters were written in the time period of 1949–2000. The collection of 5612 letters was published in 2009 partly in hard copy and entirely in electronic format. I also processed the official and personal correspondence of Gy. Hajdú,

editor-in-chief at the literary journal *Igaz Szó* archived at the Jakabbfy Elemér Foundation (Cluj-Napoca).[57] Compared to diaries, the benefit of working with correspondence data is that the letters provide insights into the opinions and activities of the corresponding partners too. Hence, one can obtain information concerning the life other editorial offices.

2.4. Implications and limitations

Having presented key elements of the research design, I close this chapter by highlighting its implications and limitations. To start with its strengths, I wish to emphasize first that the present research contributes to existing knowledge about the functioning of the Soviet-type censorship systems by providing a detailed and systematic analysis of micro-level, everyday mechanisms. Second, insights into these mechanisms were made possible by a combined methodological approach of conventional institutional analysis and ethnographic methods.

Third, the primary sources used for accessing data correspond to the necessities of conducting a comprehensive analysis according to both approaches. To stress, one of the methodological challenges in studying everyday (informal) activities, particularly the past ones, is represented by finding the proper sources. This challenge was successfully solved by using a pool of subjective sources, which is sufficiently large and represents the viewpoints of all the main actors involved in the censorship process. Moreover, biases of self-reported data were carefully tackled by corroborating documentary sources produced after and concomitantly with the events.

Fourth, the case selection strategy can be considered justified from a methodological point of view, and has its own advantages in what concerns generalizability. Opting for the typical case study implies that, in principle, issues of external validity should not represent a problem, as the typical case is representative to the population by construction. In the present

[57] Jakabffy Elemér Foundation, Dossiers K567–K571.

research, the specified relationship between the cases, more precisely, their resemblance along relevant variables was elaborated and presented in details (see 1.4.2).

Fifth, issues of internal validity were also addressed in the study. Internal validity is understood here as the extent to which the findings and the researcher's account accurately reflect the phenomenon under scrutiny and the social world of those participating in the study, as well as the correspondence of theorized relationships between the concepts and the phenomena analyzed.[58] Factual accuracy was bolstered, on the one hand, by triangulation by multiple data sources, realized by collating information from official and unofficial sources, information provided by actors playing different roles in the censorship system, and also by collating data sources created concomitantly and after the events. On the other hand, I also employed the strategy of triangulation by multiple methods of generating data, interviews and various types of written official and unofficial documents.

Several limitations due to the research design of this study need to be acknowledge as well. One limitation concerns the way informal practices were categorized and labelled according to the theoretically prepared matrix of informal practices (complementary, substitutive, accommodating and competing). In categorizing informal practices, particular formal rules were taken into consideration, which implies that my results cannot be immediately replicated to other cases, but just after observing relevant formal regulations. In other words, the same informal practice may qualify to different categories if formal regulations differ.

Second, the study does not account for the frequency of different types of informal practices identified. This seems to be an important shortcoming because informal practices rezulted exactly the opposite outcomes in what concerns the effectiveness of censorship: competing

[58] In terms of Maxwell (1992), who developed five categories to judge the validity of qualitative research, internal validity is captured by the concepts of "descriptive validity", "interpretive validity" and "theoretical validity." The other two are "generalizability" and "evaluative validity". (Maxwell 1992)

informal practices slackened the borders between permitted and forbidden topics, whereas the other three types reinforced them, hence added to its effectiveness.

Furthermore, the study did not address all informal practices. Omissions partly results from focusing on good interpersonal relationships, thus, avoiding to discuss tense relationships and related informal practices, which obviously influenced the harshness of censorship.

CHAPTER 3: ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE

The aim of this chapter is to provide the theoretical foundations for data collection and analysis of the formal working of the censorship system. I am interested to know whether or not the architecture of the censorship system in general and the internal set-up of its constitutive organizations in particular were appropriate for an effective implementation of the censorship policy. More specifically, the purpose of the investigation is to identify and analyze those formal organizational mechanisms and instruments that might have contributed to the high performance of the censorship system under the conditions of ambiguous of censorship norms. Consequently, the analysis requires a theoretical framework that can address organizational details and express their consequences for effectiveness under circumstances of specific challenges. To this aim, the contingency theory approach to organizational design seems to be the most appropriate.

Designing institutions that ensure favorable outcomes is the key concern of principal-agent theories and models (PAM) too. This approach is extensively used in political science analysis when handling issues of aligning goals and monitoring performance (see Miller 2005, Gailmard 2012); nevertheless, it does not prove suitable for the purposes of the present research. To prove this, I have to briefly recapitulate the central tenets of the PAM.

The focus of PAM is on structuring incentives for the agent in ways to promote the interests of the principal under the circumstances of information asymmetry that favor the agent. The information asymmetry allows the agent to engage in activities that go counter to the interests of the principal on the one hand, and are difficult to detect on the other. Specific activities and organizational challenges are handled by PAM in two groups termed as “problems of

adverse selection" (hidden information) and "moral hazards" (hidden action). In the first case, the agent is privy to some information that the principal needs to make a decision in her own interest, but the agent prefers the information to be used differently. In moral hazard problems, the agent takes one of several possible actions that affect the principal's utility, the principal and agent have different preferences over the possible actions the agent can take, and the principal cannot directly control the agent's action. The challenge on the side of the principal is to employ proper administrative procedures that mitigate "agency loss" deriving from hidden information and hidden action. (Miller 2005, Gailmard 2012)

For first, the PAM might seem a promising framework for studying the organizational design of the Soviet-type censorship too, especially because this approach has fruitfully been employed for understanding the (problematic) functioning of various institutional structures and organizational mechanisms that belonged to the core of state socialist regimes, for instance, the industrial and fiscal sectors in the Soviet Union and China. (Solnik 1996, Litwack 1991) Moreover, it was even used for understanding certain aspects of current successful censorship practices in the privately owned social media sector in China. (Lagerkvist 2012) In the organizational field of censorship, one can easily conceptualize the Communist Party as the principal and various executors of the censorship policy as its agents, precisely the way Lagerkvist (2012) did in his study. Furthermore, one can safely assume that institutions/organizations were designed to promote the interest of the principal to the greatest possible degree, then proceed with identifying the measures employed to contain agency loss. To name a few measures commonly scrutinized in PAM models: screening and selection mechanisms to limit adverse selection, monitoring and reporting requirements, sanctions etc. against problems of moral hazard. (See Gilardi 2001)

Upon closer examination however, the principal-agent approach neither applies neatly to the functioning of the Soviet-type censorship apparatus, nor does it fully capture aspects of

organizational functioning I am interested to study. First, it is not clear how asymmetrical information distribution favoring the agent (the rank and file censor for instance) and agency loss by hidden action can be meaningfully conceptualized in the context of internal organizational aspects of the Soviet-type censorship. There is a rather obvious characteristic of the censors' activity that makes the principal-agent approach inappropriate: outputs of the censors' work are readily observable and measurable for principals for they became literally public. This is a point where the organizational context studied by Lagerkvist's (2012) differs from the one scrutinized in the present research. Though he completely avoids to discuss the applicability of the core concepts of the PAM to the Chinese censorship case, it is reasonable to assume that internet censorship differs from paper-based monitoring, and there are operational details that are better known for the agents (private social media businesses namely) as for the principal (Chinese Communist Party); hence, one can assume the information asymmetry criteria to be met. Second, the PAMs do not fully capture issues proposed to scrutinize in the present research. On the one hand, the PAMs are primarily oriented towards control issues and neglect coordination problems, which in the case of my investigation implies that one of the central components of the research remains untracked: how the ambiguous censorship norms where clarified to executors in order to enhance their proper employment. On the other hand, the PAMs are not particularly designed to assess specific administrative measures from the point of view of appropriateness to specific organizational challenges. This is the prime concern of organizational studies, more exactly the contingency theory approach to organizational design

The contingency theory approach to organizational design focuses on the relationship between the organizational design and organizational performance, and has as its core claim that, for producing high performance, there must be a fit between the situational factors (named "contingencies") and organizational structure. (Donaldson 2001, 2006, Luo 2010)

This approach implies that one has to start by observing the critical contingencies with which the organizations under scrutiny must deal in order to be effective, then turning to see how challenges are considered by the organizational design. For this second phase, mid-level theories developed within the vein of contingency approach offer proper basis for the assessment of particular organizational mechanisms and instruments indispensable in meeting particular contingencies.

The following discussion is divided into four parts. The first section offers a brief overview of the structural contingency approach and clarifies some of its core assumptions and concepts, such as "organizational structure", "contingency", "organizational performance" and "effectiveness." The second section continues the discussion with the presentation of one of the contingencies prominently featuring in organizational studies, "uncertainty" namely, within the conceptual framework of "task uncertainty", where uncertainty pertains to task related information. I consider this phenomenon to represent the critical contingency with which the state socialist censorship system must have dealt on administrative level in order to be effective. More precisely, based on theoretical considerations and empirical evidence, I argue that the high levels of variety in input, low levels of repetitiveness in task execution, combined with vaguely worded and changing expectations created a less than accurate understanding of the censors' job, a situation termed as "task uncertainty" in organizational studies. This phenomenon represents a challenge both on the dimension of coordination and control, that is, the two basic organizational mechanisms that lie at the heart of successful organizational activity. Having identified the critical contingency, the next step is to reckon organizational mechanisms needed to meet the challenge of task uncertainty. These are presented in the third section, and ultimately offer theoretical bases against which to evaluate the particular configuration of coordination and control instruments employed within the

censorship system. The final section contains a summary of the theoretical claims guiding the analysis of the formal functioning of the censorship system.

3.1. The structural contingency approach

It is a central tenet of studies on organizational functioning that appropriate organizational design induces effectiveness and efficiency gains. However, one of the core claims of the structural contingency view is that there is not a single best way to organize, but the proper design always depends on the contingencies with which the organization must deal. (Donaldson 2001: 1–30, 2006, Luo 2010: 1–8) In other words, different circumstances require different organizational structures, and the effectiveness depends on the appropriate matching of contingency factors and organizational design.

The contingency approach emerged in the 1960's and by replacing the universalistic perspective on the functioning of organizations it brought a paradigmatic shift in their study, and still continues to provide the major theoretical framework for assessments concerning organizational design and architecture. (Donaldson 2006, Luo 2010: 4–5) The structural contingency approach to organizational design, commonly referred to as "structural contingency theory",[59] is a subset of contingency theories, which deal with different elements of organizational life, such as leadership, human resource management or decision making processes. (Donaldson 2001: 1–4) The structural contingency theory specifically focuses on the study of organizational structure. (*ibid.*)

"Structure", however, has to be understood in a broad sense here, not just as the hierarchical arrangement of the organizational components typically depicted on organizational charts.[60]

[59] Donaldson citing Pfeffer. (Donaldson 2006: 20)

[60] Galbraith (2002), for instance, treats "structure" (defined as roles, responsibilities, and relationships among functions) as a distinct organizational element from strategy, processes, rewards and people. Concerning the relationship of these elements, Galbraith claims that organizational effectiveness is achieved if structure, processes, rewards and people practices support the goals (strategy) of the organization. (Galbraith 2002: 1–5)

Next to the formal system of task allocation and reporting relationships, the organizational structure consists of the set of policies, procedures, standards and methods of coordination and control that are formulated to guide employees and their activities. (See Egeberg 2012: 158–159, Mintzberg 1993: 2) It worth mentioning that besides studying even micro processes and modes of information exchange within and between different units of the organization, analyzes grouped under the label of "structural contingency theory" regularly slip to consider the informal networks and communication, as well as informal control mechanisms, which by definition have no traces on organization-charts.[61] Nevertheless, this integrative perspective is inevitable given the interlinked nature of different organizational elements (goals, structure, processes etc.), and – one might say – it is even demanded by the contingency approach, as all components should be designed in a way to meet contingencies. (See Galbraith 2002: 1–5)

The three core elements of structural contingency theory are the contingencies (or task environment), the organizational structure, and organizational performance, and concerning their relationship, the theory posits that the fit between organizational structure and situational factors produces high performance, whereas misfit leads to performance loss. (Donaldson 2001, 2006, Luo 2010) The contingencies that must be considered can be multiple, and both external and internal to the organization. (Donaldson 2001: 17–20, Luo 2010: 2–4) Developments in structural contingency theory identified as internal contingencies the strategy, size, technology routineness, task uncertainty and task interdependence for instance, whereas the external contingencies that concern the environment of the organization are represented by economic, cultural, technological and other factors, prominently the environmental stability or uncertainty. (*ibid.*) Fit occurs where the level of a structural

[61] See, for instance, insights offered by Galbraith (1974) and Van De Ven *et al.* (1976) concerning proper organizational mechanisms under task uncertainty, or Ouchi's (1979) view on designing proper control mechanisms fitting to task characteristics, theoretical issues discussed in-depth in the next sections.

variable (for example, formalization) matches that required by the level of the contingency variable (for example, size). (Donaldson 2001: 30–33, Luo 2010: 9–18)

Let me illustrate the phenomenon of fit between contingencies and organizational structure by a few general theoretical claims concerning this relationship in case of some sort of uncertainty. A recurrent topic of the structural contingency theory is that stable environment allows for more "mechanic" solutions, whereas environments characterized by uncertainties require more "organic" structures having overall high information-processing capacity that makes them capable to adapt. (Donaldson 2001: 36-47, Luo 2010: 2) Or, having a look inside the organization, in order to achieve high performance, routine tasks have to be handled by rules, yet non-routine tasks by the employment of different adjustment mechanisms that increase the flux of information. (Galbraith 1974, Van De Ven *et al.* 1976) There is another general claim according to which formal controls are more appropriate for checking routine tasks, while informal controls ("clan control", professional control or political control) are to be expected in case of non-routine tasks in a more dynamic or ambiguous environment. (Van Elsacker 2007: 17–21, Ouchi 1979)

The previous illustrative list of external and internal contingencies offers already an immense range of possible variables to investigate. For the purposes of empirical analysis, however, it is essential to narrow the focus by selecting the most crucial contingencies. From a methodological point of view, one of the most consistent ways with the structural contingency theory for assessing the importance of the contingency is to evaluate its effect on performance of the fit between structure and the situational factor under scrutiny. (Luo 2010: 20–26) Only if the fit between structure and a situational factor causes high performance, and the misfit between them produces low performance, is the factor eligible to be a contingency. The greater the effect on performance, the more important is the contingency identified. (Luo 2010: 23) In many cases, however, instead of measuring the effect on performance,

researchers follow the "easier" way to determine the contingency, namely, assuming that a factor might be relevant based on the claims of the extant literature. In other words, if the literature claims, for instance, that different kinds of uncertainties can challenge high performance, and it can be reasonably argued that the organization under scrutiny indeed has to deal with these problems, the question related to the identification of situational factors is solved.[62] The second one is the methodological pathway I will follow too in my analysis.

The third core concept of the structural contingency theory is organizational performance or effectiveness. Curiously, in spite of the fact that they are one of the most frequently cited concepts as being the "ultimate dependent variable in organizational research", there is not much agreement concerning their definition and measurement. (Cameron and Whetten 1996: 267, Richard *et al.* 2008) Consensus emerged only to the extent that performance and/or effectiveness are multidimensional constructs, hence, the measurement of the overarching organizational performance is a complex and problematic business, if not completely unattainable. This is because the relationships between organizational performance and its sub-performance dimensions are still not clearly understood. (Cameron and Whetten 1996, Luo 2010: 167–168) To have a snapshot on the multitude of approaches concerning the measurement itself, a review performed by Richard *et al.* on three leading academic journals in management and administrative science for the time period between 2005 and 2007 identified 132 measures, which used altogether 92 different indicators of "performance" (Richard *et al.* 2008).

To unfold a bit the "construct"-nature of organizational performance or effectiveness, one has to consider the subsequently developed models of organizational effectiveness which were applied mostly in parallel in the 1980's, and apparently there are still no signs of the

[62] See this strategy in analyses cited further on in this chapter, for instance, Argote (1982) and Ren *et al.* (2008), and Chalupnik *et al.* (2009) and Kasim (2012) studying task uncertainty within the contexts of health care and product development processes, respectively.

emergence of a holistic approach. (Cameron and Whetten 1996) The first and perhaps the most extensively used approach to organizational effectiveness is the goal approach. According to this, an organization is effective when it meets its goals. Goals provide the basis for the standards and the measures of performance designed to evaluate goal accomplishment. Further on, however, newer and newer dimensions of effectiveness were explored. According to these developments, an organization is effective, if: it acquires the necessary resources from the environment (system resource model); all strategic constituencies are at least minimally satisfied (strategic constituency model); there is no stress and strain concerning internal processes (internal processes model), trade-offs between internal and external competing values are balanced (competing values model), the factors that inhibit successful organizational activity are absent (ineffectiveness model). (Cameron and Whetten 1996: 266–274) Certain cumulative stance can be witnessed in the evolution of the effectiveness models; still none of them models captures the organizational effectiveness construct. Nevertheless, even if an all-encompassing model is developed, the idea of trying to characterize a whole organization as totally effective or ineffective would be problematic, because there may be dimensions of the organization that function well and suggest effectiveness while other aspects of that same organization perform poorly. (Cameron and Whetten 1996)

Having considered the core tenets and terms of the contingency approach, by way of conclusion, let me highlight the main claims and observations presented in this section. According to the structural contingency approach, the optimal structure of an organization depends on various external and internal contingencies. The critical contingencies might be determined, on the one hand, by measuring their impact on organizational performance, which can be a really challenging task for there is neither a standard definition for performance or effectiveness, nor standard indicators for its measurement. On the other hand,

the critical contingencies can be identified based on previous theoretical assessments and empirical evidence concerning the organization under scrutiny. In my study, I follow this second methodological possibility, and in the next section, I will present the characteristics of "task uncertainty", which I consider to represent the critical contingency in the case of censorship job.

3.2. Task uncertainty – a critical contingency of censorship

As it was already mentioned, one of the prominent contingencies that are studied with regard to organizational design is "uncertainty". (Donaldson 2001: 36-47, 18-21) Generally, uncertainty exists when details of situations are ambiguous, complex, unpredictable, or probabilistic; when information is unavailable or inconsistent; and when people feel insecure in their own state of knowledge or the state of knowledge in general. (Brashers 2001: 478) Clearly, uncertainty affects decision making and task execution; hence, it might compromise the effective functioning of the organization. Here, I present uncertainty within the conceptual framework of "task uncertainty", which is specifically associated with duties to be carried out inside an organization, and – as it is going to be argued in the second part of this section– captures the best the main challenges with which Soviet-type censorship systems must have dealt in order to ensure high performance.

According to one of the most frequently cited conceptualizations developed by Galbraith (1974), "task uncertainty" emerges when there is a difference in the amount of information required to perform a task and the amount of information already possessed by the organization or organizational actors. "Task uncertainty" refers to some lack of information related to actual task execution, more exactly, a lack of prior knowledge about which operational problems will arise when, and the best way of dealing with them. (Galbraith 1974) Looking at the operationalizations of the concept, Van De Ven *et al.* (1976) found that

the major dimensions of task uncertainty on work unit levels are constituted by the difficulty and variability of the work undertaken. Generally, more or less easily analyzable and non-variable work is associated with low task uncertainty; conversely, more exceptions, more variety in input, and less repetitiveness during task performance lead to higher task uncertainty.

The lack of full understanding faced by organizational actors can stem from various factors. Helpful in mapping these sources is a review performed by Lipshitz and Strauss (1997) of different conceptualizations of uncertainty and some related concepts such as "risk", "ambiguity", "equivocality" etc. employed in behavioral decision theory and organization decision theory. They concluded that different types of uncertainty can be classified according to their issue and source, so what the decision maker is uncertain about and what causes the uncertainty respectively, the second being the more pertinent to this argument. (Lipshitz and Strauss 1997: 150–151) Three basic issues were identified, the outcomes, situation, and alternatives namely. Likewise, there are three basic sources of uncertainty: incomplete information, inadequate understanding, and undifferentiated alternatives.[63] So, next to being short of specific information, task execution might be hindered by inadequate understanding owing to equivocal information causing the abundance of conflicting meanings, the novelty of situations, or fast-changing and unstable task environments. And even if decision makers perfectly understood the situation, they can be blocked in action by facing undifferentiated, that is, equally attractive or unattractive alternatives. (Lipshitz and Strauss 1997: 151, 155) In short, one can consider all of these possibilities as sources of task uncertainty.

Additionally, one might note that the source of uncertainty can be classified according to the location, namely, external or internal to the organization, representing the corresponding

[63] According to Lipshitz and Strauss, Galbraith's definition refers only incomplete information. (Lipshitz and Strauss 1997: 151)

types of contingency to organizational functioning. Nevertheless, according to Argote, this distinction is somewhat artificial, because external factors can also have an immediate impact on the tasks that the organizational units perform. (Argote 1982: 422) Still, to enumerate a few, exogenous uncertainty can arise from organizational change, changes of markets, changes in consumer preferences, or the evolution of the political and cultural contexts of the organization, whereas endogenous uncertainty is related, for instance, to technology novelty and task complexity. (Donaldson 2001: 18, Chalupnik *et al.* 2009: 2-3)

Given the complexity of sources, uncertainty is a ubiquitous phenomenon of all organizational settings, and examples for jobs characterized by task uncertainty abound. However, high task uncertainty situations are emphatically associated with the health care practice or with those implying a great deal of creativity, such as research and development. In health care practice, it can be related to many aspects of this job, such as uncertainty concerning the diagnosis and appropriate treatment methods, or the overall composition of the patient inputs, a problem primarily faced by hospital emergency units. (Argote 1982, Ren *et al.* 2008) Uncertainty in research and development springs from their nonroutine nature. (Chalupnik *et al.* 2009, Kasim *et al.* 2012) In case of software developments, for instance, most projects are specifically tailored to the customer's needs. Furthermore, large codes are usually broken into several modules, each being assigned to a different team, and each module is likely to encounter peculiarities that are unique to that project. (Dessein and Santos 2006: 961–962).

Having defined the core aspects of task uncertainty, I turn now to the censorship and present how task uncertainty characterizes this job. As it was introduced in the first chapter, the state censorship can touch different realms of cultural production, such as literature and scientific books, fine arts, mass media, radio and TV etc. Monitoring cultural production itself literally implies an indefinite variety of inputs and low repetitiveness to the organizations involved in

censorship, which represent the prime indicators of high levels of task uncertainty as claimed by Van De Ven *et al.* (1976). This is because the uniqueness of these products constitutes their utmost characteristic compared to other consumer goods in which a limited number of product variations are produced and marketed.

Analyzability is further complicated by the ambiguity of censorship norms that results inadequate understanding of requirements, an important subset of uncertainty-sources described by Lipshitz and Strauss (1997). In practical terms, vague censorship criteria imply that differentiating between the permitted and forbidden contents is problematic. Again, as it was argued in the first chapter, this is a general concern with regard to the functioning of censorship, but let me now sharpen the focus on the Soviet-type censorship systems and see how task uncertainty is amplified in this case.

The Soviet-type censorship system was totalitarian in what concerns the domain of supervision and its aims. In other words, it targeted to monitor all public information with the aim to shape their content and form to fit the radical official ideology. The area subject to monitoring and the characteristics of the value system against which cultural products had to be evaluated have major implications in what concerns task uncertainty.

First, in covering all realms of cultural production, censorship implied a huge variety in inputs, both in terms of types and content of products to be censored, as well as in size. Variety in input is a steady element of all censorship systems, yet it was more acute under the state socialist regimes, which were indeed targeting all information exchange, which means in the realm of printed matter, for instance, the whole spectrum of written word from product labels to scientific journal articles. For those who are impressed by numbers: according to a Glavlit report from 1940, during the previous year, 7,194 dailies, 1,762 journals (83,035 authors' sheet) and 41,000 books (247,066 authors' sheet) were checked in the Soviet Union, next to all materials of the News Agency, 1400 radio stations, 2,357.803 foreign books and

cleansing 70,000 libraries of "politically harmful books". (Gereben 1999) In 1973, the Romanian censors' office reported the checking of 738 periodicals and 740 other types of materials multiplied outside printing houses, 5,850 books, 850 motion pictures, 230 pieces of theater and music, 460 museums and exhibitions, 4,000 publications coming from abroad, as well as 12,000 postal matters per day containing periodicals and books.[64]

Second, in terms of the value system and censorship norms, one can observe that the Soviet-type censorship system contained both proscriptive and prescriptive elements, that is, issues which could not be expressed on the one hand, and issues which concerned the qualities (content and style) expected in a written or creative work on the other. The prohibited topics covered a broad range, including issues related to military, economic, social, scientific, and political "secrets", which could be data concerning the armed forces, criminality, jails, poverty, censorship, epidemics, demonstrations, names of emigrants, and others. (Leftwich Curry 1984, Şercan 2012a) The guideline of the Soviet-type prescriptions was "scientific socialism" and socialist realism (or Zhdanovism). Socialist realism consisted of *partinost* (ideological consistency), *ideinost* (Party spirit), and *narodnost* (true portrayal of the people), implying that a work had to be evaluated according to its truthfulness and Party-mindedness in portraying reality (in terms of historical-materialism), its pedagogic potential, and the accessibility of its form and content to the broad masses. This approach dictated a set of complex stylistic requirements, "typical" socialist heroes and circumstances for instance, depicting the socialist society in positive terms, omitting specific words, avoiding semantic ambiguities etc. (Jansen 1991: 108–119, Ermolaev 1997: 53).

Furthermore, besides the fact that the domain of forbidden topics and approaches was extremely broad, the standards of censorship were vaguely defined on the one hand, and inconstant and inconsistent over time, on the other. The obscureness of the Soviet-type

[64] ANIC F. CPT, Dossier no. 8/1973, ff. 112–113.

censorship norms was already illustrated in the first chapter, but it can be easily deduced from the previously presented prescriptive elements of censorship as well. To stress, the problem here is that "inimical attitude" towards the regime could manifest itself in indefinite ways.

To illustrate the changes in the censorship norms by a classical example, one can recall the sudden changes related to the "thaw" of the Khrushchev era and the reverse processes of the subsequent years under Brezhnev, and the impact of these shifts in censorship norms on the fate of Solzhenitsyn's career.[65] *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was permitted publication in November 1962 in the Soviet literary magazine *Novy Mir*. The topic and the approach of the book were in line with Khrushchev's anti-Stalinist policies, and it was the first publication ever blatantly treating Stalinist terror. Important to note that the Glavlit would not have passed the topic this time either, but publication happened through the personal intervention of Khrushchev. (Ermolaev 1997: 142, 146) The book was hailed as a brilliant exposé of Stalinist repression methods, and it placed the author in the foremost ranks of Soviet writers. Nevertheless, both the cultural and the political thaw ended with the removal of Khrushchev in October 1964. The publishing of Solzhenitsyn's works quickly stopped and he became one of the worst literary enemies in the eyes of the regime. In the upcoming years, publication of the *In the First Circle* dealing with the issue of special prisons that served the state as research institutes under Stalin, and *Cancer Ward* focused as well on Stalinist purges, were rejected, and he had been subject of a vilification-campaign. Finally, he was expelled from the Writers' Union in 1969, then in 1974 from the Soviet Union, being formally accused of treason. Already before his expulsion, a ban was issued concerning his entire Soviet and foreign work. According to this order, all his publications had to be removed from the public libraries and book market, along with the issues of periodicals in which they appeared. (Ermolaev 1997: 185, 221)

[65] For the most comprehensive analysis of the changes in censorship norms concerning Soviet literature, see Ermolaev (1997).

Additionally, it is important to emphasize that uncertainty faced by censors in completing their duties is not just a theoretical speculation, but it is substantiated by contemporary documents. More precisely, this can be derived from the evaluation of their performance carried out by superiors of the censors' office or the Party cadres. In 1937, for instance, the Soviet Communist Party condemned the "[…] Glavlit's practice of arbitrary, bordering to sabotage, mass withdrawal of literature", whereby "overzealous bunglers and wreckers" engage in "[…] criminal practice [that] has only played into the hands of our enemies." (Clark and Dobrenko 2007: 264–265) This impetuous assessment can be read as indicating to inadequate understanding of the censorship rules by Glavlit employees. But the similar phenomenon was documented by the Romanian censors' office too. According to GDPP statistics regarding the activity of its employees from the provinces, censors were far from being certain of what they were supposed to do: between June 1954 and February 1955, there were 750 "good interventions" but also 265 "mistakes," consisting of "missed" problematic content and "unjustified interventions."[66] Later reports also keep pointing to failures, unjustified and missed interventions.[67]

The arguments developed so far suffice to reckon task uncertainty a critical contingency to the functioning of the censorship system. Censors faced high levels of variety in input and low levels of repetitiveness during the execution of their task. The issue of uncertainty was related to the situation, that is, censors were uncertain about how to interpret particular works they had to check, which is tightly linked to the inadequate understanding of the censorship norms. The analytic process in which they were engaged was difficult because of the vague and altering censorship norms, which eventually caused the inadequate understanding of the situation and uncertainty about how exactly to proceed. To top it all, textual analysis is further complicated by the semantic structures inherent to the use of language.

[66] ANIC F. CPT, D. 10/1955, ff. 86–109.
[67] See an annual activity report prepared almost two decades later. D. 08/1973, ff. 115, 118.

Having identified one of the critical contingencies with which the censorship must had to deal in order to be effective, I turn in the next section to present particular organizational mechanisms claimed to be appropriate to manage task uncertainty.

3.3. Coordination and control under task uncertainty

It is a basic premise of organizational and management studies that organizations must generally solve two problems in order to accomplish their work: motivating individuals so that their goals are aligned and organizing individuals so that their actions are aligned. The first is known in the literature as the agency or control problem, whereas the second as the coordination problem (Heath and Staudenmayer 2000, Metzler and Hamilton 2003). The agency or control problem is about mechanism designed to increase the possibility that individuals behave in line with achieving organizational goals. (Ouchi 1979, Metzler and Hamilton 2003, Dunbar and Statler 2010, Sitkin *et al*. 2010) Coordination concerns task division and task allocation having as ultimate aim integrated action, and coordination failure occurs when activities are not synchronized. (Heath and Staudenmayer 2000) Though coordination concerns primarily the management of task dependencies, hence the literature can be interpreted to suggests that independent activities require little or no coordination (see Heath and Staudenmayer 2000), it seems equally important to coordinate independently performed tasks among the members of a work unit, especially when the clear understanding of the task to be performed is challenged. After all, one important purpose of coordination is to reduce undesired variation in work. (Mintzberg 1993: 5-7, 34)

In practice, control and coordination instruments can take indefinite number of forms. Control mechanisms consist of various methods of recruitment, standards of performance, reviewing methods, disciplinary actions (sanctions or rewards), as well as values, beliefs and norms that guide employee' behavior and action within an organization. Traditionally,

control mechanisms have been categorized according to their nature as "bureaucratic" or "clan" control implying characteristics such as formal and mechanistic structural configurations and informal, more organic structural arrangements, respectively. (Ouchi 1979, Cardinal *et al.* 2010: 57, Korsgaard *et al.* 2010) Coordination mechanisms entail task descriptions, chains of command, various modes of information exchange, indoctrination and training etc. On their own turn, these can be categorized according to their nature as explicit or implicit (Macmillan *et al.* 2004), formal or informal, impersonal or personal, programmed and non-programmed (Van De Ven *et al.* 1976, Mintzberg 1993). Distinctions between the enlisted categories are sometimes fuzzy; moreover, particular organizational instruments are not classified exclusively to mechanisms of control or coordination. On-the-job training, mentoring and counseling for instance, appear both in control (Loughry 2010: 330-331, Ouchi 1979: 842) and coordination literature (Mintzberg 1993: 39-43). More important to note, however, that these mechanisms and methods usually appear intertwined, furthermore, – in line with the contingency approach to organizational design – the advantages and disadvantages of their employment depend on the nature of task and the task environment.

Task uncertainty faced by the participants of an organization represents a challenge on both the dimension of control and coordination. Obviously, defective incentive schemes and monitoring mechanisms have always negative impacts on employee behavior and attitudes, but this is multiplied under task uncertainty: shirking becomes excessive, the employees' organizational commitment is lower, as well as their investment in task expertise, loss of self-confidence, less favorable attitude toward superiors, decreased job satisfaction, distorting reality, and as a consequence, less effective performance and lower productivity. (Rizzo *et al.* 1970, Pearce *et al.* 2000) Likewise, under the conditions of task uncertainty aligned work among and within work units might be compromised. Coordination failure results in errors,

bad products, delays of service, and also in conflicts within and across teams. (Ren *at al*. 2008)

Consequently, under the conditions of task uncertainty, special attention has to be paid to structures that ensure coordination to occur and control to be appropriate. In the remainder of this section, I will present particular mechanisms proposed by the literature to meet the challenge of task uncertainty.

Coordination

Along the dimension of coordination, a critical role is played by the spread information, as it was incurred in the definition and characteristics of task uncertainty. According to the critical contingency approach, in order fit to occur between structure and task environment, the information processing capacity has to match the information processing requirement. (Galbraith 1974)

Galbraith (1974) suggested that in order to achieve its goals, as the amount of uncertainty increases, the organization must either reduce the need for information processing (by new task division through which more self-contained tasks are created) or adopt integrating mechanisms that increase its information processing capabilities (by investing in vertical and lateral information systems). For the second strategy, he proposes two solutions: hierarchical structure and coordination by targets or goals.

The starting point of his argument is that the basic effect of uncertainty is to limit the ability of the organization to preplan or to make decisions about activities in advance of their execution. When uncertainty is low, tasks are well understood prior to their performance and many activities can be pre-planned. These recurring job situations can be programmed with rules, more precisely, in terms of contingency theory, they must be coordinated by rules. However, infrequent situations have to be coordinated by hierarchical information flow,

where these infrequent situations are referred to that level in the hierarchy where a comprehensive perspective exists on the problem. The third technique is coordination by targets and goals. As the uncertainty of the organization's task increases, coordination increasingly takes place by specifying outputs, goals or targets. Instead of regulating behavior, the organization undertakes processes to set goals to be achieved and the employees select the activities which lead to goal accomplishment. If the organization does not achieve integrated action through targets, the hierarchy is employed again.

Complementarily, Van De Ven *et al.* (1976) distinguish between impersonal coordination modes and coordination by feedback, defined as mutual adjustment based upon the introduction of new information. They classified all forms of coordination by programming as an impersonal coordination mode, whereas they split the methods of coordination by feedback into personal and group coordination modes. Coordination by programming is exemplified by integrating mechanisms such as the use of "[…] pre-established plans, schedules, forecasts, formalized rules, policies and procedures, and standardized information and communication systems." (Van De Ven *et al.* 1976: 323) According to the authors, the common denominator of these mechanisms is that a codified blueprint of action is impersonally specified, and one might add, their employment requires minimal communication between users. Conversely, feedback or mutual adjustments occur either through personal (vertical or horizontal) channels or staff meetings, which provide a forum of interaction and information sharing. These possibilities of task adjustment can be scheduled as well as unscheduled. Though it is not specifically emphasized in the article, clearly, these arrangements can emerge both as a response to organizational requirements (in case attending the meetings is part of the formal organizational structure) or spontaneously. [68]

[68] "Mutual adjustment" is discussed by Mintzberg (1993) too as a prime mechanism of coordination, though in his conception mutual adjustment pertains exclusively to the domain of informality. It appears along two other types of coordination mechanisms, direct supervision and standardization (including standardization of skills

Examining the relationship between task uncertainty and coordination modes Van De Ven *et al.* found that as the uncertainty of the tasks undertaken by a work unit increases, the use of impersonal coordination significantly decreases, while the use of personal and group coordination significantly increases. (Van De Ven *et al.* 1976) In other words, as the task encountered by a unit becomes less analyzable and more variable, a greater number of mutual adjustments are required among unit members which are accomplished by personal information exchange and group discussions. Further compelling empirical evidence for the relationships among task uncertainty, coordination mechanisms, and organizational effectiveness is provided by Argote (1982). She found that task uncertainty indeed affected the relationship between the mode of coordination and organizational effectiveness. Impersonal modes of coordination made a greater contribution to organizational effectiveness under low uncertainty, whereas personal means of coordination made a greater contribution to organizational effectiveness under high uncertainty.

To summarize, in order to achieve aligned action under task uncertainty there is a need for coordination modes that enhance information processing capacity. This can be achieved by hierarchical structures in which lower level work units can request information from higher levels. Furthermore, differences in task uncertainty place different demands on problem-solving processes. For duties characterized by low task uncertainty, coordination by programming materialized in formalized rules is appropriate, whereas for components characterized by high levels of task uncertainty there is a need for organizational solutions that make mutual adjustment possible. This can be realized through formal and informal personal and group interactions.

and norms, work processes, and standardization of results). According to Mintzberg, mutual adjustment achieves the coordination of work "by the simple process of informal communication." (Mintzberg 1993: 4) What „simple" is meant with regard to the communication process is totally unclear, yet it stands out that he handles mutual adjustment as a phenomenon through which employees adapt to each other by communication that occurs beyond formal mechanisms. (Mintzberg 1993)

Control

According to Ouchi's (1979) seminal study on control design, which became a basic point of reference for normative and empirical research on organizational control, there are three fundamental mechanisms through which organizations can seek to cope with issues of control. (See also Sitkin *et al.* 2010, Van Elsacker 2007: 17-21) The three archetypes of control mechanisms are referred to as market, bureaucracy and clan. The market mechanism imply checking the decisions against the simple criterion of cost minimization, but I will not present more details for such mechanisms are not directly relevant for the present research. The bureaucratic control implies personal surveillance of subordinates by their superiors, more specifically, formal hierarchical instructions and performance evaluation based on established organizational rules. The clan control concern attitudes, values and beliefs, and relates to the socialization process of members, which implies a previous period of highly formalized skill-training, as well as "value training" or indoctrination. (Ouchi 1979: 837) The goal congruence is guaranteed by shared values and norms, and high level of individual commitment to the work performed. Contrary to the formal rule-based bureaucratic control, clan controls rely on selecting the right people for the job, then using rituals and ceremonies to strengthen the socialization and increase individuals' desire to comply with the shared norms. Clan is regarded by Ouchi as primarily an informal social mechanism.

The enlisted three mechanisms should be regarded as ideal types according to Ouchi, hence, in real life they do not appear in their pure forms but in various combinations, and the design problem concerns decisions about which of these forms of control emphasize in a given organizational unit. (Ouchi 1979: 840) Echoing the structural contingency approach, he claims that the appropriate blending of various control mechanisms depends on the characteristics of the tasks performed, more precisely, on the measurability of output and

behavior.[69] According to Ouchi, when the possibility of output measurement and the individual performance measurement is high, which in his conception also implies that the level of interdependence between individually performed duties is low, a bureaucratic mechanism is appropriate. Conversely, when evaluating outputs and processes is problematic, interdependency among duties is high and the clarity of individual contribution is low, control is best achieved by clan mechanisms, that is, carefully selecting skilled and dedicated workers. In case of high possibility to measure outputs and low possibility to measure behavior, and the analogue converse situation, organizations should capitalize bureaucratic measures on the dimension which can be observed with more precision. Further developments in the literature also suggests that when either outcomes or behavior can be made observable, formal outcome and behavior control instruments are not only feasible but also necessary for high organizational performance. (Kirsch and Choudhury 2010)

Within the control literature, situations of task uncertainty are primarily discussed in terms of task dependency and behavior observability. (Liu *et al.* 2010) As low task uncertainty is associated with programmable tasks, low levels of task interdependence and (as a consequence) measurable individual behavior, organizational performance is claimed to be a function of the combination of input, behavior and output controls. In high uncertainty context however, input and output controls are appropriate, thus proper organizational structure relies on the selection and training of personnel, and setting project targets and verifying its completion respectively. Behavior control is not considered to be an effective control mode in high task uncertainty context because the proper assessment of individual behavior is challenged. (Liu *et al.* 2010: 8–9)

[69] The is the dominant paradigm in the field of organizational control studies, as they chiefly seek to demonstrate how and why means for control are appropriate in some circumstances but not in others. (Dunbar and Statler 2010: 30-31)

As it was argued in the previous sections, the censorship job can be characterized by task uncertainty. Indeed, for various reasons that are not going to be restated here, tasks cannot be programmed with precision. Nevertheless, there is no interdependence between the individually performed duties, and outputs are measurable in the sense that there is the possibility for superiors for observing whether or not the products controlled by censors meet prevailing censorship norms. Given these features, in terms of control mechanisms, the structure of the censorship apparatus calls for the employment of formal bureaucratic instruments on the one hand, which on their own turn capture all three components on the other hand: input, behavior and output control.

3.4. Summary

Based on the core claim of the structural contingency approach, one can assume that if the organization is successful, the coordination and control mechanisms employed must have functioned in a satisfactory way, that is, there was a goodness of fit between challenging situational factors and the structure of the organization. Data collection and analysis of the formal architecture of the censorship system is guided precisely by this theoretical approach, the starting point being represented by the assumption that the Soviet-type censorship systems have been effective.

This assumption can be contested by pointing to various literary practices that confronted and overcome strict restrictions on publishing (ambivalent discourse, samizdat, the existence of more outspoken media organs etc.); furthermore, certain shortcomings in the work of the Soviet and Romanian censors were pointed out in this chapter as well. I wish to emphasize however that I do not intend to claim that the state socialist censorship systems were perfectly effective (itself a problematic concept), rather to assume that in terms of goal effectiveness these censorship systems performed fairly well. This is not an arbitrarily selected surmise, but

an assertion substantiated by the transformative effects of censorship on the cultural life. Moreover, taking into account the uncertainties surrounding the censors' job and the related challenges to administer the censorship policy, the claim related to effectiveness of censorship seems even better grounded.

Besides eliminating rival theoretical frameworks (the principal-agent model namely), and presenting the central tenets and core terms of the structural contingency approach, I argued throughout this chapter that the critical contingency in case of censorship is represented by the task uncertainty characterizing the censors' job, and I reviewed adequate structural options for meeting this challenge. Accordingly, the further aim of my empirical investigation is to identify coordination and control mechanisms employed within the censorship system (more precisely within the narrower organizational setting of the censors' office) and confront their characteristics with relevant theoretical claims.

With regard to coordination mechanisms, the aim is to identify organizational instruments that specified censorship norms, and provided information concerning the borders between forbidden and permitted topics, or, to put it simply, communication channels and forms for transmitting instructions regarding what to filter out. Concerning the control mechanisms, the aim is to identify organizational means that were meant to induce concerned parties to meet censorship norms. Special attention will be paid to evaluate different coordination instruments according to the level of uncertainty encountered in performing specific tasks, so the combination of coordination by programming and those based on feedback (or mutual adjustment). Similarly, control mechanisms are going to be grouped into different categories, namely, those belonging to the bureaucratic mechanisms and those that pertain to the domain of clan control, as well as according to the target of control, namely input, behavior and output control.

The adopted theoretical approach, the structural contingency approach to organizational design namely, and mid-level theories developed in this vein, enhance a systematic investigation in the internal functioning of the censorship system. More importantly, they helps elucidating and evaluating the formal functioning of censorship apparatus from the point of view of organizational effectiveness, one of the main aims of the present research.

CHAPTER 4: INFORMALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

To recall, one of the main components of the present research is to map the domain of informality in the organizational setting of censorship, more exactly to identify informal mechanisms and practices that next to formal organizational design might have contributed to its high performance. The purpose of this chapter is to set a conceptual and theoretical framework for data collection and analysis regarding this aspect of censorship.

Informal components of organizational functioning have been repeatedly mentioned in the previous chapter too with regards both the dimensions of organizational coordination and control. To stress, it is widely accepted now in organizational science that successful organizations adapt a mix of formal and informal mechanisms to fit relevant contingencies; moreover, recent research also considers the explicit design of informal organizational elements, more precisely the deliberate management-designed formal mechanisms that facilitate or encourage the emergence of informal practices that advance organizational goals.[70] (Cardinal *et al.* 2004, Cardinal *et al.* 2010: 62-63, Loughry 2010) However, as it was also noted already, informal activities are not always consistent with accomplishing organizational interests, and related unproductive reactions may consist of collective resistance, sabotage, low levels of commitment and others. (Bijlsma-Frankema and Costa 2010)

[70] For management-designed mechanisms that facilitate or encourage informal control see Loughry's typology on peer control mechanisms. (Loughry 2010: 328) These mechanisms include structuring the work and work context to influence the emergence of informal relationships and practices by the following techniques: task and reward interdependence, open offices, sponsoring social events for workers, training workers in techniques for relating to one another etc.

Logically, there is not much variation in what concerns the effects of informal practices on organizational effectiveness: they either raise or reduce performance. There is, however, variability with regards to the compatibility of informal practices and formal rules and their effects on organizational performance, which however is not accounted for in a systematic way in the organizational studies literature. It was observed, for example, that certain practices that obviously infringe formal organizational rules may in fact advance organizational goals, yet different branches of organizational studies did not displayed much interest in developing nuanced typologies. To illustrate this, one can cite Van Maanen's fieldwork in US urban police departments where he observed that superiors may overlook officially taboo practices such as outwitting superiors, alcohol consumption, taking a snooze, practical jokes etc., because these carry the value of "identity-work" in this particular occupational community, and can sometimes be exchanged for hard work on other matters that might otherwise be resented and resisted by particular officers. (Van Maanen 2010: 130-131) Or, according to Anteby's ethnographically oriented monograph on a French manufacturing firm in the aeronautics industry, managers were willing to allow for the crafting of artifacts with company money and on company time, because "identity incentives" of this kind regulated the interaction order in the plant among craftsmen and managers, and at the same time insured that official work was carried out well. (Van Maanen citing Anteby, Van Maanen 2010: 154) Typologies of informal–formal interactions that may capture these kind of informal practices too can be found in the field of comparative politics, and as a consequence, conceptual approaches and theories I draw on in this chapter are rooted preponderantly in comparative politics and not organizational studies.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I discuss conceptualizations of informality in political science literature and develop an argument for employing the term "informal practice" instead of alternative conceptual approaches offered by the literature such as informal

institutions or networks. Since there are no steadily used definitions for any types of informal occurrences, based on extant theoretical insights, I provide a working definition of "informal practices", one of the central conceptual variables of the present research that stands for capturing informal mechanisms. Next, I present and compare three available models of formal-informal interactions: one developed by Nee and Ingram (1998) in the field of new sociological economics, and two other models from the field of comparative politics, that offered by Lauth (2000) and Helmke and Levitsky (2006a). I turn then to a more detailed critical review of the currently most influential model, the one constructed by Helmke and Levitsky namely. By means of empirical testing and methodological considerations, I identify the shortcomings of this model and propose a conceptual typology that makes use of insights offered by all three models under scrutiny. The revised typology is presented in a separate subsection, which also contains comments on the margin of its employment on the one hand, and its applicability to categorize informal practices on the other hand, as the original models were actually developed for assessing various types of informal institutions. The last section provides a summary of the key theoretical points that will guide the present empirical research on the informal practices in the domain of censorship.

4.1. Approaching informality in political science. Towards a definition of informal practices

Though the dominant preoccupation of political scientists has been with the formal organizations and institutions, dealing with informal inputs to politics has been on the political science research agenda for a long time. [71] Research on political culture and social capital already shifted the focus from hard formal institutional factors to variables such as values, beliefs, norms, trust, networks, and so on, and the schools of new institutionalism

[71] For reviews concerning the appearance of "informality" on the political science research agenda see Farrel (2009: 1-22), Guha-Khasnobis *et al.* (2006), Christiansen – Neuhold (2012), Helmke and Levistky (2006), Radnitz (2011), Van Tatenhove *et al.* (2006).

reconfirmed their relevance for understanding the complex world of politics. The growth of theoretical and empirical research undertaken in this direction was buttressed by development studies, the literature of non-democratic regimes and transitology, on the level of case studies covering a wide geographical area, from Latin America, to Africa, Central and Eastern Europe and Asia. Besides the impetus resulting from the fact that real life situations failed to conform to prevailing models of various disciplines, conceptual shifts, like from the narrower "government" to the wider phenomenon captured by the term "governance" also implied paying greater attention to the study of non-formal aspects of politics, but also a return in focus to developed, democratic regimes. (Christiansen and Neuhold 2012: 1)

The increasing concern with informality, however, did not result into conceptual clarity, but in identifying newer and newer empirical phenomena and relevant theoretical aspects, and the multiplication of compound catchwords. So, "informal" as a qualifier has been attached to various concepts, for instance, "politics", "economy", "institutions", "norms", "governance", "networks", "organizations" or "practices". The literature was also loaded by novel concepts not explicitly containing the word "informal", yet defined by references to extra-formal mechanisms, such as "network form of governance", "neopatrimonial regimes", "hybrid political orders" etc.[72] Likewise, the study of informal occurrences has come to encompass highly heterogeneous phenomena, such as clientelism, patronage, corruption, mafia, clans, *guanxi*, cliques, cronyism, specific governance practices at the EU level, coalition agreements, power-sharing arrangements, norms of fair exchange, codes of trust, and the enumeration could go on.

As one can already guess from this snapshot of informal occurrences, agreements stop at the assessment that informal activities are important in what concerns policy outputs, but there is no steadily used definition in political science for the phenomenon of informality in general,

[72] For "network form of organization" and governance see Podolny and Page (1998); for "neopatrimonialism" see Erdmann and Engel (2006); for "hybrid political orders" see Kraushaar and Lambach (2009).

but not even for different types of informal phenomena. On the one hand, employing the term in scientific discourse coincides so well with everyday understanding of "informality" that many authors use the terms without defining it, and the results of their analyses seem not to suffer at all by this shortcoming, because everybody seems to be familiar with the term of "informal practice", for instance.[73] On the other hand, the opposite and methodologically sounder approach resulted in almost as many definitions as there are treatments and approaches of the topic. The primary point of departure of the majority of the attempts is the juxtaposition of the formal and informal elements of the phenomenon under scrutiny in a way that informal is conceived as the non-formal counterpart of the object of study. The informal network is defined as non-formal network, informal politics as non-formal politics, informal governance as non-formal governance, informal mechanism as non-formal mechanism, and so on, whereby the difference is made whether or not the phenomenon (more exactly, rules concerning actors and procedures) is codified. Next to this step, the definitions might capture specific characteristics related to the informal nature, such as that informal politics or informal governance make use of social (informal) relationships or webs of these ties.[74]

Being traditionally interested in the study of institutions, political science is more focused on delivering a definition for "formal/informal institutions" than for any other form of informal

[73] See, for example, Allina-Pisano's (2008) detailed analysis of the failures concerning land privatization processes in Ukraine and Russia, which implies a close scrutiny of the repertoire of informal practices developed by local state officials in response to economic liberalization.

[74] See his strategy in providing a definition for "informal politics". Pike defines it as "[…] a set of *interpersonal activities* stemming from a *tacitly accepted, but largely unenunciated, matrix of political attitudes* existing outside the framework of legal government, constitutions, bureaucratic constructs, and similar institutions (the latter being the domain of formal politics)." (Emphasis added; Pike 2000: 281)
According to Tsou, "[i]nformal politics consists of political interactions among persons with *different types of informal relationships* and their *networks*, which play an important part and sometimes even serve as a nucleus of 'political actions groups' in the struggle, conflict, or contestation over significant policy issues or personnel change." (Emphasis added, Tsou 2002: 105)
There are various definitions of "informal governance" too. Christiansen, Follesdal and Piettoni define governance as informal "when participation in the decision-making process is not yet or it cannot be codified and publicly enforced" (Christiansen *et al.* cited by Christiansen and Neuhold 2012: 4). A more refined version of the similar concept is offered by Harsh, where specific elements of informality are captured too: "informal governance refers to a means of decision-making that is uncodified, non-institutional, and where *social relationships* and *webs of influence* play crucial roles [but it] also includes decision-making led by, or occurring entirely within NGO's at all levels." (Emphasis added; Harsh cited by Christiansen and Neuhold *ibid*.)

occurrence. Currently the most influential one is that offered by Helmke and Levisky (2004, 2006a) This is anchored in the definition given by North to the concept of "institution", which stipulates that social interactions are influenced by both formal and informal rules, which constitute the formal or informal institutions.[75] So, informal institutions, according to Helmke and Levitsky, are "[…] socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels. By contrast, formal institutions are rules and procedures that are created, communicated, and enforced through channels that are widely accepted as official." (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 5).

This definition guides empirical research to detect consistently enforced rules that are formally not codified. Two observations seem at place here. One is a further elaboration and rectifying remark concerning the enforcement mechanism, which is to ensure compliance with informal institutional arrangement, and according to Helmke and Levitsky, crucial to this definition, therefore, for empirical analysis too. (*ibid*.) The other is about the restrictions imposed by this definition to the study of informal occurrences, which eventually guides me to employ in the present research a broader concept.

Regarding the enforcement mechanisms, that is the fact that violating rules carries some form of punishment, it is worth underlining that besides "social sanctioning" understood in the classical sense, thus social disapproval expressed in shunning, ostracism, physical punishment, loss of reputation and alike, the disadvantages for rule-defecting individuals are extended to the domain of game theoretical thinking, that is losing the payoffs conditioned by cooperative behavior.[76] To enlist a few examples: in case of institutionalized (endemic or systemic) corruption, not paying the bribe results in not gaining access to goods and services; putting an end to clientelistic exchange results in losing the advantages related to the other's

[75] According to North, "[i]nstitutions are the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction. They consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights)." (North 1991: 97)
[76] A similar line of argument is to be found in Lauth's analysis of informal institutions. (Lauth 2012: 47)

support; not taking part in "ghost coalitions" implies minimizing the chances of influence and access to resources; and to add an informal arrangement with a more positive outcome too, not opting for power-sharing carries the risk of regime instability.[77]

The rectification concerns the means employed for sanctioning defections. Informal rules are not exclusively "enforced outside officially sanctioned channels", but often by abusing of official sanctioning mechanisms. When informal practices permeate formal structures, breach of informal duties can be punished by resorting to vindictive measures such as harassment by superiors, firing, obstructing formal cooperation, enforcing official monitoring processes that otherwise are selectively applied, and other similar methods. (Brinks 2006) Actually, this aspect was observed by Helmke and Levitsky based on Brinks' article included in their volume, which deals with informal norms sustaining police violence in Brazil (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 6, 27, Brinks 2006), yet they did not modify the definition in a way to encompass these instances too.

Turning to the second observation, the restrictions imposed by the definition namely, one can note that by opting for a focus on "institutions" only those informal acts are considered that stem from the existence of more or less clearly identifiable informal rules; consequently, the spectrum of informal occurrences under scrutiny is reduced. Though a large number of phenomena qualify for the category of informal institutions, the area being widened by the previous observation regarding enforcement mechanisms, informal institutions represent just a special type of informal phenomena.[78] Yet, as it was observed by Radnitz in his review article dealing with recent findings on the intersection of informal politics and the state, "[…] important political outcomes may emanate from occurrences that are informal, that is, unwritten and unenforced by state authority, but not repeated in predictable, patterned ways."

[77] See, for instance, Siavelis (2006) on informal power-sharing arrangements in Chile and related enforcement mechanisms.
[78] A large number of examples for informal institutions are provided in the next section dealing with different types of informal institutions (4.2).

(Radnitz 2011: 354) Actors may behave in single-shot games outside formal institutions (*ibid*), moreover, according to varying contexts, they can also switch between the formal or informal rules of the game whereas some (formal and informal) rules are enforced and the others infringed. (O'Donnell 2006: 286–287, Ledeneva 2006) Or, one can add, actors may decide pragmatically which out of the possible informal ways to follow in their dealings: bribe or pulling some strings to hush up certain problems, for instance?

In order to avoid prior conceptual narrowing by adopting a focus on "institutions", I consider that a broader concept is needed to approach my research topic. Out of the informal phenomena enlisted at the beginning of this section, the term "informal practice" seems adequate from a conceptual point of view as the terms of "informal network" or "informal organization" both indicate rather the social structure through which activities are performed or social (informal) mechanisms take place. Though fundamental elements are captured by these terms for understanding the phenomenon of informality, they do not specifically indicate the activities emerging out of these personal (or personalized formal) relationships. So, there are informal rules of the game constituting informal institutions that enable or constrain given actions, there are personal ties connecting people and representing the informal structure of interactions, nexuses that, to make it clear, can be both positive and negative,[79] but to capture the activities themselves the term "practice" seems the most appropriate.

Out of similar considerations, that is, to escape the conceptual and empirical trap represented by studying "unwritten rules", and for addressing the "elusive domain of political and economic know-how" by which main actors of the Russian political scene routinely solve their tasks, Ledeneva introduces the term "informal practice" as follows:

[79] Whereas the gross of research in network studies is focused on the effects of positive interpersonal ties, Labianca and Brass warn us that to map the complete social ledger, one has to address the role of negative relationships in organizations as well. (Labianca and Brass 2006)

> a "regular set of players' strategies that infringe on, manipulate, or exploit formal rules and that make use of informal norms and personal obligations for pursuing goals outside the personal domain. Such strategies involve bending of both formal rules and informal norms or navigating between these constraints by following some and breaking others where appropriate. They also involve a creative interpretation of these constraints, a discovery of their enabling aspects, and an improvisation on that basis." (Ledeneva 2006: 14, 22)

Though this definition echoes the institutionalist approach in its reference to formal and informal rules, she repeatedly notes that her focus is not on the rules defining the structure of the game, rather on the players and their strategies shaped by rules of different nature. She argues for this approach by claiming that instead of mapping the terrain of informal rules most often it makes more sense to inquire about how players engage in manipulative ways of mixing formal rules and informal norms and how do they develop a practical sense in navigating between them. To substantiate this, she mentions the example of *blat* (exchange of "favors of access") that was a ubiquitous informal element of everyday life and organizational activities in the Soviet Union, yet it cannot be comprehensively described in terms of consistently enforced rules and principles. For instance, issues of who, how, and how much could have been asked within *blat* transactions were neither clearly set nor universally applied, moreover, with these dealings not just the formal rules, but informal norms upheld in family circles, such as that lies and bribes are wrong, were bent too. (Ledeneva 2006: 16)

A further variation of this concept is offered by Aasland, Grødeland and Pleines in an article examining patterns of generalized and institutional trust among elites in relation to informal practices and informal networks. They define "informal practices" as "acts that are not regulated by formal rules" (Aasland *et. al.* 2012: 118), or in a more detailed version as "behaviour not in line with formal procedures stipulated for dealing with a given problem or behaviour aimed at solving problems for which there are no (clear) formal procedures." (Aasland *et. al.* 2012: 116, fn. 2)

One can immediately observe that the second definition is broader than Ledeneva's in the sense that next to practices that are aimed to evade the law, the authors have an eye for beneficial instances aimed at solving issues for which there are no formally stipulated procedures or these are just vaguely defined. Ledeneva explicitly deals with "rules of breaking the rules"; hence, she is particularly interested in practices that infringe formal rules in one way or other (i.e. the letter or the spirit of the law; for instance, creating negative publicity about one's competitors, schemes of tax evasion, engaging in "alternative" techniques of contract and law enforcement). Yet there are many well-known routine informal bureaucratic procedures followed in order to get things done in an under-regulated formal environment, but also to cut corners in over-regulated situations that prescribe cumbersome procedures. Both kinds of practices might considerably influence the performance of the concerned organizations, this time, however, in a positive sense.

In order to arrive to a working definition, I will summarize now the fundamental points of various attempts to define different informal phenomena, including the previously cited definitions of "informal practice". First of all, informal practices take place in formally not codified settings. This implies a social or personal relationship between concerned parties, which does not exclude, however, a relevant formal relationship between them. In its own turn, this implies that social ties and roles overwrite formally set roles, which lead to particularistic considerations in organizational behavior as opposed to those based on universalistic principles.[80] Informal practices might be constrained or enabled by intermingling informal norms, like that of friendship, kinship, honesty, trust and others, yet certain practices require the infringement of some informal norms. Let us not forget that personal ties can be not just positive but negative too. In case the parties involved in negative personal relationship do not manage to act in "professional manner" (i.e. no influence of

[80] Following Pearce *et al.* (2000), universalism refers to the application of formal rules uniformly to all in an organizational setting, whereas particularism implies actions influenced by personal attachments.

personal attachments), their interaction slips to the domain of informality again. Finally, informal practices relate variably to formal organizational goals and procedural rules.

The working definition that encapsulates the highlighted elements:

Informal practices are acts that function through different types of personal ties and make use of informal norms and particularistic considerations and obligations. They take place in formally not codified settings and have various relationships to formal rule requirements and organizational goals.

On specific combination possibilities between informal practices and formal procedural rules and organizational goals, I will elaborate in the next section, which deals with typologies of formal-informal interactions. However, as a final remark concerning the working definition just provided, it seems important to react to a common concern regarding conceptualizations of informality, treating them as a residual category to formally regulated activities namely.

Conceiving informal activities by way of deviation from formal ones is contested, among others because it depicts informality as a residual category, in the sense that is what remains once eliminating everything explicable by formally codified rules and procedures. Hence, Radnitz, for instance, recommends as a starting point for studying "informal politics" the sociological definition offered by Misztal regarding the concept "informality", which "[…] has the advantage of specifying the phenomenon on its own terms […]." (Radnitz 2011: 353) Misztal defines it "[…] as a form of interaction among partners enjoying relative freedom in their interpretation of their roles' requirements." (*ibid*, Misztal 2000: 46) The opportunities of shifting frames in different interactional settings permit space for the occurrence informality, and implicitly, fewer opportunities lead to more formal behavior. (Misztal 2000: 41) One has to observe, however, that this "formality – informality span" does not overlap with the formal/informal distinction offered by the political science literature cited before. (Misztal

2000: 46) Misztal's definition is based on the literature of symbolic interactionism and concerns specifically the style of interaction. But clearly, informal institutions or organizations do not work exclusively (and not even preponderantly) by informal interactions in the sense offered by Misztal, but through a multitude of strictly role bounded interactions too. The interactions between Mafiosi illustrate this point well. The Mafias, as informal institutions and organizations represent a set of particular informal norms, yet there is not much space left for behavioral informality or improvising with regard to the script of interaction between hierarchical superiors and inferiors. To put it sharply, interaction within informally organized settings as it is defined in the domain of political science (i.e. not formally codified rules) can be role bounded, which translated to Misztal's conceptional framework means formal.

Though Misztal's definition does not seem to represent a starting point that could be readily applied, there is undeniably a core of truth in Radnitz's call pointing to weaknesses of current conceptualizations of informality. Nevertheless, the solution is not to reject all elements contrasting it with formality, but to include peculiarities of the informal phenomena under scrutiny, which is a frequently used methodological pathway as it was pointed out at the beginning of this section, and I consider it was also achieved by the working definition offered here for "informal practices". Even if one will manage to describe informality without any reference to formality, the case remains that from the point of view of empirical research the most viable way is to identify first the formal elements of the work related processes and activities, and then to look for practices, beliefs and norms existing beyond these mechanisms.

4.2. Typologies of formal-informal interactions – a critical review

Although in the previous chapter I argued for employing in my analysis the term "informal practices" instead of the more frequently applied "informal institution"-approach, I have to return once again to the notion of institutions. This is because the political science literature contains models of formal and informal interaction only for formal and informal institutions and not for other informal occurrences (i.e. informal practices, informal politics). A review of the existing models is still useful as it can be adapted to interactions of formal and informal practices.

As it was pinpointed by Helmke and Levitsky, virtually everyone agrees that formal and informal institutions coexist in all types of political systems, and their interaction bears with special importance regarding policy outcomes, yet characterizations of formal-informal relationships tend to be oversimplified. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 16–17) Most often these relationships fall into one of two sharply contrasting categories: either informal institutions are functional or problem solving, in that they provide solutions to problems of social interactions, which enhance the performance of formal institutions, or are dysfunctional and problem creating, with the effect of undermining performance. (*ibid*.)

In an attempt to depict more nuanced relationships, based on the degree of convergence between formal and informal institutional outcomes, and the effectiveness of the relevant formal institutions, Helmke and Levitsky developed a typology that instead of the dichotomous classification captures four combination possibilities. This has become the most frequently quoted typology since it was published in 2004 in an article aimed at setting informal institutions on the research agenda of comparative politics. (Helmke and Levitsky 2004) This effort of creating a typology of formal and informal relationships is not unique in the political science literature however. Actually two other typologies preceded the one offered by Helmke and Levitsky: one developed by Nee and Ingram (1998) in the field of

new sociological economics, and the other by Lauth (2000) in the field of comparative politics.[81] As it is going to be presented in this section, both typologies contain combination possibilities that were not incorporated in the latest version, though Helmke and Levitsky claim that their typology represents a revised form of Lauth's model. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 4).

In order to map the varieties of formal and informal interactions I will present and compare first the enlisted typologies, and then, in a separate subsection, I will turn to a more detailed critical analysis of the typology offered by Helmke and Levistky. The final subsection presents a refined typology of informal institutions, a version arrived at by incorporating relevant aspects inspired by the other two models.

Before I proceed with the presentation of these models, I must note that from a methodological perspective the comparison is not problematic, due to the fact that the conceptual framework is identical in these typologies, as all are based on North's approach to "institutions".[82] (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 5, Nee and Ingram 1998: 19-20, Lauth 2000: 23) Furthermore, I will use the term "interaction" similar to the analytical approaches manifested in the cited works: they reveal primarily how informal institutions influence the working of formal institutions, but not the reverse route.[83]

4.2.1 Extant typologies

Concerning the interaction between formal and informal institutions, Nee and Ingram's (1998) and Lauth's (2000) typology is constructed on the very same variable, namely, the compatibility between the formal and informal rules followed by actors in their activities. Accounting for the effects of informal actions on the performance of formal institutions, both

[81] Lauth retakes the similar typology in later writings too. (Lauth 2004, 2012)
[82] Cited in the previous section.
[83] For the latter perspective see Zenger *et al.* (2002) and Pejovich (1999).

models contain three types along the variable of rule-compatibility.[84] These three types overlap only partially however. First, there are the two "classical" situations in which formal and informal constraints coincide or are at odds with each other with the corresponding consequences previously indicated: increasing or decreasing effectiveness, advancing or hindering the achievements of formal institutional/organizational goals.

Next to these two possibilities, Nee and Ingram extricate a situation of antagonistic relationship between the formal and informal rules, when, contrarily to the expectation, formal institutional stability and performance is maintained because informal activities deviating from formally prescribed norms ultimately further organizational goals. As an illustration of "decoupled norms" they mention an informal norm followed by the agents of the US federal law enforcement agency, where it became an informal rule not to report attempts at bribery, because reporting apparently weakened the agents' ability to secure the cooperation needed to complete their investigations. (Nee and Ingram 1998: 35) Though certain rules set up for fighting corruption were violated, the main task of the agency was more effectively accomplished.

In his own turn, Lauth identifies as the third possibility the functional equivalence of formal and informal institutions. The examples provided for this type are different forms of civil disobedience, such as "wildcat strikes"/"political strikes" or "blockades", where these phenomena are interpreted by him as functional equivalents of formal (but not properly working) participation channels. (Lauth 2000: 38–40) He observes that these activities are illegal, yet legitimate and sustainable from a normative point of view in case they aim at correcting democratic deficits. Albeit not explicitly categorized by Lauth, one can include here the self-help networks that provide services in the area of social security: saver and migrant clubs, or burial societies for instance. According to Lauth's analysis, these informal

[84] Nee and Ingram label the categories as *congruent*, *decoupled* and *opposition norms*, whereas Lauth uses the labels of *complementary*, *substitutive* and *conflicting*.

institutions belong to the domain of customary law that is compatible with the rule of law and informal arrangements correspond to their formal counterparts. (Lauth 2000: 42) Consequently, it is safe to treat them as equivalents, which guides me to place them within the same category as the forms of civil resistance, the category called by Lauth "substitutive". One must note, however, that while both are capable of making positive inputs on the functioning of the formal institutions, civil disobedience implies law-infringement (this aspect is emphasized by Lauth too), whereas the maintenance of self-help networks does not. This indicates that from the point of view of compatibility between the formal and informal rules, the category actually contains two different sets of institutions: one that is similar to the third category identified by Nee and Ingram (i.e. formal institutional performance is bolstered by antagonistic informal rules), and the other that represent the parallel working of formal and informal institutions.

Therefore, up to this point, there are not three but four possibilities identified with regard to interaction between formal and informal institutions along the dimension of compatibility of rules: two types of compatibility and two of incompatibility. The same number of types of informal institutions is captured in the typology crafted by Helmke and Levitsky (2000a) too.

However, contrarily to the one-dimensional typologies presented above, Helmke and Levitsky constructed a typology on two categorical variables. They propose to classify informal institutions along the following dimensions: the degree of convergence between formal and informal institutional outcomes, and the effectiveness of the relevant formal institutions, respectively. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 13) On the first dimension, outcomes of formal and informal institutions can be convergent or divergent, where the difference is made whether following the informal rules produces substantively similar or different results from that expected from strict and exclusive adherence to the formal ones. On the second dimension, formal institutions can be effective or ineffective. Here effectiveness indicates

"the extent to which rules and procedures that exist on paper are enforced or complied in practice." (*ibid.*) These parameters, however, are not assumed by the analyst, but are dependent of the actors' perceptions. In case of effective formal institutions, "actors believe there is a high probability that noncompliance will be sanctioned by official authorities." (*ibid.*) Where formal rules and procedures are ineffective, "actors believe the probability of enforcement, (and hence the expected cost of violation) to be low." (*ibid.*)

Compared to the previously presented typologies the novelties of this model are that instead of the compatibility between the formal and informal rules it captures the compatibility between outcomes and the second variable introduced, namely, the formal institutional effectiveness.

The cross-tabulation of these two dimensions produces four different types of informal institutions:

Formal institutions / **Outcomes**	**Effective formal institutions**	**Ineffective formal institutions**
Convergent	*Complementary*	*Substitutive*
Divergent	*Accommodating*	*Competing*

Helmke and Levitsky: A Typology of Informal Institutions (2006a: 14)

Again, the complementary and competing types correspond to the "functional" and "dysfunctional" types that predominate in much of the literature with the added condition that complementary informal institutions work in effective formal institutional settings, whereas competing informal institutions in ineffective formal settings. I will return to the implications of this criterion later on in this section.

Concerning the complementary informal institutions, Helmke and Levitsky contribute to circumscribing their domains of working by specify that complementary informal institutions

might be broken down into two subtypes. The first "fills in gaps" within formal institutions either by addressing contingencies not dealt with in the formal rules or by facilitating the pursuit of the actors' goals more effectively within the formal institutional framework such as by informally agreed operating procedures of the bureaucracy that enhance coordination and ease decision-making. The second subtype serves as underlying foundation for formal institutions. In this latter case compliance with formal rules is not rooted in formal rules *per se*, but in shared expectations created by underlying informal norms, for instance norms of meritocracy or fair exchange. They illustrate the second type of complementary informal institution by Singapore's postcolonial bureaucracy (the formal organization of which resembled those of Indonesia and the Philippines, yet these two proved to be highly ineffective), where effectiveness is attributed to underlying norms of meritocracy and discipline shared by state bureaucrats and private sectors entrepreneurs. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006b: 279) Other underlying informal institutions, norms and expectation that facilitate meeting liberal constitutional provisions are norms of gracious losing and norms concerning the public-private boundary. (cf. Galvan, Helmke and Levitsky 2006b: 280) To add some further examples by citing works currently analyzed, formal rules and regulations governing economic transactions can be buttressed by informal norms of honesty and fair exchange. (Nee and Ingram 1998: 34)

For competing institutions Helmke and Levitsky cite the following examples: corruption, clientelism, patrimonialism, extrajudicial killing by the police in Brazil, clan politics, and certain "traditional" or indigenous institutions. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 15–16, 2006b: 276–277)

From the category where the relationships between formal and informal rules can be seen as incompatible, Helmke and Levitsky detached two additional types, the substitutive and accommodating informal institutions. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 17) Here actors "bypass

formal rules and procedures" or "violate the spirit of the formal rules", nevertheless, this way they achieve results in domains where formal rules failed to do so (substitutive informal institution) or generate outcomes that are generally viewed as beneficial (accommodating informal institution), such as regime stability, for instance. (Helmke and Levtisky 2006a: 16–17) The substitutive institutions usually compensate for weak or ineffective state institutions (convergent outcomes); conversely, accommodating informal institutions dampen the effects of strong formal institutions that produce (more exactly, would produce) outcomes disliked by the actors (divergent outcomes). In the latter case actors are unable to change formal rules or openly violating them is considered too risky, consequently, they turn to practices that help to reconcile their interest with formal institutional arrangements.

Let us see a few examples provided by Helmke and Levitsky for these two novel categories. For substitutive institutions they mention *concertasesiones* (or "gentelman's agreements") as a form of electoral dispute resolution in Mexico and *rondas campesinas* (community patrols) in Peru. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006: 16) For accomodating informal institutions the following are mentioned: early Dutch consociationalism or informal mechanisms employed by the governing *Concertacion* in Chile, which created incentives for interparty and interbranch cooperation and consultation, this way mitigating the characteristics of exaggerated presidentialism. Of the similar type of informal institutions are considered to be the *blat* in the Soviet Union and *guanxi* in China. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006: 15, 2006b: 278)

4.2.2 A critical review of Helmke and Levitsky's model

Though very compelling at first sight, elegant in being anchored in (bi-)dimensional thinking and the types having telling distinctive labels, one might raise several objections regarding the typology formulated by Helmke and Levitsky. To start with, the categories collectively are not exhaustive, so the typology is not capable to accommodate all possible forms of

informal institutions. This is due to the conditions imposed by the dimension of formal institutions. As the following examples will illustrate, informal institutions having certain defining attributes of the competing, accommodating and substitutive types can occur along both effective and ineffective formal institutions.

Consider the samizdat for example; which is an informal institution embodying dissent under harsh formal censorship, and offers itself immediately to be tested, given my research-interests in censorship. In the Soviet Union for instance, the formal rules regarding publishing and the sanctions attached to violating rules of censorship (where producing and circulating uncensored materials are included too) were harsh. Given that outcomes can be considered divergent and the formal institutions effective, samizdat has to be included into the category of accommodating informal institutions. Following the same theoretical considerations, one has to lump into this category the "flying universities" functioning under Communist regimes too, likewise certain practices related to the hidden economy. But this clearly goes against the common sense of conceiving samizdat or flying universities as competing informal institutions considering that formal and informal rules of the game are definitely at odds.

At this point it seems well founded to note that, though not appearing among the categorical variables, the issue of rule compatibility is still lurking in the explanations attached to the types captured by the model. In fact, what seems to distinguish accommodating and competing types is not reduced to the variable concerning the formal system, but there is a difference in the degree or nature of infringing formal rules, i.e. violating the spirit vs. violating the letter of formal rules. (See Helmke and Levitsky 2006: 15)

Back to our examples, these informal practices are undertaken by the actors with a clear understanding of the risks implied in infringing formal laws; nevertheless, this does not hold them back. This is because these activities are usually guided by a "mission" to complete, which trumps the losses incurred by acting against formal institutions. Nevertheless, there is

no such kind of cell in the typology offered by Helmke and Levitsky. Additional examples would be the Central Asian clan politics that patronized and provided their members goods and services through an extensive underground economy and collusions against Soviet officials. (Schatz 2004) While Brezhnev decided to turn a blind eye towards these practice as long as they remained politically submissive, Andropov, followed by Gorbachev initiated purges of great scales directed to remove clan networks, which, nevertheless, continued to function. (*ibid*.) But certain vigilante movements from democratic settings would also qualify for competing informal institution existing along effective formal institutions.

By continuing this exercise of placing different informal institutions into the typology offered by Helmke and Levitsky, one can observe that some sort of accommodating type is also missing from the column of ineffective formal institutions. Grzymala-Busse pointed out that there are cases for informal institutions in contexts where they do not undermine directly formal institutions, rather exploit them by capitalizing on poor specifications of formal rules. (Grzymala-Busse 2010: 322–323) An example for this situation would be in the early phases of democratization in countries from Central Europe, where party financing rules were rife with loopholes and permitted the emergence of clientelistic networks between parties, businesses and governmental agencies. Now, playing upon gaps in the formal rules "contradict[s] the spirit, but not the letter, of the formal rules", to quote Helmke and Levitsky (2006a: 15). To recall, they used this description for the category of accommodating informal institutions, and the presumed outcomes can indeed be seen as divergent. But the relevant formal context here cannot be considered an exemplary piece for the rule of law, where actors would expect any formal sanctions for their dealings. The other possibility is to treat this informal institution as a competing type; nevertheless, this would imply a conceptual stretching of the competing category to all kinds of formal rule infringements, which was obviously not intended by Helmke and Levitsky.

Furthermore, one can observe instances that cannot be placed into any of the available categories because there is no formal sanctioning at play, so the effective/ineffective formal dimension proves to be of little use again. This is the case of self-help networks providing social security support, as it was mentioned by Lauth. But one might think of other instances too when formal institutions are either ignored or rendered neutral, because the costs of making informal arrangements are considered lower than the costs of depending on formal rules to resolve specific problems. For instance, actors may prefer to resolve disputes without resorting to the legal system. A few examples for this situation are given by Pejovich, namely, informal agreements between merchants, or resolving conflicts concerning boundary fences or cattle trespass in rural Canada. (Pejovich 1999: 170–171) These are cases that cannot be easily accommodated into the complementary category based on the assumption that the outcomes are convergent and the relevant formal institution effective, because they are rather substitutes of formal institutions, they function in parallel to formal rules that taken by and large may function quite effectively. So, it is not clear at all what the enforcement of formal rules adds to the characterization of this type of informal institution.

Cases of decoupled norms described by Nee and Ingram, as well as similar situations noted in the introductory part of this chapter (i.e. organizational practices analyzed by Van Maanen) are again hard to be interpreted by the model offered by Helmke and Levitsky. These kinds of situations imply violating certain formal rules; nevertheless, these rule infringements may be tacitly accepted by the management for the greater good of the organization. Do these cases qualify for the column of effective or ineffective formal institutions?

To summarize, the cases depicted above indicate that different types of informal institutions bearing specific characteristics of competing, substitutive and accommodating institutions can occur along effective, as well as ineffective formal institutions as defined by Helmke and Levitsky; furthermore, in particular instances is it not clear how to interpret the variable of

formal institutional effectiveness. Translated to methodological terms, the problem is that the category that establishes the column variables in this typology (effective/ineffective formal institution) does not grasp the core defining attributes of different informal institutions.

To unfold this issue a bit, the problem stems from the fact that Helmke and Levistky seem to mix two different forms of typologies. They promise to craft a typology of "formal-informal institutional relationships" (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 15), but actually the typology they offer is that of informal institutions as the title of the matrix suggests too. Following the methodological considerations of Collier *et al.* (2012), we can assess that this is a conceptual (or descriptive) typology, given that the cell types serve to identify and describe the phenomenon under analysis, namely, informal institutions. In this form of typology the meaning of the cell types (or the concept that corresponds to each cell) is established, on the one hand, by the fact that cell types are indeed "a kind of" in relation to the overarching concept around which the typology is organized. On the other hand, the categories that establish the row and column variables provide the core defining attributes of the cell type. (Collier *et al.* 2012: 222) The overarching concept being "informal institutions", the first variable indeed captures (conceptually and empirically) the attributes of informal institutions: whether or not they generate similar outcomes to formally expected outcomes. The second variable, however, which concerns the effectiveness of formal institutions, operationalized through expected sanctions for the violation of formal rules, cannot be said to represent a core attribute of informal institutions, and the laconic presentation offered by Helmke and Levitsky to this categorical variable does not help us to disentangle this aspect. As it was illustrated in the test-cases too, it is not a proper variable to discriminate between different types of informal institutions.

It seems sound to treat formal institutional effectiveness as an independent variable explaining the emergence or functioning conditions of informal institutions, and actually this

approach is present in the description attached to each type of informal institution. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 13–16) Yet this would imply to construct a different form of typology, namely, an explanatory typology, in which the cell types together form the dependent variable, and the dimensions that establish the rows and columns are the independent variables. (Collier *et al.* 2012: 218) In this case however, the other variable should be replaced, because the convergence in outcomes cannot be conceived as an independent variable to the emergence or functioning of informal institutions.

To conclude, methodological arguments and empirical testing indicate that the typology of formal and informal interactions most frequently employed in political science analysis has some rather severe shortcomings. The problems seem to be rooted in mixing two different methods of crafting typologies, and in the authors' option for a particular operationalization of one of the categorical variables, i.e. formal institutional effectiveness. In the conceptual typology for which the model eventually qualifies, the respective categorical variable does not capture core attributes of the phenomenon under scrutiny, i.e. informal institutions. This leads to problematic placement of various well known informal phenomena. Consequently, in order to account for various types of informal institutions (or practices) a revision of extant typologies is unavoidable. In what follows, I will present an alternative descriptive typology that integrates insights offered by all three previously presented typologies.

4.2.3 Proposed conceptual typology of informal institutions/practices

One way of addressing the problems identified in the typology offered by Helmke and Levitsky is to redefine the dimension concerning the effectiveness of formal institutions. Instead of interpreting effectiveness in terms of expected sanctions and/or a context in which informal institutions emerge, one can consider effectiveness of formal institutions as a function of informal institutions, as it was used by Nee and Ingram, and Lauth. Furthermore, inspired by the same authors, it seems convenient to return to a conceptual typology based on

the crucial and empirically readily identifiable categorical variable, the compatibility between the formal and informal rules namely.

To recall, after splitting Lauth's "substitutive" category in two groups based on the principle of compatibility between formal and informal rules, the combination of his categories with the categories constructed by Nee and Ingram already resulted four different types of informal institutions. These four types can be merged with the four types developed by Helmke and Levitsky, this way capitalizing the strength of extant typologies. I do not attempt to introduce new variables, concepts or labels, but to redefine and clarify categories used by Helmke and Levisky with insights offered by Nee and Ingram, and Lauth. Clarifications concern primarily the substitutive and accommodating institutions with regard to their distinctive marks as against the other types from the same category, i.e. various instances of compatible vs. incompatible rules.

The following four definitions capture two situations of compatibility and two of incompatibility between formal and informal rules, the latter showing variance regarding their impact on the functioning of the formal institution, increasing or decreasing performance namely.

Complementary informal institutions – consist of informal rules compatible with the formal rules, where informal activities "fill in gaps" within formal institutions either by addressing contingencies not dealt with in the formal rules or by facilitating the pursuit of organizational goals more effectively by providing additional incentives and mechanisms of coordination and control. "Underlying informal norms" are included here too. This definition is overtaken from Helmke and Levitsky without altering it.

Substitutive informal institutions – consists of informal rules compatible with the formal rules, where informal institutions work in parallel to (strongly or weakly enforced) formal

institutions. Basically, the difference between the complementary and substitutive institutions is defined by the existence of formal regulations: in case of complementary institutions there is a lack of relevant formal regulation, whereas substitutive institutions work along a set of formal rules. Substitutive institutions can be either neutral or raise the effectiveness of formal institutions. It seems important to emphasize, that informal institutions that infringe to whatever degree formal rules do not qualify for this category, but for one of the two next categories. So, the proposed category here is more restricted than the corresponding types indicated either by Helmke and Levitsky, or Lauth.

Accommodating informal institutions – consists of informal rules incompatible with the (spirit or letter) formal rules, and as a consequence certain formal rules are infringed, nevertheless, the result is a more effective functioning of formal institutions. This category is better described in terms of "decoupled" formal and informal rules developed by Nee and Ingram than by the definition given by Helmke and Levistky. Note that the examples of civil disobedience cited by in Lauth, as well as *rondas campesinas* cited by Helmke and Levitsky under the rubric of substitutive institutions qualify as accommodating informal institutions according to the current typology, for they do violate certain formal rules, yet it can be argued that they also compensate for shortcomings of formal institutional functioning.

Competing informal institutions – informal and formal rules are incompatible, and informal institutions work in ways that decrease the effectiveness of formal institutions. Without the restrictions imposed by the variable concerning the effectiveness of formal institutions, this category can accommodate various informal phenomena brought up as test cases in the previous subsection, such as the samizdat and clan politics in the Soviet Union, as well playing upon legal loopholes in the early phases of the transition process in Eastern Europe etc.

Having this laid down, a couple of further important issues must be addressed, firstly, the fact that an informal institution might relate differently to formal institutions governing given sphere of activity. In other words, the same set of informal rules may fall into different categories in relation to different formal institutions. For instance, as Reh (2012) elaborates on the relationship of informal politics and democratic governance, even the best intended informal arrangements bolstering the effectiveness of a given policy might infringe other normative standards (institutions). "Informal politics", characterized by restricted set of decision-makers, seclusion of the decision process and constraining force of pre-decisions, may enhance problem-solving and efficiency, which represent important normative standards, but they harm under all conditions the democratic norms of deliberation and accountability. (*ibid.*) Therefore, it seems that genuine complementary and substitutive informal processes, in the sense of perfect compatibility between (all) formal and informal rules, are rather hard to find in the domain of democratic decision-making. The more important lesson is, however, that one must clearly state which (set of) formal institutions are considered when analyzing the consequences of informal activities.

For that matter, the fact that categorizations of informal institutions are not always mutually exclusive was observed by Helmke and Levistky too, and they cite Van Cott's article in which she shows how indigenous laws from Latin American states may fall into all four of the categories captured by their model. (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a: 17) Indigenous law can be considered complementary in cases when the state is unwilling to deal with issues considered important by the community, competing when their rule enforcement mechanisms do not coincide with that administered by state agencies (among others punishing transgressions that are not considered crimes according to the state law), substitutive (as defined by Helmke and Levitsky) when considering that they operate in remote rural areas or

in urban slums founded by migrants, where state institutions have failed to effectively establish jurisdiction. (Van Cott 2006: 251–255)

The second problem that has to be tackled is the applicability of these interaction types to informal practices. As it was discussed, I prefer to employ the broader term of "informal practices" to "informal institutions" because the former also encompasses instances that do not attain the status of institutions, still might considerably influence policy outcomes. However, the conceptual shift from "informal institutions" to "informal practices" implies that there are no informal rules at work to assess their compatibility with the relevant formal rules. Nevertheless, I consider that the same typology can be applied as in the case of informal institutions, because it is possible to ascertain the compatibility of practices with formal rule requirements and practices, as well as to assess their impact on organizational effectiveness. Having the formal goals and rules established, one can assess whether the informal practices complement, substitute for, accommodate to or compete with formal organizational requirements.

Besides, the added value of the concept of „informal practice" is that it opens up the theoretical possibility to grasp the very empirical fact that actors switch between informal ways of contradictory logics within the similar sphere of activity, a phenomenon that is inconsistent with the logic of institutions. People may switch between complementary, accommodating, substitutive or competing informal practices according to their current needs, strategies or possibilities, likewise between following formal rules and acting informally, hence, sometimes undermining, other times reinforcing formal organizational rules and objectives. But theoretically they cannot navigate between informal institutions of contradictory logics that would generate opposite outcomes (i.e. informal rules that bolster

vs. those that undermine the same formal institution).[85] This is related to the very nature of informal institutions. As Brinks pinpointed, "[i]nformal rules derive their existence in part from the very fact of their operation", specifically, they "must have both normativity (in the limited sense that they state a standard of conduct) and facticity (in the sense that they are actually enforced)" (Brinks 2006: 203, 204). In other words, "[w]hile laws and other formal rules may, in some sense, continue to be laws even if they are never enforced, it makes little sense to say there is an informal rule but it is never [or seldom] applied." (Brinks 2006: 203)

This argument guides me to conclude that two sets of contradictory informal rules (norms of meritocracy vs. favouritism for instance) is a non-existing case within the execution of the same sphere of activity. Dealing according to the rules of one informal institution implies not to obey the rules of the other, which quires the existence of the latter set of rules. To make this point clear by an example, consider the case when certain "informal output norms" are set up by workers' groups sabotaging performance. These norms represent the minimum allowed by formal requirements, whereby informal rules are enforced by ridiculing offenders ("rate-buster" or "speed king"). (Nee 1998: 86, 88) This is a clear example for a competing informal institution. Obviously, there is no place for another type of informal institution that would speed up the performance of the same group of workers, be it complementary, substitutive or accommodating.

To conclude, though simplified, the revised typology of informal institutions seems to better accommodate salient forms of informal phenomena. Furthermore, I consider that the revised typology can be applied to categorize informal practices too, and I also claim that these different types of informal practices can work together in the very same domain of activity. Reanalyzing all examples provided by the authors of the three extant typologies and placing

[85] One might have the impression that the two consecutive arguments contradict each other. The first argument concerns the relationship of a set of informal rules to various formal institutions. The second argument, however, deals with the possibility of different informal institutions competing with each other, the relevant formal institution being the same.

them in the revised typology is problematic, because this would imply to examine the original studies they cite in order to identify (if provided) the particular formal institutional rules, which is a basic point of reference in the present typology. Nevertheless, the employment possibilities of the proposed typology, as well as the claim that various types of informal practices may simultaneously occur, is going to be substantiated by empirical evidence drawn from the case of the Romanian censorship system.

4.3. Summary

The discussions included in this chapter aimed at developing a conceptual and theoretical framework for grasping informal mechanisms emerging in the censorship system. Two important results worth to be pinpointed. One the one hand, the critical review of the literature resulted sorting out the concept "informal practices" from the multitude of alternative approaches, and providing a working definition for it, by which data concerning relevant informal mechanisms are going to be identified. On the other hand, the review involved confronting extant typologies of formal and informal interactions, which resulted a revised typology that can be employed both for informal institutions and practices. This provides an analytical tool for systematically exploring various patterns of informal interactions identified in the organizational setting of censorship.

Concretely this means that based on the working definition of informal practices, and by research methods indicated in Chapter 2, I will identify the type (formal/informal) and nature (positive/negative) of relationships between the actors involved in the censorship process, and trace their interactions deviating from formal procedures, that is instances when particularistic considerations are implied in initiating and pursuing activity. Subsequently, I will group and place various informal practices into the proposed typology based on assessments concerning the compatibility between the formal procedural rules and goals and

the practices. This way, I will provide a systematic and detailed account of informal mechanisms, issues that are presented in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5: FORMAL CENSORSHIP MECHANISMS IN ROMANIA (1949–1989)

The previous two chapters laid out the theoretical perspectives on which the present empirical research draws for addressing the research questions concerning the formal and informal mechanisms contributing to the effectiveness of the Soviet-type censorship systems. The present chapter is dedicated to the analysis of internal formal structural solutions of organizations involved in censorship based on theoretical claims regarding the adequate design of coordination and control mechanisms in jobs challenged by task uncertainty, issues that were discussed in-depth in Chapter 3.

To remind the reader briefly, on the one hand, it was argued there that the critical contingency characterizing the censors' job is task uncertainty. On the other hand, it was presented that under these circumstances, on the dimension of coordination, specific mechanisms enhancing the information processing capability are needed in order to ensure high performance. More specifically, structural contingency theories indicated that these organizational tools imply hierarchical organizational structures, and task adjustment through the introduction of new information, which can be realized by personal and group modes of feedback. Furthermore, on the dimension of control, effectiveness asks for mixed mechanisms, clan combined with bureaucratic mechanisms namely, which in terms of targets implies input, process and output monitoring. Based on these considerations, the present chapter critically assesses coordination and control mechanisms employed in the Romanian censorship system, which is regarded a typical case for the Soviet-type censorship systems according to a set of common descriptive characteristics identified and presented in the first chapter of this dissertation.

The presentation and analysis of empirical data is structured in three sections. The first two sections aim to provide a historical and institutional context for the examination of micro-level organizational mechanisms, which – as it was already mentioned in the methodological chapter of the dissertation – is narrowed down to the last linchpin of the pre-publication control procedure, namely, the censors' office (General Directorate of Press and Printing/Committee of Press and Printing), and even within this organization the focus is on the activity of local censors. [86] In other words, the analysis is ultimately focused on the ways GDPP delegates were instructed with regards to the norms of censorship, and the ways they were controlled in their work. Familiarizing readers with the history, main institutional components, actors and processes of the Romanian censorship system is important not only from the point of view of contextualizing the analysis of formal organizational arrangements, but also for understanding the informal practices and mechanisms that are going to be discussed in the next chapter. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that data processed in these sections contribute with new information to the extant literature on the history of Romanian censorship as I carefully assess the role and functioning of various organizational components, as well as the changes and continuities between the "two distinct periods" marked by the abolition of the 30 years old GDPP/CPP in 1977, changes that are much emphasized by analysts of Romanian censorship. Besides presenting in details the turns and shifts during the 1970s that temporarily induced considerable perplexity in the activity of stakeholders (editors and leaders of cultural institutions, new censors working at CSEC and Party activists), the second section outlines the changes but also the continuities between the two periods, the latter being crucial for the arguments developed in this dissertation that handles unitarily the whole period.

[86] *Direcţia Generală a Presei şi Tipăriturilor* (1949–1975), henceforth GDPP,and *Comitetul pentru Presă şi Tipărituri* (1975–1977), henceforth CPP. For the sake of readability, I will refer to this office as GDPP.

The third section of this chapter directly addresses the research question of this thesis, and presents in three blocks the most important formal means of coordination and control employed within the GDPP.[87] First it is presented the GDPP's setup, then the analysis zooms on formal communication channels and forms for transmitting instructions, and means that were meant to induce local censors to meet performance expectations. More specifically, I analyze coordination by directives and methods of promoting good practices, control exercised by recruitment, and by the system of rewards and sanctions, as well as certain combined control and coordination mechanisms realized through the system of reports and feedback, control and instruction at the workplace, and large-scale meetings of censors. The analysis indicates that most of the requirements concerning proper organizational design under task uncertainty were met in the GDPP.

To substantiate the conclusions derived from the analysis of official records, the third subsection explores the actual usage of these information sources and control procedures, so attitudes and behavior of local censors with regard to the previously presented means of coordination and control. Interview data with former censors suggest that everyday practices diverged from the picture gained from the analysis of official documents, for instance, local censors did not pay much attention to written feedbacks, and they were not particularly impressed by sanctions. Still, the importance of several organizational tools crucial under task uncertainty were underscored in testimonies as well, such as the personal horizontal and hierarchical communication networks, which ultimately guides me to conclude that on formal organizational level the system was properly designed for effectively reaching its aims.

The chapter ends with the main conclusions of the analysis and several remarks concerning its limitations. These are related to the timeframe of analysis, which in what concerns the in-

[87] An early version of this analysis was published in Kiss 2012b.

depth analysis of internal organizational mechanisms covers the first three decades, but not the last ten years of the state socialist period.

5.1 Organizational components of the censorship system: the Party, the cultural/media institutions and the censors' office

Histories of Romanian communist censorship customarily begin with the 23rd of August, 1944, when Romania changed sides in World War II and joined the Allies, and as a consequence, Soviet-type censorship was almost immediately installed.[88] By building upon censorship structures inherited from the previous regime, censorship was exercised through the Directorate of Press and Information (*Direcţia Presei şi Informaţiilor*) subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Military Censorship (*Cenzura Militară*) responsible to the government called Council of Ministers (*Consiliul de Miniştri*), and also through a body of Soviet counselors working at the Press Bureau of the Soviet Embassy (*Biroul de Presă de pe lângă Legaţia Sovietică*). These Soviet counselors were bringing to fruition the orders of the Allied (Soviet) High Command, acting on behalf of the Allied Powers. (Teodor 2012: 361–382)

The story continues with the Communist takeover of the Government in 1946, then the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947 that obliged Romania to outlaw the "fascists" and "all other bodies engaged in anti-Soviet propaganda", and further internal and external events that were accompanied by continuous institutional reshuffling, including the status of the censors' office. In 1949, this was upgraded to the status of general directorate, directly responsible to the Council of Ministers. It was called the General Directorate of Press and Printing (*Direcţia Generală a Presei şi Tipăriturilor*), and its role was to exercise state control, on the one hand, for protecting "state secrets," and "on the political content" of cultural products on the other. Despite its name, GDPP was not dealing only with printed matter, but its scope of duties

[88] For the most detailed history of the installation of communist censorship in Romania, particularly for the period between 1944 and 1947, see Teodor (2012: 361–382).

actually covered the monitoring of all cultural production.[89] By this time, the ground was already prepared for exhaustive censorship by the particular Soviet-type macro-institutional framework outlined in the first chapter of this dissertation, implying that everything related to printing was nationalized as well as the core cultural institutions and the news agency (*Agerpres*), "inimical" newspapers were banned and the editorial staffs purged, the libraries were "cleansed", and the enumeration could go on. (Teodor 2012, Petcu 2005: 71–79, Corobca 2010: 36–43, CPADCR 2006: 489–494)

As it was also presented in the literature review on the functioning of the Soviet-type censorship systems, the censors' office was not the sole agency performing control over cultural production. Similarly to the other states concerned, the centralized institutional structure of cultural management that would remain in place for about forty years in Romania included three main bodies: the Party, the state institutions (relevant ministries and the censors' office), and the cultural and media organizations. The relationship between these institutional components was the following: the Party played the "guiding" role and set the censorship norms, the cultural and media organizations with their parent organizations were supposed to apply them, whereas the censors' office checked for their enforcement through its central and local units. The GDPP (called CPP) was abolished in 1977, nevertheless, its former task were shared between the Council of Socialist Culture and Education (*Consiliul Culturii şi Educaţiei Socialiste*) and the Party, one of the relevant departments being the Propaganda and Agitation Department (under various names).[90]

One might wonder why the authors or the secret police were not included into the list of main actors of the censorship machinery. The answer to the first part of the question is that except for making pressures on the editors or editor-in-chief, the authors could rarely latch into

[89] Details about the tasks of GDPP are presented in section 5.3.1.
[90] On the functioning of the Agitprop until 1965 see Vasile (2011).

disputes regarding the fate of their own work, at least according to the formal procedures.[91] Commonly the authors did not even know for sure whether the editors or the censors intervened in their writing.[92]

With regards to the involvement of the secret police, there is always an expressed or tacit assumption that the censors' office worked hand-in-hand with the secret police agency (*Departamentul Securităţii Statului*, commonly called *Securitate*).[93] However, if not out of their personal enthusiasm, unlike editorial offices, GDPP employees did not work with the *Securitate*. Actually, as a response to the growing pressure of the *Securitate*, in 1973, it was strictly forbidden for local GDPP employees to provide any information related to their work to the secret services.[94] Officially, the *Securitate* could communicate to GDPP only on the highest organizational levels. Contrarily, editors-in-chief had to react when contacted by the secret services concerning the manuscripts or drafts of topics to be published, information extracted through inside informers.[95] If they did not remove the contested materials, the *Securitate* officers forwarded the issue to the local Propaganda Department with the remark that the editor-in-chief assumed personal responsibility for making the issue public.[96] In case of further denunciations and open scandals, the *Securitate* completed its own investigation on the issue, and requested the Party organs to sanction the editor-in-chief, or depending on the case other culpables (journalists, correctors, typographers etc.). (Şercan 2012b) In spite of the close monitoring of editorial offices and cultural institutions (including specific targets

[91] Sometimes it happened though. See M. Banuş's account (poet, writer) on trying to reason for her work on several levels of censorship both before and after 1977. (Banuş 1998: 9)
[92] "Naturally, they deleted or threw out stuff from my writings, but it was hard for me to assess if it was done by the editor-in-chief or the censor, because they always blamed the censor, or as it was said: the directorate of press". Interview with J. Szász in Bányai (2006: 307)
[93] Interview with former editor-in-chief Pongrácz (2009).
[94] An internal GDPP order issued in 1974 forbade to transmit information related to GDPP activity to all other organs and persons, and all requests in this sense had to be reported to the general director of GDPP. Censors working in the provinces could share information only with the first secretary or propaganda secretary of the county level RCP Committee, but this too had to be immediately reported to senior GDPP officials. Strict prohibition concering information sharing with secret services was mentioned by interviewees too. (Kiss 2009, Koszta 2010, Rebendics 2010, Censor B 2010)
[95] Interview with former editor-in-chief Madaras (2010).
[96] *Ibid*.

among their employees), interferences in both pre- and post-publishing censorship process, the *Securitate* cannot be considered a regular censorship organ, namely one that was formally included in the censorship process, so regularly received and made direct interventions on cultural products.

As a final general remark, one can note that the censorship processes in Romania integrated both pre- and post-publishing monitoring, and all previously mentioned actors were engaged in preventive censorship too. Furthermore, just as in the other states, the border between the forbidden and permitted topics was continuously altered according to current trends, visions and needs of the political power. According to historical accounts, the period of relative liberalization in Romania was restrained to the years between 1965 and 1971.[97] Nevertheless, the censorship machine did not cease to function in this period either.

5.2 "Two" censorship systems

The biggest institutional shift that captured the attention of analysts and induced considerable confusion at the time of the events was the closure of GDPP/CPP in 1977. The first assessments regarding the change in the censorship system were written shortly after, and elements of this very early born line of thought are still echoed in the vast majority of memoirs and analyses of Romanian censorship. "[I]n the summer of 1977, Ceausescu suddenly decided to abolish censorship", claims a Paul Goma, perhaps the most famous Romanian dissident writer; however, this was merely a lame attempt to give the appearance

[97] In 1965, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej died and Nicolae Ceauşescu succeeded him as first secretary of the Communist Party. Politically an obvious detachment from Moscow was tried, and the refusal of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 (in which all the countries from the Warsaw Treaty participated), brought Ceauşescu a considerable international prestige and internal legitimacy. 1971 is known as the year of the "July Theses". Returning from a trip made to China and North Korea, inspired by the hardline model found there, Ceauşescu delivered the speech entitled *Proposed measures for the improvement of political-ideological activity, of the Marxist-Leninist education of Party members, of all working people*. The "July Theses" marked the breaking with the former reconciliation strategy towards the society and intellectual life, and the return to a hard-line dictatorial policy. Strict ideological conformity was demanded, which meant more propaganda on behalf of the personality cult of the "leading couple" and an indigenous version of national communist ideology for instance, accompanied by corresponding harsh censorship. (Deletant 1995, Verdery 1991)

of more relaxed control over media and literature. (Goma (1978) in Schöpflin 1982: 167) Actually – the arguments continues –, the censorship system was just restructured. It was decentralized and started to work essentially with self-censorship and the mutual censorship of fellow-writers, and so it became more mischievous than ever, it turned "into insurmountable censorship." (*ibid.*) The most frequently uttered points in the sense that censorship after 1977 was tougher are the following: the tasks of the GDPP were overtaken by editorial offices and other cultural institutions, so it was done in-house, in the case of editorial offices by editors-in-chief and former censors parachuted to editorial offices, as well as new committees set up on the level of editorial offices. Furthermore, by lacking clear guidelines it was harder to get in line with the wishes of the Party, which resulted that the authors and cultural institutions become emphatically cautious, consequently, the censorship system worked more effectively.[98]

One has to be careful, however, with this widely shared account, and be aware that there might be a gap between the subjective perceptions and guesses, and the systems' actual functioning, as well as of discrepancies between the formal regulation and everyday practices. There is no point in questioning whether or not authors really felt it more malignant the censorship system after the GDPP's abolition, nevertheless, the role of different institutions and the working processes can and has to be carefully weighted. In what follows, I will have a closer look at the structural changes surrounding the episode of closing the GDPP and demonstrate that it was actually well prepared, though certain amendments were so poorly enforced that they passed kind of unnoticed before 1977. Furthermore, I will show that the new control organ set "in-house" was not functioning, internal editorial processes were not commanded by former GDPP censors, and the formal and informal self-censorship of editorial offices was a ubiquitous feature of the editorial work in times of the GDPP too.

[98] See these arguments, for instance, in one of the most frequently cited analyses provided Ficeac (1999: 35-37), Petcu (2005: 89-90) and Gross (1996: 17-18), as well as in Györffy (2009: 164–170), Preda (2010: 154–157).

By discussing these topics, I want to clarify certain aspects of the organizational rearrangements related to the abolition of the GDPP. Besides, the following discussions presents more details about the main actors and concrete censorship processes.

5.2.1 Reorganizations in the censorship system

During the 1970's, there were several changes in the distribution of censorship tasks and responsibilities that preceded closing down GDPP. First, the State Secrets Law from 1971 and the Press law from 1974 stipulated the responsibility of the editorial offices and publishing houses (more exactly the personal responsibility of journalists and the editors-in-chief) for the content of released materials.[99] Moreover, the press law also contained an article about the basic censorship norms that had to be observed by the editorial personnel.[100] Second, the GDPP's internal setup was partly modified in 1973, when an Administrative Council (*Consiliu Administrativ*) was installed comprising external members too: editors-in-chief of major papers, directors of publishing houses, representatives of the ministry of culture, called the Council of Socialist Culture and Education (*Consiliul Culturii şi Educaţiei Socialiste*)[101], the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of National Defense and other organs.[102] Next year, based on the same principle of "collective command", managing boards (*consiliu de conducere*) were requested to be set up in each editorial office too comprising "representatives of political organs, […] people of science and culture, specialist,

[99] Law no. 23/1971 and Law no. 3/1974, art. 68, 73–74.
[100] According to the press law, the media organs "[…]must act for the transposition of the policies of Romanian Communist Party, of the high principles of socialist equity and ethics, into real life [...]", and for this they had to stop the publishing or broadcasting of any materials that "[…]contain attacks on the socialist order, against principles of foreign and domestic policy of the Romanian Communist Party and the Socialist Republic of Romania; […] defame the leadership of the state and the party; communicate secret information, data or documents […]; contain false or alarming information, […] propagate fascist, obscurantist, anti-humanitarian concepts; chauvinistic propaganda, instigate to racial or national hatred, violence […]" Law no. 3/1974, art. 2, 67.
[101] Henceforth CSCE.
[102] See the approval of the Council of Ministers for the members of the Administrative Council of the GDPP. ANIC, D. 2/1973, ff. 109–113.

journalists".[103] The next step was taken in 1975, when the censors' office, then called the Committee of Press and Printing (*Comitetul pentru Presă şi Tipărituri*), became an "organ of dual nature", which was a state organ that is formally responsible to the Romanian Communist Party too.[104] These episodes were complemented by a personnel change at the chair of the GDPP. In 1973, the director inducted in 1949 retired and his place was taken by the former first deputy director of the Central Committee's Press Department.[105] Finally, at the plenary session of the CC RCP in June 1977, it was decided that censorship is to be abolished, and the CPP was indeed suddenly closed down.[106]

From this moment, it was claimed that responsibility for the content of published material had to be overtaken by the editing institutions (editorial offices, publishing houses or other cultural organizations), yet all organizations fell either under the command of the CSCE invested with guiding and controlling all cultural institutions in the country since 1971, or under the command of the RCP.[107] These two organs, which were anyway involved into the censorship process before 1977, shortly were going to overtake all attributes of the former censors' office.[108] Similarly to the status of GDPP, the CSCE was an organ of dual nature simultaneously subordinated to the Central Committee of the RCP and the Council of

[103] See the Press law from 1974 (Law no. 3/1974, art. 22).
[104] Decree (of the State Council) no. 53/1975.
[105] Ardelean Iosif (of Jewish-Hungarian origins, he was also called Erdélyi József, Adler József, or Adler Döme) was replaced by Ion Cumpănaşu.
[106] ANIC, Fond CPT, D 2/1977, f. 4. According to Goma's diary, abolishing censorship was already personally announced by Ceauşescu at the Congress of the Writers' Union held at the end of May 1977. (Goma 2009: 20)
[107] See Decree no. 301/1971 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the CSCE. The CSCE commanded over all publishing houses, printing industry, motion picture production, theater and music institutions, museums etc.
[108] Unfortunately, there are rather scarce sources about the functioning of the CSCE and its predecessor called State Committee for Culture and Arts (*Comitetul de stat pentru Cultură şi Artă*). About the involvement of CSCE in the censorship process before 1977 on can consult documents included in Maliţa's (2006) volume, which is exclusively focused on theatre censorship. According to these documents, CSCE approved theater programs and its employees were part of the visioning committees that evaluated staging before first public performance, which was actually a joint task with the GDPP. But there are references in GDPP documents, according to which the tasks performed by the two organizations overlapped to a great degree. This was remarked by local GDPP employees in 1974 (Györffy 2009: 163), and later by central GDPP unites as well. In 1976, it was observed by the literature section of the GDPP that the CSCE set up its own regular unit for checking manuscripts and developed a notification system. (D. 28/1976, ff. 24–25)

Ministers, and since 1971 it represented the core propaganda machinery through which Ceauşescu's "cultural revolution" had to be accomplished.[109]

In the new system, next to external monitoring performed CSCE and Party officials, control on the level of press organs was to be exercised by the managing boards of editorial offices and publishing houses. To recall, certain managing boards should have been functioning since 1974; according to unofficial sources however, it seems that they were set up just after the categorical appeal within the context of changing the censorship system. (Gáll 2003: 9, 21) Nevertheless, this time it was also specifically stipulated that about one third of this large board had to be composed by external members, among others delegates of the local or central Party organs and the CSCE.[110] As about the function of these boards, Ceauşescu specified a couple of years later: "There has to be a group at each editorial office – we do not call it censorship –, but a council, a group of people to oversee and respond for what is published there, just like it happens abroad too."[111]

Reorganization started in summer 1977, and typically to the functioning of the system, by the end of the year, the adjustment of formal regulation took place as well.[112] So, the managing boards were set up, the offices of the GDPP were closed down and its employees transferred to similar or entirely different jobs. With the last wave of transferals, the CSCE overtook a quarter of the GDPP censors working at the central office (in Bucharest) including the entire directorate. (Corobca 2011: 237–238) In the first month, there was considerable uncertainty regarding the functioning of the new system; nevertheless, rules of the game gradually

[109] See CPADCR (2006: 601–604). In 1977, CSCE was put under the control of the Ideological Committee of the CC. (*ibid.*)
[110] See Law no. 3/1974 republished in *Buletinul Oficial* no. 3, January 19, 1978, art. 22.
[111] See the Minutes of the Political Executive Committee of the CC, on the 27th of February, 1979. [http://ceausescunicolae.wordpress.com/c-literar/].
[112] The Congress of the Romanian Writers' Union was in May 1977, and according to the notes of Gáll, at the beginning of July 1977, the editorial offices were called for urgent establishment of the managing boards comprising 13–25 members. Further commands regarding this board were issued by the end of the year. (Gáll 2003: 9, 21). Concerning the legal regulations: in November and December 1977, it was modified the Press law (Decree no. 471/1977), the law on the functioning of the CSCE (Decree no. 442/1977), and the CPP was abolished (Decree no. 472/1977).

crystallized. According to the accounts of Ernő Gáll, editor in chief at the cultural-scientific monthly journal *Korunk* from Cluj, his editorial office was announced by the local GDPP office that they are not anymore in charge for checking the journal, and for further questions editors were directed to the CSCE, where the contact person had no idea how to handle the situation. (Gáll 2003: 9–11) Likewise, the local Party officers were rather bewildered. It was not clear, for instance, what is going to be the function of the managing boards or who is in charge to check the texts for "state secrets", which was a specific activity performed by the GDPT. (*ibid*.) What seemed to be certain – being repeatedly emphasized by officials – was that the "bureaucratic form of censorship" is over, and there is not going to be any pre-publishing control. (Gáll 2003: 9) Regarding the role of editorial offices the first alarmed voices appeared already in the first days: are they going to be indeed their own and each other's censors in the new system?[113]

Amid all perplexity, *Korunk* obtained the central CSCE's approval (more exactly, one of the current head's approval, L. Hegedűs, who was working before at CPP) to print the current issue on their own responsibility. For the next two issues the CSCE intervened on certain texts, yet the editor-in-chief was repeatedly assured that the remarks of the CSCE are to be handled as suggestions, not as commands. (Gáll 2003: 11–12)

This role of the CSCE seemed to be further strengthened at a central meeting of editors-in-chief organized in September 1977 by CSCE to discuss issues of "running editorial work without the censors' office". (Gáll 2003: 14). This event might be considered a rather desperate endeavor to demarcate new and old practices: it was emphasized that CSCE does

[113] Gáll even recorded in his diary the first critical article published in the spirit of "checking each other". The article he cites appeared in *Előre* (central Hungarian Party newspaper) at the beginning of September 1977, and it was written against the *Bihari Napló* (a local Hungarian Party newspaper) claiming that they published some "obscene" folklore materials. (Gáll 2003: 13) Gáll followed the developments in the field of post-publishing censorship too: „I can hear that after the appearance of *Utunk* there was already a phone-rebuke (3 hours later)." (2003: 11). Or, „We have heard in the previous days that the post-reader did not like the June editorial [...]". (Gáll 2003: 12)

not do pre-publishing checking, moreover, its work cannot even be considered post-publishing censorship, rather some sort of advices given in the spirit of comradeship. To underline this position, some "aberrant (sic!)"[114] reports written by former GDPP censors were presented, as well as a couple of recently published texts that, according to the audience, were "indeed mistaken"; consequently, they considered some external intervention legitimate. (*ibid*.)

While at the beginning there was some room for ignoring the CSCE's "advices", in a very short time the new control system took shape and formal control procedures stabilized. This was based on two pillars: the CSCE and the Party, both performing pre-publishing censorship. Party journals were controlled by Party organs, having nothing to do with the CSCE. Cultural periodicals and books were primarily under the control of CSCE, however, local and central Party organs gradually became involved in checking printed matters with a cultural profile too.

From 1980, drafts of the journals and "sticky" articles had to be submitted to local Party organs, whereas by 1982 direct intervention in publication decisions of the Printed media and TV section of the Central Committee became more and more substantial, up to the point when it worked as a regular, insurmountable control-forum.[115] Certain cultural journals, such as the *Korunk* were under tighter control, meaning that (next to the control performed by local and central CSCE units) previous approval of the local Party became a condition for sending the articles to the CC, or for specific topics was required the assent of a specialized departments of the CC.[116] Obviously, editors of cultural periodicals were more and more disappointed as filters multiplied.

[114] Thus, according to the notes of Gáll, Hegedűs (CSCE) called these interventions "aberrant".
[115] Gáll on *Korunk* (2003: 77, 104). See also Györffy's account on the parallel controlling performed by the CSCE and CC RCP over *A Hét*. (Györffy 2009: 166)
[116] See E. Gáll's letter to Constantin Mitea [former editor-in-chief at *Scânteia*, Ceausescu's counselor on press and propaganda issues] on the 26th of February, 1984, in which E. Gáll blames the new system of discrimination

Contrarily to the cultural newspapers, journals and books, newspapers belonging to the Party were not subject anymore to the control of a state agency after 1977. Curiously, the editorial personnel does not recall this event contentedly either. According to the interviews I conducted, the GDPP censor had the role to double-check the texts, hence protected the authors and the newspaper against sanctions or political attacks. Consequently, from the perspective of the editorial staff, abolishing GDPP meant the disappearance of a link in the security-chain around the newspaper.

> "It was easier with the censors, because we knew that if there was a problem with the writing, there was somebody to stop it. This way [after abolishing GDPP] we had to be more careful." (Mórocz 2010)

> "It would have been better for us [with censors], because we would be certain that there was no state secrete left in the newspaper." (Péterfi 2010)

> "Before you could say something like 'Come on, this was passed by the censors' office, what is your problem with me?' So, you had an excuse. But after it we did not have it anymore. The situation became more dangerous without the censors." (Kühn 2010)

This far one can conclude that whereas some actors, including media personnel and GDPP employees too, might have had the impression that institutional rearrangement came out of the blue, the institutional transformation actually started years before abolishing GDPP and proclaiming "freedom of press".[117] First, different institutional components of the censorship system were merged and incorporated into the leading body of the censors' office, then there was the change in the GDPP's tutelage in 1975, when it formally entered under the direct

against the *Korunk*, arguing that, according to his knowledge, previous approval of the local Party officials is applied only in the case of his journal.
L. Demény's [researcher at N. Iorga Historical Institute] letter to E. Gáll from the end of Febuary 1983 confirms that none of the professional journals and, according to his knowledge, not even the cultural journals had to submit articles with a historical topic to the Ideological section of the Central Committee, as Gáll was requested to do.
Letters sent and received by E. Gáll that are cited in the dissertation can be consulted in the electronic version of Gáll's correspondence (Gáll 2009) by searching after date and corresponding partner.

[117] As former censors testify, some of them were rather astonished by learning that their job was over from one day to the other. (Horváth 2010)

supervision of the Party, a similar status held by the CSCE.[118] Second, control-responsibilities of the CSCE, editorial offices, publishing houses and other cultural institutions were institutionalized years before the abolishment of the censors' office. Third, pre-publishing censorship was continued by the CSCE and/or the Party, but contrarily to the previous period, even publications of similar profile ended up to be treated in differentiated regimes. For further assessments regarding the functioning of the censorship system before and after 1977, in the next section, I will have a close look on the issue of "in-house censorship" and arguments sustaining that the censorship system after 1977 ensured closer monitoring, therefore higher effectiveness of the censorship policy.

5.2.2 "In-house censors"

The establishment of the managing boards on the level of editorial offices and other cultural institutions, transfer of censors to editorial offices, and self-censorship of editorial offices – these are the three tightly interlinked points that are most frequently uttered in order to describe the process of decentralization in the censorship system and its consequence, tightened censorship. None of these claims, however, stand the proof of close scrutiny.

According to both private and official documents, the extensive managing boards that were set up to control the activity of the editorial offices and publishing houses, and included CSCE and Party officials too, had no real function in the running of these institutions in spite of the clearly formulated dispositions.[119] Apparently, the managing boards only formally functioned everywhere, even under the command of editors-in-chiefs that were considered by their contemporaries entirely subservient to the regime. One entry from 1987 in the diary of Gáll clearly indicates that all these boards existed just formally. (Gáll 2003: 253) Even more

[118] The significance of this institutional change was also remarked by Coman and Gross (2006: 19), as well as Corobca (2011).

[119] There are remarks in this sense in the editors' notes to Gáll's diary, yet they contradict each other. First they claim that ex-censors became members of managing boards and continued their previous activity (no 1/1977), in a later note they suggest that the activity of the boards was just formal (9/1977). (Gáll 2003: 394)

telling are in this sense the official letters written by Győző Hajdú, editor-in-chief at the literary journal *Igaz Szó*, one of the most conformist editors-in-chief according to his contemporaries. His accounts show that over seven years of the board's existence 11 persons out of the total of 17 never attended or just very rarely the meetings, including the delegates of the CSCE and the local Party. According to him, the primary cause of this situation is that the majority of the council-members were not locals, yet he did not miss the occasion to point to the „problematic" attitude of certain board members, primarily his fellow writers. As a consequence, on the board meetings were present preponderantly the members of the editorial office. It seems that all other journals of the Romanian Writers' Union were in the similar situation, at least this was the conclusion of the joint analysis of the Romanian Writers' Union, CSCE and CC at the beginning of 1984.[120]

Concerning the transferal of GDPP employees, recent archive research confutes the popular fallacy according to which censors "flooded" media and cultural institutions and were set to leading positions in these organizations. (Corobca 2011: 237–238) This prevalent proposition is to substantiate arguments regarding the continuity, as well as the intensification of censorship. It is a fact that many censors ended up in working at editorial offices, but not in leading positions, and according to my interviewees, they were not particularly requested to perform censorial tasks.[121] Moreover, not all periodicals and cultural institutions had to hire their former censors. If they did, new employees started to work on the lower ranks of the

[120] See: *Propunere privind reorganizarea Consiliului de conducere a revistei Igaz Szó* [Proposal regarding the reorganization of the leading board of *Igaz Szó*, 2nd of February, 1984], Gy. Hajdú's letter to NicolaeVereş (prime secretary of Mureş county RCP council), from the 2nd of February, 1984, Gy. Hajdú's letter to Maria Bradea (secretary of Mureş county RCP council) from the 1st of February, 1984. (Jakabffy Elemér Foundation, Cluj-Napoca, Dossier K567).

[121] To check and complete Corobca's research, I also processed archive materials of the CPP. I managed to identify orders concerning the transferal of half of the local CPP employees. According to these, a quarter of them (12 persons) were transferred to local editorial offices, the rest being roughly equally split between Party and CSCE jobs (18 persons) and jobs of entirely different nature (16 persons). As for the transferal of the central operative staff, I have found orders with regard the transferal of 40 percent of the employees. About 20 percent were transferred to editorial offices (17 persons), about 60 percent to the CSCE (51 persons), and the rest to other jobs (14 persons). (ANIC, F. CPT, D. 3/1977, ff. 37, 38–39,58–62, 65–67, 73, 77, 80, 83, 85, 88, 92, 97–99)

editorial hierarchy, therefore, the former censor had the task to control the paper as issue-responsible just as frequently as his/her colleagues.[122] Former censors were usually not handled as "professionals" in controlling the papers, and they were not asked for special advices. Finally, as the interviewees suggested, moving to the "other side" represented no significant challenge either to the editorial office or to the ex-censors.[123] One remarkable difference was noticed by former censors however: somebody started to blue-pencil their writings, which invariably irritated them too. (Rebendics 2010)

Let me turn now to the issue of self-censorship of editorial offices, which is also claimed to be a new and crucial element of the censorship system after 1977. As it was already mentioned, shifting the responsibility on the editorial offices and publishing houses for the content of published materials was formally tackled before 1977; moreover, selected editors-in-chief used to receive precise censorship directives too.[124] Despite these arrangements, the fact that primary responsibility rests with the staff of the editorial office became a subject-matter among the stakeholders just after reorganizing the censorship system.

To see one of the problematic analytical consequences resulting from anchoring editorial censorship to the post 1977 period, one has to sharp a bit the main message of the prevailing accounts: censorship under GDPP was bad, whereas censorship without GDPP was even harder. This hindsight concerning the "benefits" of having an external agency, emphasizing the differences caused by the dissolution of GDPP and the efficiency of the means employed "instead of" GDPP-activity, guides to the following misleading result: it overstresses the GDPP's relevance and underrates the impact of other institutions and mechanisms before the censorship system's change, specifically the censorship performed in editorial offices.

[122] Censor B 2010, Rebendics 2010, Koszta 2010.
[123] As a former censor claimed, "*We used to have such a normal relationship with the editorial office that I was in there from one day to the other. It did not represent a real change for me*." (Rebendics 2010) The similar is stated by Censor B (2010), as well as Koszta (2010).
[124] This was mentioned in interviews too. (Mórocz 2010, Kiss 2009)

Intended or unintended, GDPP is elevated to a position of core importance in the functioning of the previous censorship system, as if GDPP would have performed, though with lower efficiency, the gross of censoring activity before.

Yet, regarding the importance of GDPP and the censorship done during the editorial process, a former editor-in-chief emphasized: "*compared to the real censorship, it was much more significant the self-censorship of editorial offices*", that is to say that GDPP played a relatively minor role compared to the interventions effectuated at the level of editorial offices. (Keszthelyi 2009) The route of a manuscript from the moment it was submitted to the editors' office to its appearance on the newspaper-stand included various stages in the editorial office, some specialized local and central Party bureaus, the parent institution of the publishing organization, and only after these stages arrived to the censors' desk.[125] To illustrate the procedure, I will briefly sketch the steps taken in controlling a newspaper article.

Firstly, the text submitted by the journalist, part-time collaborator or individual author was read by the columnist (head of thematic department), than it was passed to the corrector and the managing editor. From here it went back to the columnist who forwarded the text to the editor-in-chief or deputy editor for final approval. Although some of these steps required just technical interventions (language and grammar, fragmentation etc.) and professional corrections (style, structure), all people could make observations regarding the content. (Jámbor 2010, Raffai 2009, Graur 2009) Though the political and ideological correctness of the paper was ultimately the responsibility of the editor-in-chief, lower level employees could be also blamed if improper material slipped in. (Pongrácz 2009)

Still before arriving to the GDPP, the text was seen at the press section of the Party. In case of party newspapers the plan of each issue had to be submitted (titles and abstracts) for approval, sometimes even whole articles. In case of non-Romanian newspapers, the articles

[125] See this process sketched for controlling book manuscripts in Diac (2006).

had to be translated as well. This was not a rule for the whole country, rather it depended on the zeal, language proficiency and chauvinism of the prime-secretary and press-responsible of the county RCP. (Péterfi 2010, Mórocz 2010, Madaras 2010, Muncian 2009) By examining the issue, they deleted and added parts to the text, as well as for the whole issue, just like CSCE employees did with texts entering their scope of activity.

The other route through Party bureaus led even further, to the Central Committee of the Party. This was not mandatory, rather it was up to the decision of editors-in-chief. The opportunity of publishing a "sticky" article were felt out by editors-in-chief in talks on local and central Party levels, and they were asked on both levels to guarantee the cooperation of the other level. The practice was that texts or drafts were sent to the high-ranked contact person from Bucharest, followed by phone conversations. Finally, the decision was communicated by the time of the next monthly orientation of editors in chief held by the CC in Bucharest.[126]

Passing these checkpoints the text arrived to the press house, and to the censor's desk. First the galley-proofs where checked by two proof-readers, and only after that the corrected galleys were handed over to the censor, however, not only to him, but also to the issue-responsible/political responsible. The issue-responsible were assigned according to a roster by the editorial office and explicitly accomplished a function of political control. If the censor found something problematic, noticed the issue-responsible by marking the text, who made the adequate modifications. The issue-responsible had his/her own observations, and most of the times remarks were confronted between them. Deletion was mandatory only in case of state secrets and other confidential information. Political-ideological remarks made by the censor were optional; it was up to the editorial office to decide whether or not to take it into

[126] Several Hungarian editors-in-chief consulted Sándor Koppándi from the CC's Agitprop section. (Madaras 2010, Rebendics 2010, Koszta 2010) Germans used to contact Eduard Eisenburger, editor in chief from Braşov and an influential CC member (Wittstock 2010, Censor B 2010). These issues are going to be discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

consideration. In controversial cases, the issue-responsible contacted the editor-in-chief, who decided over the proper modifications or assumed personal responsibility for the version appearing in the galley. After checking the second version, the censor put the stamp signaling that the text can be printed. Usually control before printing was accomplished by these steps, however, it happened that a propaganda activist popped in for a final advice or the editor-in-chief requested further cutting. [127] (Kiss 2009) The last one who checked the first copies of the printed newspaper was the "clear-head", after that the issue was ready for distribution.

Clearly, before arriving to the censor's desk, a manuscript passed through a surprisingly big amount of filters. The magnitude of intervention on each of these filters, however, remains a question. Unfortunately, only the GDPP interventions were systematically archived, so a meticulous rating is problematic. The subjective journalists' accounts, however, indicate that extensive corrections regarding the tenure of articles were of everyday occurrence, up to the point that there was almost nothing left for the censor. Enthusiastic, young journalists were outraged seeing their writings mutilated, more experienced they accepted it as the rule of the game, and once got into the situation of decision they started to dissect the articles of enthusiastic, young journalists. Former editor-in-chief Madaras (2010) recalls his impressions

…as a beginner from the mid 1960's

> "Szilágyi [editor-in-chief at *Előre*, the CC's Hungarian newspaper] took my article, crossed one half and rewrote the other. He told me to stop kidding, and asked what was in my head when trying to discredit such an important factory. He put me to rewrite the entire article. Later on we had further discussions that regularly ended in angry disputes. I was told by my colleagues that it is his method to supple people this way. [...] When I came to this paper [*Brassói Lapok*], I said "No more as it was at *Előre*'s!"

…and about a decade later, as senior official at *Brassói Lapok*

> "I was trying to follow the principle that reality should be represented in the newspaper as closely as it is possible. And we taught the youth from the editorial office accordingly. Of course, there was a section of this reality that was not allowed to be depicted. It happened

[127] Cutting out from materials passed by censor with no remarks was frequent in radio broadcasting too. (Kühn 2010)

> that young guys went to make economic reportages and we had to cut things out from their writings. We did this scrupulously (*becsülettel*), and this is why nobody picked at us."

To add another example about the effectiveness of censorship performed within editorial offices, in his memoir Cseke, editor-in-chief at *Ifjúmunkás*, later editor at *Előre* recalls as follows:

> "I did my job without resentments and, that time, with a slight sense of pride, because after my "weeding" in 99 percent of the cases the censorship did not find anything in the manuscripts to cut." (Cseke 2009: 118)

To conclude, the censorship procedure itself, as well as personal accounts indicate that serious interventions were made on texts even before arriving in the hands of GDPP censors. Therefore, self-censorship of editorial offices should not be considered a patent of the new censorship system. In what concerns the other related arguments concerning decentralization and "in-house censorship" after 1977, it was found that neither references to the managing boards, nor arguments related to the dispersion of censors cannot be fully sustained.

5.2.3 Changes and continuities

Having sketched the evolution of formal institutional setup, and clarified details of censorship procedures and functioning of specific organizational components, let us record the major changes and continuities between the 1970's and 1980's. On the whole, the first major structural change was that the absolutely mandatory pre-publishing censorship performed for almost three decades by the GDPP was overtaken by two organizations, the CSCE and the Party namely, which were already experienced in the field. Second, Party publications and other cultural productions were divided between these two organizations, wherein the Party checked both types, the CSCE's activity was refrained to cultural matters. Third, until 1977 all printed matters were subject to the same control procedure; namely, all had to be approved

and stamped page by page at the GDPP. After 1977, press organs and cultural institutions were treated differently, implying differentiated control procedures.

The unanimous opinion of the editorial staff about the new system was that the era after 1977 was definitely worse than the previous period. For some, filters were multiplied, the checking procedure prolonged, expectations appeared to be more and more unpredictable and inconsistent to everyone involved; in sum, the system lost transparency.[128] However, to the causes of the ever growing general disappointment one has to count that the amount of propaganda materials requested to be published gradually grew, consequently, other materials were crowded out from printed matter and other cultural manifestation.[129]. These were related to the personality cult of the Ceauşescu-couple, articles dedicated to pre-established topics, festivities and commemorations in line with the national communist ideas propagated. One has also take into account the harsh economy problems and austerity measures from the 1980's, which resulted in shortage of paper, cut-backs regarding the number of pages, printing runs and editorial staff, and reduced financing from the state budget.[130] Instead of reprimands, control started to be exercised preponderantly through economic means, that is, financial controls and financial sanctions. (Domokos 2004: 20–21)

From the perspective of the topic of the dissertation – which is going to be further developed in the next chapter – an important difference between the 1970's and 1980's is that the measures of latitude of all officials gradually shrank; consequently, personal networks could not be exploited with the same efficiency. As the former deputy editor A. Horváth put it:

[128] See these complaints in E. Gáll's letter already cited to Constantin Mitea on the 26th of February, 1984.
[129] As it was already mentioned, the literature on media and cultural life under Ceauşescu handles as an important shift in cultural policies the *July Theses* from 1971 that announced the "cultural revolution" in Romania. However, Bucharest-based journalists testify that they could still do meaningful work during the 1970's and propaganda interventions became unbearable only in the 1980's. See the interviews realized by Bányai (2006) and also Gáll's (2003) diary about this process.
[130] Among other, austerity measures materialized in the principle of "auto-financing" imposed on press and cultural institutions, which implied that financing from the state budget was cut back, and cultural institutions had to use their own resources to (partially or integrally) finance their activities. See details on these measures taken form the mid 1970's in Preda's analysis. (Preda 2010: 184–189)

> "Though this structuring is a bit simplistic, I would say that the very difference between the seventies and eighties was that the previously "softer" line of the guiding and controlling institutions – the responsible departments of the central Committee, the ministry, the Securitate – later hardened in such a fashion that it counted less and less who the person was: all state and party officers acted more "soldierly", that is, his/her latitude shrank irrespectively of the function he/she bore, in a great degree it was confined to the execution of commands. The director of the ministerial department, even the minister itself was afraid, the functioning principle of offices was the over-insurance". Bányai (2006: 225–226)

Besides these changes a series of continuities can be enumerated too. First, in spite of rearrangements in responsibilities, formal pre-publishing censorship never ceased. Second, the main actors of the censorship system for the entire period remained the same: the censors from the Party, the censors from the (dually subordinated) state agencies (DGPT and the CSCE, later only the CSCE), and the editors-in-chief and leaders from cultural institutions, or their deputies. Communication concerning the employment of censorship norms between these forums with regards to a particular press or cultural organ occurred between clearly identifiable and limited number of persons. Finally, self-censorship of editorial offices was employed extensively up to the point to overweight the job of the GDPP; consequently, it should not be considered a specific characteristic of the period after 1977, as most of the recollections or the official propaganda suggest. Editorial offices had always an eye fixed on pleasing the Party, and "self-censorship" was employed extensively both by formal and informal means during the whole socialist period.

In the following section, I will investigate more closely the organizational aspects of censorship, and systematically analyze micro-level organizational mechanism and processes by which a coherent application of the censorship norms was realized, hence the effectiveness of the censorship system maintained. These underlying components of the censorship machinery are going to be studied on the internal functioning of the GDPP, which – as it was just presented – was the last linchpin in the pre-publication control process. By approaching the topic from a theoretical perspective inspired by organizational studies, and more specifically by structural contingency theories, it is possible to identify crucial information

processing channels and monitoring mechanisms put to work in the censors' office, and also to assess their adequacy for the particular challenges of the censors' job.

5.3 Formal control and coordination mechanisms within the censors' office (GDPP/CPP, 1949–1977)

5.3.1 GDPP/CPP tasks and organization

The main targets of the censors' office were laid down in 1949; nevertheless, more and more new objects came into its focus during the early 1950s.[131] According to the legislation, the role of the GDPP was to exercise state control, on the one hand, "for protecting state secrets," and "on the political content" of all printed matter and other public materials on the other. More specific tasks were laid down in 18 points, stipulating control over the content of all kinds of printed matter,[132] the printing houses and all means of replication,[133] the news agency (*Agerpres*), the content of radio and TV productions, libraries and second hand bookshops, museums and exhibitions, cinemas, all forms of "visual agitation",[134] and theatrical performances, as well as over the classification, usage, circulation and distribution of all printed matter.[135] Besides these, the GDPP authorized the import and export of all

[131] See Decree No. 214/1949, Decree No. 218/1949, Decree No. 612/1949, Order (of the Council of Ministers) No. 461/1951, Order (CM) No. 462/1951, Order (CM) No. 340/1952, Order (CM) No. 343/1952. ANIC F. CPT, D. 10/1949 and Order (CM) No. 267/1954. The Order No. 267/1954 summed up the previous legal norms concerning GDPP, and this remains the basic point of reference for the functioning of the censors' office until 1975, when it was replaced by the Decree no. 53/1975 concerning the functioning and organization of the Committee of Press and Printing.

[132] This task has to be interpreted quite literally, that is, control over "all printed matter" ranges from periodicals, books, maps, and internal working materials edited by central and local state organs, to the phonebooks, forms, calendars, book-markers and wrapping paper of commercial products.

[133] This task refers to the fact that nothing could be printed or multiplied without the stamp of the GDPP and everything had to be printed exactly in the approved format.

[134] This task was performed by a special Committee formed by the delegates of the GDPP, the members of the local Party activists from the Propaganda and Agitation Section and members of the local government. The task was to control the portraits of the party leaders, placards, sculptures, special installations of official ceremonies etc., in public places, like streets, train stations, schools, factories, and so forth. See this, for instance, D. 10/1949 p. 90, 121–124, representing circular letters sent to the censors.

[135] The "classification" refers to the fact that books and periodicals were categorized as "forbidden", "secret" (technological issues, "that occasionally contain inimical material"), "documentary" and "free to circulate". Access to books and periodicals – in libraries and other institutions – was determined on the ranking of the concerned printed matter. For instance, those labeled as "secret" and "documentary" could be used only by ministries and central institutions. This task also implies that GDPP commanded over the recall of all "inadequate" materials. See D. 14/1949 p. 40, D. 11/1955 p. 16–17, representing Order (CM) No. 343/1952 and a circular letter.

materials under its sphere of control, monitored postal consignments traveling across Romanian borders, and issued licenses for periodicals. From 1975, the censors' office (CPP) became also involved in keeping the evidence of economic and financial indicators of editorial offices and publishing houses, and in setting their printing quotas. Furthermore, GDPP employees had to compile reports on the propaganda-work of editorial offices and cultural institutions they checked. This implies that besides monitoring visible representations, censors also had to assess what was missing from the point of view of the prevailing propaganda elements.[136]

Next to this widespread activity, there were some issues lying behind the sphere of GDPP control, that is, certain internal working materials of the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs and specifically those classified as "secret" and "top secret". Furthermore, the Ministry of Defense had its own related censorship institution, the Military Censorship Office.[137] When facing materials related somehow to the military (e.g. bridges or roads of strategic significance, military sport clubs, military parades etc.), the GDPP employees had to ask for the approval of the MCO before turning back the manuscript to the editors.

In parallel with the widening of the GDPP's scope of duties, one can witness the multiplication of specialized departments and the growth in the size of personnel. Whereas in 1949 there were only six departments, their number grew to 12 in 1962, and the organization became to be structured and specialized according to realms such as Social sciences, Science and Technology, Literature, Libraries–Museums–Secondhand bookshops, Radio–TV, Arts, Central Press, Local activities.[138] The staff transferred in 1949 from the Ministry of Arts and

[136] See Decree (of the State Council) no. 53/1975, art. 3. Next to the previously cited legal norms handling the scope of duties of the censors' office, one can also consult the internal CPP document regarding its specific tasks issued in 1976, or a report issued shortly before its abolition. D. 12/1976, f. 1; D. 2/1977, ff. 4–7.
[137] Order (CM) No. 267/1954, D. 10/1949.
[138] D. 10/1949, ff. 6–8; D. 12/1962, ff. 63–65.

Information involved about 100 persons, but in four years, only the operative staff counted more than 300, this remaining the rough average over the studied period.[139]

From the very first moment the organization included local branches. Apart from licensing new periodicals (duties that were performed by central GDPP department), censors from the provinces, called delegates (*delegat*), had to accomplish all the tasks of the GDPP at the local level. The whole organization was structured in a strictly centralized hierarchy, the delegates being subordinated to a department called the Directorate of Instruction and Control (*Direcţia Instructaj Control*).[140] Members of the DIC were called "instructors" (*instructor*), and each of them was responsible for several "collectives" (*colectivă*): that is, groups of delegates working in a locality under the guidance of the collective's chief (*şef colectivă*). DIC was the only central directorate the delegates were in direct contact, that is, all commands were sent by DIC (including those issued on higher GDPP levels and/or concerning the whole operative staff) and all reports, questions were addressed to DIC. The monitoring of local GDPP activities was also performed by DIC. The size of local collectives varied from one to eight persons, depending on the amount of tasks to be carried out: that is, the number of newspapers, theaters, typographers, and so on operating in each county. Although at the beginning of 1950 there were only 12 delegates working in ten cities, in 1951, they counted already 79 persons working in 58 localities, and this figure remained the approximate average for the 1960's, then peaking to 112 in early 1970's and dropping back to 80 persons by 1977.[141] The largest ratio of instructors to delegates was 1 to 4 in 1955, when the DIC had 22

[139] D. 9/1949, ff. 2–11, 42–44; D. 12/1951, ff. 73–81; D. 14/1960, ff. 1–10; D. 13/1966, f. 1; D. 79/1968, f. 70; D. 20/1974, ff. 73–74; D. 3/1977, ff. 41–48.
[140] Henceforth DIC. Its name was modified several times, initially being called Service for Press and Printed Matters in the Country (*Serviciul Presei şi Tipăriturilor pe Ţară*), the functions, however, never changed.
[141] D. 1/1950, ff. 87–90; D. 1/1950, f. 196; D. 14/1951, ff. 4–6; D. 14/1960, ff. 1–10; D.13/1966, f. 1; D. 79/1968, f. 70; D. 20/1974 ff. 73–74, D. 3/1977, ff. 42–44.

members. [142] At the moment of closing down the office, however, this was already reduced to 1 to 9.[143]

As already mentioned, the basic task of GDPP employees was to protect state secrets and to examine the political content of cultural products. A more detailed task description appeared in a document entitled *Instructions Concerning the Activity of the Censorship Bureaus from the Province* issued in 1950, which also represents the basic written guidelines concerning norms of censorship.[144] According to this, it had to be erased all "manifestations of the class enemy", as well as any content that was "meant to instigate against State organs [or] the USSR, […] or to defame people's democracies", information that "would contribute to the weakening and undermining of the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry, and to the repression of class struggle, or would propagate racial hatred against the nationalities living together," "would advocate or popularize imperialist scientific and artistic manifestations," or "advocated maleficent religious principles of the class enemy and imperialists, principles that would harm the legal norms in force." Censors also had to prevent the publication of "military secrets […] regarding the national defense strategies […], information related to the economy, administrative organization, technical details of factories, industrial installations, hospitals," or of information "that would induce panic: about epidemics, fire disasters, floods, droughts, calamities of big proportions, railway accidents, crimes, thefts, and so on." Likewise, the reproduction of news from "imperialist sources" also had to be prevented.

Based on these quotations, one can see that guidelines provided for the censors were formulated in rather broad and vague terms. Who is the "class enemy"? How does its "manifestation" materialize? Guidelines provided in 1975 to the censors were similarly

[142] D. 12/1955, f. 32.
[143] D. 20/1974, ff. 73–74.
[144] D. 17/1952, ff. 1–7.

vaguely worded. Typical formulas such as "manifestation of the class enemy" or "imperialism" were omitted, yet the basic ideas remained the same (i.e. protecting the socialist order, the Communist Party and its leaders), augmented by terms such as erasing "fascist, obscurantist, anti-humanitarian conceptions."[145]

One might suppose that whereas facts of disclosing "state secrets" or the "panic-monger" news could be more or less easily identified even by an amateur, filtering out other kinds of forbidden issues was also a routine task for the well-trained eyes of the "specialists". On the contrary: as it was already mentioned in the theoretical chapter depicting task uncertainty faced by censors, Romanian censors, as well as their Soviet colleagues, had difficulties in applying all kinds of censorship norms.

The subsequent sections will demonstrate that this challenge was partially foreseen by the designers of the organization too, who put much effort into trying to eliminate the *ad hoc* application of ambiguous censorship norms and to ensure effective functioning of the organization. I will present certain techniques of coordination meant to harmonize the work of the few hundred censors and to control their activity. I will start with the recruitment of appropriate personnel for this work, one of the basic control mechanisms. After this, I turn to some specific means of coordination, dispositions and models or examples of censorship interventions namely. Dispositions received under various formats (single dispositions, Circular letters/Information Bulletin, Booklet of dispositions) and models of good practices (entitled Notes) contained the operationalized forms of censorship norms with regards to state secrets and "political and ideological faults", respectively. Next, I present various tools that combined the functions of coordination and control: censors' reports and their superiors' feedback, control and instruction in the workplace, and large-scale meetings (called symposia). Finally, I deal with the system of rewards and sanctions, yet another control

[145] D. 12/1976, f. 1, 11. Tasks and guidelines provided to local censors were actually overtaken from the Press Law. See Law no. 3/1974, art. 68/g.

mechanism. Jumping back and forth between means of coordination and control might not seem to be the best strategy for catching the readers' attention; nevertheless, I employed this structure to avoid too many cross references among sections.

5.3.2 Coordination and control of the GDPP/CPP delegates' activity

Control by recruitment

To establish and maintain authority over the bureaucratic organization of the Party and other state organs, recruitment of reliable personnel was considered to be of paramount importance. Summarizing the GDPP's activity in this sense, a report written by the DIC in 1957 stated that the aim was "[…] the recruitment of young cadres with satisfactory professional backgrounds, showing an adequate political-ideological level, with healthy origins, people who understand and are able to put into practice the political line of our Party."[146] So, next to professional skills, the core selection criteria is represented by the congruence of values and beliefs of the candidate with the ideology and current politics of the Party, and individual commitment to these values was supposed to ensure appropriate task execution. This control strategy is very close to what Ouchi referred to as "clan" mechanism, though in this case input targets concerning human resources were explicitly formalized.

At the beginning, there were two main sources of recruitment: Party cadres and fresh university graduates. The regional or local Party Committees were asked to propose persons, check their "files" and send a characterization to the Central Committee of the Party. After this approval, GDPP instructors examined the candidate's proficiency. The procedure for recruiting fresh graduates was easier because they were assigned by the Ministries of Education and of Workforces to a specific workplace. Trying to take advantage of this

[146] D. 10/1953, ff. 12–15.

possibility, the GDPP requested students, specifying the number of persons that they needed and their specialization.[147]

Already in 1954, the GDPP realized that "the orientation in the recruitment was wrong" and professional competence might be more important than other qualifications.[148] The DIC pinpointed the fact that the most adequate source for recruitment was the universities, and proposed checking professional competence first and the cadre files only afterwards.[149] Nevertheless, despite several attempts to change the recruitment strategy, the practice remained the same, delegates being recruited preponderantly through Party channels with a special attention to their "dossier".[150]

Based on various statistical information gathered by the GDPP regarding its employees in the first 15 years, one can assess that people recruited to the local censors' offices were indeed young, but generally older and less educated than censors from the center. In 1951, half of the delegates were under 35 (three quarters in the capital), and at the end of 1965, about 62 percent of the delegates were still younger than 40 (80 percent in the capital).[151] However, the educational gap diminished over the 15 years. In 1953, half of the delegates held high-school diplomas or a higher degree, whereas in Bucharest this range was 71 percent. Towards the end of 1965, this increased to 83 percent among the delegates, whereas in Bucharest it was already 97 percent, but still about 10 percent of the delegates had finished only elementary school.[152] The university graduates mostly held degrees in humanities, such as philology, history, pedagogy, philosophy, journalism, law, economics, and so on.[153] Although regarding age and education delegates lagged behind the staff from the center, they seemed to

[147] D. 11/1956, ff. 8, 13–17, 92–93.
[148] D. 12/1955, f. 128.
[149] D. 10/1953, f. 61; D. 32/1961, f. 6.
[150] D. 32/1961, ff. 2–6; D. 79/1968, ff. 75–77, D. 37/1977, ff. 8, 10, 11, 13, 14.
[151] D. 14/1951, ff. 37–39; D. 10/1952, ff. 1–3; D.13/1966, f. 1.
[152] D. 14/1960 ff. 8, 10; D.13/1966, f. 1.
[153] It is worth mentioning that just a small number of censors had their basic degree from Party schools. (D. 13/1966, ff. 169–173) Furthermore, by 1973, there was no censor with only elementary school. (D. 8/1973, f. 125)

"compensate" on the dimension of "healthy origins." About half of them came from workers' families, and this category accounted for far fewer in Bucharest; however, the "unhealthy" category of intellectual background was kept extremely low in both groups, at about 3 percent.[154]

Although nowhere mentioned among the selection criteria, language proficiency and hence ethnicity had to be of core importance in the recruitment process due to the need for monitoring the cultural production in minority languages. According to the internal statistics for the first 15 years, about 40 percent of the delegates belonged to a national minority group, meaning that ethnic minorities were grossly overrepresented among censors. The peak was in 1958 with 46 percent, out of which 26 percent were Hungarians, while the lowest figure was 31 percent in 1960, with 17 percent Hungarians.[155]

As a final remark regarding the profile of the recruited delegates, one has to note that, in the first period, a relatively large proportion of them were just part-time employees of the GDPP: for instance, in 1955, this amounted to 64 percent. Most of these people held offices at the local Party organization or the local government (*Sfat Popular*), but some were teachers or newspaper editors.[156] By 1968, however, the GDPP was working almost exclusively with full-time employees.[157]

Once chosen and hired, the next step in the professional carrier of censors was a training period spent in central GDPP offices, followed by a short period of time when they had a mentor assigned in the collective for monitoring their activities. This is an important method of knowledge transfer and control method according to the literature cited in Chapter 3, but surprisingly, I did not find any concrete official documents concerning the curricula and

[154] D. 14/1960, ff. 1–10.
[155] The other registered categories were Jews, Germans and Other. D. 14/1960, ff. 1–10, D 13/1966, f. 1.
[156] D. 10/1952, f. 19; D. 9/1952, ff. 7–9.
[157] Four part-time jobs out of 81. D. 79/1968, f. 85.

methods of instruction employed during the traineeship.[158] Consequently, I will turn now to present some further regular methods of coordination, that is, channels of information by which censors' were guided in their day to day activities.

Coordination by directives and promoting good practices

The common denominator of directives issued in various forms and materials promoting good practices is that they were written documents periodically addressed to all censors. The directives contained lists of issues that were forbidden or permitted to appear under specified conditions, as well as procedural and technical details of the censors' job, while the materials promoting good practices entitled *Notes* (Note) consisted of compilations of censorship interventions, meant as models to be imitated by censors in similar cases. These two information sources concerning the employment of censorship norms corresponded to the two basic types of issues that had to be erased: the directives concerned state secrets and other clearly definable confidential information, while the *Notes* were meant to highlight "political-ideological deviations."

In terms of the methods employed to achieve coordination, both directives and *Notes* qualify for impersonal methods of coordination. Directives can be easily recognized as instances that standardize processes and pre-establish expected behavior, and are communicated uniformly to all parties concerned, in short, they represented the explicit rules of censorship, which is a textbook example for coordination mechanisms by programming. Though not as immediately obvious, the *Notes* qualify for the same category. No direct interaction between different agents occurred, and all parties received the same commands, the difference being that standards were set not by regular "rules" but through examples of practices, interpretations and solutions that had to be pursued if applicable. Because the vast and continuously changing domain "political-ideological mistakes" was not possible to capture and define in

158

other ways, convergence in the interpretation of censorship norms concerning this domain rested on promoting good practices.

Directives - Dispositions, Information Bulletin, Booklet of dispositions

For about two decades, directives were communicated to local censors by *Dispositions* (*Dispoziţie*) and documents entitled *Circulars* (*Circulară*). The Circulars contained "the state secrets and working dispositions" and an attachment comprising instructions related to the everyday work of censors.[159] The specific data for the list of state secrets and issues that "do not constitute state secrets but – due to political, economic reasons – are not indicated to be publicly available" were issued by different state agencies and the Party, and centralized by the GDPP, then forwarded periodically by DIC to local censors.[160] As it was observed by GDPP officials in 1968, the amount of "state secrets" was actually minimal as compared to the quantity of other type of "confidential" information.[161]

A newly issued Circular did not represent the updated version of the previous ones; rather, each issue added new items or revoked some earlier dispositions; consequently, they had to be handled as one corpus. Between 1951 and 1963, the delegates got at least 159 Circulars (each of 1 to 13 pages) that amounted to a total of 378 pages.[162]

The Circulars had a rather unsystematic content, comprising forbidden items from the most diverse domains listed more or less randomly, but also exceptions (permitted items); furthermore, issues that were allowed to appear could bear different qualifiers, such as "only with data mentioned in the central press," "without editorial comments," "placed on a

[159] D. 14/1949, ff. 1–165; D. 16/1951, ff. 7–9, 12–68, 71, 74–76, 88–98, 117–118, 140–195; D. 13/1953, ff. 1–54, 59, 135–263; D. 14/1953, ff. 1–39, 41–144; D. 11/1955, ff. 2–11, 13–25; D. 32/1965, ff. 1–76; D. 39/1965, ff. 1–55; D. 95/1967, ff. 3–4, 8–9; D. 69/1968; D. 62/1971, ff. 1–28, 39–42, representing Circulars and Dispositions.

[160] In 1970, the input of 43 central institutions (including the secret police) was requested to update the list of confidential information. D. 14/1970, ff. 8–10, 18–19.

[161] D. 71/1968, f. 11.

[162] D. 14/1949, ff. 1–5; D 32/1965, representing the records of handing the Circulars to a new censor and individual Circulars.

peripheral place on the page and with a moderate title," and so on. These included data and information related to agriculture, telecommunication, light and heavy industry, health care, sports, authors and particular works etc.

Due to the size and chaotic content, the delegates asked repeatedly that the Circulars be systematized or completely updated from time to time.[163] Nevertheless, not even years of administrative endeavors from the 1960s could solve this issue.[164] The most notable among these measures was to condense and set out all dispositions into the Booklet of dispositions (*Caietul de dispoziţii*) where censorship rules were grouped according to the domains to be censored, and a GDPP department was invested with the task to update it periodically.[165] Yet, as it was observed at the revision from 1965, there were already 480 new dispositions accumulated since 1963.[166] This is because there was a real flood of information classified as confidential by the ministries and the Party within the time frame of two revisions, and specific forbidden items continued to be addressed by circular letters (renamed though Dispositions), just as it happened before.[167]

In the attachments of the Circulars/Dispositions the focus was on the technical details of control, rules that did not really change over time, yet for some reason the DIC felt that it had to be occasionally retraced. Besides these, the DIC occasionally requested special reports about the situation of libraries, secondhand bookshops, markets from the provinces, and so on. They could also contain lists of recommended readings (books and articles, official Party

[163] See, for instance, D. 14/1958, f. 31.
[164] For the measures taken by the central GDPP to systematize and update dispositions see the study of Şercan (2012a).
[165] The first Booklet of dispositions was released in 1963, while the second just in 1965, although the initial idea was to update it every half a year. (Şercan 2012a: 338–340)
Concerning its structure, the revised Booklet of dispositions from January 1968, for instance, contained 86 (more or less) general dispositions grouped into the following 12 domains: General, Electrical energy, Mines – Geology, Metallurgy, Machinery construction, Petroleum, Chemistry, Transport – Telecommunication, Constructions – Systematization, Agriculture, External trade, Education – Social – Cultural – Sport, Labor and Wages, Diverse. The conditions of publications attached to the items included into the booklet ranged from "total restriction" (*restrictiv total*) to the amount of information that could be made public, yet most frequently there were indicated the ministries authorized to approve particular references. D. 69/1968, ff. 1–36.
[166] D. 71/1968, f. 12.
[167] See also Şercan 2012a: 340, 342.

documents), reminders to the censors to read the central press, and specified topics for individual or group study.

In 1971, weekly Information Bulletins (*Buletin de informaţii*) were introduced instead of Circulars.[168] On the one hand, the bulletins aimed to help censors in following changes concerning censorship rules, and usually contained the following sections: "announcements" concerning procedural issues and the situation of specific dispositions (getting into force or their annulment);[169] "announcements of the Press Bureau of the Council of Ministers" grouped into "forbidden to write about" and "permitted to write about" sections; "information published with approval which can be overtaken [in other publications]", "verbal dispositions", and "recommended readings and topics for study." On the other hand, the novelty compared to the Circulars/Dispositions from the 1960's was that examples were provided for proper interventions (what was cut and what remained in the text), as well as for missed interventions, by which an "exchange of experience across the delegates" was aimed according to the president of the GDPP.[170]

To summarize, in the 1970's, the work of the GDPP staff in the domain of "state secrets" and "other issues not indicated to be publicly available" was coordinated by immediate communications through Dispositions, weekly Information Bulletins that comprised various dispositions and information concerning their employment, and the Booklet of dispositions that was periodically updated with information conveyed through the first two channels.[171]

Standards set by promoting good practices – Notes

As it was already mentioned, the Notes were collections of the best interventions on texts with "improper" political-ideological content. It has to be emphasized this ingenious idea of

[168] See D. 16/1972 comprising the Information Bulletins and Dispositions issued in 1971.
[169] There were separate, single dispositions (*Dispoziţii*) sent in parallel to the Information Bulletins.
[170] D. 14/1976, ff. 65-66.
[171] This process can be clearly traced in discussions concerning the revision of the Booklet of dispositions from 1975. D. 1/1975, ff. 42–49.

ensuring convergence in interpretation did not originate from the instructors or higher GDPP forums, but was demanded by the delegates, who simply could not apply the existing abstract guidelines, yet could face harsh criticism for missed interventions. On their insistence, this technique of instruction was introduced in 1958.[172]

The interventions compiled in the Notes were chosen from the activity reports of the delegates and censors working in Bucharest at different GDPP departments (literature, press, science, TV and radio, customs etc.). The account of an intervention usually contained a short summary of the examined text, a quotation from the incriminated sentence, paragraph or verse, the reasons for considering it to be mistaken, and the solution deemed correct, namely, deleting or modifying: in the latter case the changed version was also provided.

Here is an example overtaken from the work of the Literature Directorate in 1958:

"Note

The Door – N. Velea, E.S.P.L.A[173]

The volume comprises seven short stories with topics related to the life of our villages. The thematic of these stories is inappropriate and outdated. They set forth insignificant aspects from the early periods of collectivizing the agriculture as well as from the agrarian reform and the years of drought. There is not a single story mirroring the essential aspects from life in our villages nowadays.

The story "Crocks" handles the conflict and processes between an individually farming peasant and the G.A.C.[174] from the village. This story is even faultier when taking into account that there is another story presenting the conflict of a peasant with a big landowner.

In both of these stories the conflicts start with the cattle's entering on the fields of the collective farm and the landowner, respectively.

The volume got "Good for print" with observation included in the texts.

The story "Crocks" was eliminated from the volume. "[175]

[172] D. 9/1959, f. 37.
[173] The publishing house.
[174] Collective farm.
[175] D. 4/1958, f. 21.

There are not enough data to estimate the size of this kind of material for the whole period; nevertheless, it seems that, in 1971, delegates received 600–700 pages of Notes.[176] Censors were supposed to read it and proceed accordingly under analogue circumstances. So, coordination within the domain of vaguely defined political-ideological errors was facilitated by identifying and promoting good censorship practices, the basic assumption being that incorporated new information could have contributed to the adequate understanding of the censorship tasks.

Control and coordination by reports and feedback, control and instruction in the workplace, and symposia

The most evident means of control performed within the censors' office were the regular activity reports and controls on the fields executed by instructors. As it is going to be presented below, through particular requirements concerning the frequency and format of activity reports, the thorough bureaucratic control of the working process and output control was also realized next to the input control, that is, the selection of proper personnel.

A rather important procedure related to the process of control, however, is the fact that local collectives received detailed and very specific feedback to their reports, up until 1965 in writing, then orally. This practice had a rather evident twofold purpose: on the one hand, the message was that "you are closely watched," being meant to stimulate the censor into doing more thorough work; on the other hand, the feedback provided further guidance by pinpointing and correcting mistakes. So, measures of control and coordination were closely intertwined. This phenomenon was also present in the instructors' fieldwork, which besides control was also aimed at instructing delegates in their workplace about the proper employment of censorship norms.

[176] ANDJM, F. CPT, D. 17A/1971, D. 17B/1971, D. 17C/1971 comprising Notes for 1971. For later years see D. 24/1972–1973, ff. 1–100; D. 27/1974, ff. 1–21, as well as ANIC, F. CPT, D. 14/1975, ff. 10–28.

Contrarily to the methods of coordination presented in the previous section, feedback to the activity reports, as well as instructions received through personal communication can be regarded as personal coordination mechanisms. The only difference is that feedbacks on reports were communicated in writing until 1965, whereas feedback provided in the field materialized in oral communication, otherwise both were relaying on close monitoring of individual delegates and personal interaction between the instructors and delegates. Furthermore, one can observe that the information exchange was realized through hierarchical structures, yet another principle that is crucial from the point of view of organizational effectiveness under the circumstances of task uncertainty, as superiors are assumed to possess the necessary information with regards to organizational aims and expectations.

The third group of organizational methods that are going to be discussed in this section are composed of larger-scale meetings organized periodically for local censors, events called "symposia" (*consfătuiri*). These events represent instances for information exchange and task adjustment across delegates dispersed trough the country (input being provided by other GDPP departments too), hence, qualify for the group coordination mode, which were also emphasized in theoretical studies to be proper mechanisms for enhancing information processing capabilities of organizational work challenged by task uncertainty.

Reports and feedback

Delegates had to submit different types of regular activity reports, monthly, trimestrial (after 1965 semestrial) and annual.[177] These were compiled by the chief of the collective and signed by the other delegates, and each type had to be prepared after a well-specified model by

[177] ANIC, F. CPT, D. 13/1953; D. 60/1963, ff. 1–6, 9–10, 13–15, 19–20, 24–26, 28–30, 32–35, 37–40, 42–45, 47–50, 53–57, 59–62, 65–74, 77–97, 100–119, 123–136, 140–154,157–165, 169–174, 177–179, 182–184,187–190, 193–197, 201–215, 217–231, 235–253, 257–270, 274–283; D. 88/1968, ff. 31–197; D. 43/1977, ff. 33–55, 90–91, 107, 110–118, 121–138, 147–191; D. 44/1977; D. 45/1977, ff. 1–15, 22–23, 27–86, 88–118.
ANDJM, F. CPT, D. 2/1968–1969; D. 5/1968–1969; D. 8/1969, D. 11/1970, ff. 1–9, 13–106; D. 16/1971; D. 18/1972; D. 22/1973; D. 25/1974; D. 28/1975 representing reports sent by delegates to the DIC.

including information that fostered the deepest control possible. If not meeting formal requirements, local collectives were immediately warned by their superiors.

The monthly report was a detailed overview of all press interventions, containing the following data: quotation from the paper and the related reference material, justification for the intervention, solution (deletion or modification), the modified text, the name of the censor who executed the intervention, and cuts from the publication with the place of intervention. The interventions were grouped in two categories: "political-ideological" and "interventions according to the dispositions," later on rephrased as "observations" and "mandatory interventions".

Reports having longer time frame were more comprehensive, covering all domains of activity, but also more analytical in the sense that the interventions were rated as "good," "unjustified" and "missed," following the structure indicated in the case of monthly reports (citation, motivation, name of the censor, and so on). The "good" interventions were those that the censors were most proud of or the ones that were highlighted as such by the instructors. The other two categories were compiled based on the post-circulation control (the feedback coming from the instructors and the local Party organs), but also those noticed by delegates themselves. The report had a section that contained a description of the everyday work of the collective (division of tasks, schedules, meetings, study-groups etc.) followed by the "self-criticism" section that was focused on the whole collective but also on each censor separately, opinion about the general profile of the periodicals, relationships with the editorials and local Party organs, and finally, the critique of an the proposals to the DIC.

Based on the data required by the DIC it is clear that collectives were requested to report on all activities and to keep a record of each censor's work separately. Furthermore, the motivations attached to interventions were meant to filter out *ad hoc* interpretations, the

possibility that censors might act "out of instinct." By asking to explain their interventions, censors were pressed to reiterate, learn and consciously apply the Party line.

Each report sent by local collectives was answered in about a month.[178] The instructors collated the reports and the published materials (thus the post-circulation censorship of printed matters represented the control of the delegates too), and counted and rated the interventions, and even if they agreed with the actual intervention, it was mentioned if the motivation was wrong. When noticing missed interventions, instructors explained what should have been the reason for intervention, and in this way they provided further guidelines. The final version of the feedback contained personalized remarks about the delegates' work, and criticism could occasionally be very harsh.[179] Besides evaluating their activity, the feedback contained lists of reference materials for individual study, tips for controlling, and other issues mentioned in the directives.

Finally, let us see some examples from these feedbacks for

… missed interventions regarding dispositions:

> "[…] in the article *Intense Production Activity in GAS*[180] *Lechinţa* written by Halasz Edmund ("Avîntul" no. 653/13.VII.1963), it is mentioned, contrarily to the dispositions, the wheat production in GAS for this year: over 2000 kg/hectare. And this happens after just two days You got the phone notice regarding this issue!
>
> In the material *Technical Propaganda Closely Linked to Production* (no. 656/3.VII.1963.) appear references to the trucks "Carpaţi" and the buses T.V. 2R. (The appearance of this last reference is hardly explicable, especially when taking into account that at the end of the last year You have been harshly criticized and sanctioned for infringing, among others, the dispositions that forbid the propagation of this bus.) Further references to the truck "Carpaţi" can be found in the material *Beloved by the Collective* (nr. 661/7.IX.1963).
>
> […] These mistakes are due to – least of all – the gross superficiality in lecturing the materials got for visa. We say "least of all", because the situation You created lets us to

[178] ANIC, F. CPT, D. 16/1951, ff. 69–195; D. 60/1963, ff. 7–287, representing the written feedback issued by the DIC to the reports of the delegates.
[179] See, for instance, D. 60/1963, ff. 191–192.
[180] GAS (Gospodăria Agricolă de Stat) – collective farm.

believe that You don't read at all the newspapers and the materials that have to be controlled."[181]

… missed interventions regarding "inadequate political views":

"[…] In the material We Like the Russian Language (radio emission on 21.II. 1963), it is said that school-children learn "the language of the Soviet people, who helped us to liberate ourselves from capitalists and to build up our lives." The same is repeated in two letters sent by students. You should realize that those underlined are mistaken. The Soviet Union supported us to liberate our country under the fascist yoke; however, the liberation from exploitation is an internal problem, brought to fruition by working people under the guidance of the Party. "[182]

As it was mentioned, the system of reports and feedback slightly changed in 1965. Among a multitude of internal orders issued from the summer of 1964 until the end of 1966 aimed to "foster control" performed by GDPP, one decided to put an end to the "post-publication control of publications from the provinces."[183] Activity reports were still required from the delegates, nevertheless, these reports and the published materials were not collated anymore by higher GDPP forums, and DIC instructors did not have to reply in written comments. The written feedback was to be replaced by periodic discussions between DIC instructors and delegates during the control and instruction performed by instructors at local collectives. Although these changes can be interpreted as a relaxation of control over the delegates work, continuous and thorough checking of the activity reports actually did not cease for a moment. By studying reports submitted after 1965, one can observe that most of them were signed and dated by instructors, moreover, all entries of interventions are marked by handwritten "Da" ("yes"), "Nu" ("no", which stands for unjustified interventions) or "FB" (abbreviation of *foarte bun*, that is "very good") and in many cases comments were inserted on the margins

[181] D. 60/1963, f. 191–192.
[182] D. 60/1963, f. 175–176.
[183] D. 12/1965, f. 174.

too, for instance, "Attention, let us do not exaggerate!", "I do not see what's wrong with this", "And what if this would be published?"[184]

Control and instruction in the workplace

With more or less regularity, local collectives were visited by their instructors for a few days. According to the original plans, this should have occurred once every two months (in 1976, even more often); but in fact the visits were much more irregular.[185] On the one hand, the task was to make exercises on printed matter, examining in parallel the local periodicals, to test and improve the censors' knowledge concerning the application of dispositions, to study records of interventions executed in other GDPP directorates, to discuss current political matters and verify whether the delegates were reading the central press and other recommended materials. On the other hand, the instructors inspected the typographers, paper recyclers, museums, and so on, to see whether the received reports matched the real situation. Occasionally the instructors discussed matters with the editors and collected information about the delegates from the local Party organs, and tried to tackle the tense relationship within the collectives, and between the delegates, the local Party organs and the editorials, respectively. These fieldworks represented also the occasions when the DIC sought to solve the problems of recruitment.[186]

Upon returning to Bucharest, the instructors wrote detailed reports that contained information ranging from observations concerning the delegates' work to comments regarding their personal life and attitudes. Later all important observations were discussed at DIC meetings.

[184] ANDJM, F. CPT, D. 2/1968–1969; D. 5/1968–1969; D. 8/1969, D. 11/1970, ff. 1–9, 13–106; D. 16/1971. The fact that these documents were preserved in the county archive indicates that the marked reports were eventually sent back to the local collective.
Further examples for reviewed and marked activity reports can be found in ANIC, F. CPT, D. 43/1977, D. 44/1977, D. 45/1977.

[185] ANIC, F. CPT, D. 12/1955, ff. 39–111; D. 36/1959, ff. 1–349; D. 38/1965; D. 31/1965–1970; D. 93/1967; D. 99/1967; D. 12/1976, ff. 23–38, D. 40/1977, representing plans of control on the field and reports concerning these controls.

[186] See these tasks included in a memo concerning the job description of instructors from 1976. D. 12/1976, ff. 6–10.

Symposia

Unlike the previously presented techniques of coordination realized through written and oral personal feedback, the symposia were instances that implied a form of collective guidance and control applied to and in the physical presence of all (or most of) delegates, which can be regarded as a group mode of coordination. The symposia provided occasions for theoretical and practical instructions and represented an opportunity for a larger-scale information exchange among local collectives and different GDPP departments, which eventually fostered coherent application of the censorship norms. The symposia also represented occasions for a demonstration of power and knowledge of the GDPP leaders in front of the delegates, which was aimed at stimulating censors into doing harder work by means of honorable mentions and by public embarrassment.

Starting from 1952, the DIC organized two- or three-day-long symposia of a "guiding and educational character"[187] for the GDPP delegates, almost on a yearly basis.[188] Attendance was mandatory for all delegates, and the presentations and discussions were generally organized in plenary sessions. A symposium usually contained the following blocks: lectures, activity reports of certain collectives, activity report of the DIC, discussions and debates, and finally announcements coming from the military censorship, different ministries, the Party or the accounting and administrative offices of the GDPP. I will present here some aspects of the lectures, the DIC reports and the discussions.

The lectures were given by members of the board of directors, leaders of different GDPP directorates or "guest lecturers" from different ministries. According to their topic, the lectures either presented the international situation and Romania's stance on various external

[187] D. 12/1955, f. 90.

[188] D. 10/1953, ff. 37–49; D. 9/1955, ff. 1–96; D. 10/1955, ff. 1–151; D. 13/1956, ff. 1–71; D. 13/1957, ff. 1–57; D. 14/1958, ff. 1–131; D. 9/1959, ff. 1–83; D. 21/1960, ff. 1–152; D. 18/1962, ff. 1–172; D. 43/1964, D. 36/1965, D. 37/1966; D. 14/1975, ff. 4–9, 29–34, 90–101; D. 15/1975, ff. 1–35; D. 16/1975, ff. 1–98, D. 40/1977, D. 42/1977 representing the minutes of symposia and other types of documents (plans, topics to be discussed, programs, attendance sheets, and so on).

and internal issues, or they were focused – in the jargon of the 1950s – on the "imperialist attacks on the ideological front." Examples for this latter topic were taken either from the work of the delegates or from the work of other GDPP departments, and the names of the censors involved or at least the locality were always specified. On the whole, the technique employed here is the very same as in the case of the Notes: as the domain of political-ideological mistakes cannot be precisely defined, not even when trying to subsume them under "scientifically definable tendencies",[189] superiors selected and presented a huge number of examples, hoping that censors would learn from them and apply the standards in similar cases. The difference, however, is that at the symposia the missed interventions were mentioned too, frequently accompanied by ironic remarks.

The focus was on analyzing literary works; yet, terms and explanations were expected to be applied to a much wider sphere. One can assess that the labels borrowed from the "social-realist theory of esthetics", were also vaguely defined and in many cases their interpretation completely overlapped.[190]

Let us see an example for explaining "objectivism":

> "[…] objectivism, [means] presenting certain things from the capitalist lager that does not use for our propaganda. A work of this sort, which cannot be detected from its title, *The Mechanization and Ensilage of Forages*, actually contained a sever mistake. The work sinned [sic!] with the fact that presented in parallel the American technique with the techniques from the Soviet Union and our country. When presenting the machines used for ensilage in the Soviet Union, it made references to older machines that are not in usage anymore. Those who are not familiar with agricultural problems cannot realize that this was actually the propaganda of Western technology."[191]

[189] For instance, "imperialism," "cosmopolitanism," "nationalism," "isolationism," "revisionism," "dogmatism," "hermeticism," "symbolism," "aestheticism," "formalism," "naturalism," "intimism," "pessimism," "objectivism," "negativism," "apoliticism," "obscurantism," "mysticism," and so on.

[190] It might be due for my untrained ears, but some of these labels are quite undistinguishable, like "estheticism", "symbolism" and "hermeticism". Nevertheless, based on the comments made by delegates, I have serious doubts that they could clearly differentiate the "-ism"s in general.
Sometimes even the lecturers became confused, see in this sense the following example: "Concerning the question of Comrade Z. [my abbreviation], namely, what makes a material hermetical, I have to tell that if we don't understand it we may not give B.I. [good for print]". D. 13/1957, f. 47.

[191] D. 14/1958 p. 17–18.

…and one that appears under the heading of "[p]olitical-ideological mistakes resulted from hermeticism, intimism, symbolism, pessimism":

> "In the newspaper *Steaua* no. 2 from 1958 the poems signed by A. E. Baconsky should have not appeared. The poems emanate a desolated, depressing atmosphere: the writer is sad; he does not understand what is going on around him. In the majority of the poems the "snow" symbolizes uniformity, the monotony of the poet's life."[192]

It seems appropriate to discuss here one of the most disturbing issue faced by censors, which at the same time represented a huge challenge for instructors in explaining to them. This is rooted in the core communist principle propagated for every domain of life, namely, "criticism and self-criticism are the motors of improvement and development". But, how to distinguish between "helpful criticism" and "criticism made from a bourgeois stance"; which articles tackling the shortcomings of the "socialist reality" are welcomed and which have to be classified as "negativist", "objectivist", and so forth? Or as a delegated in all sincerity asked, "[…] actually what are the limits in criticizing collective farms?"[193]

According to the instructors, "healthy criticism" had to be: "constructive", "principal", "mobilizing" and related to an "isolated case that allows for no generalizing thoughts." For instance, it had to be understand by readers that there is just one corrupt party activist and, not a single superior knew of his/her foul plays; there are just discrete cases of drunken workers playing cards in the factory, there are just isolated cases when peasants did not want to join collective farms, due to the fact that, quite incidentally and inexplicably, their individual farming was more prosperous than the collective farm. Furthermore, criticism had to "mirror justly reality", "should have not exaggerated", and finally, it had to appear at "opportune times". Thus, certain problems were just invented by authors, like increasing rates of divorce and alcoholism; other problems were amplified up to having "alarming character",

[192] Selected verses from the poem were read out. D. 14/1958, f. 127.
[193] D. 13/1956. f. 48.

for instance, shortage of certain vaccines, diseases related to malnutrition, or splinters of robber and glass in the bread; consequently, all these information had to be erased.

Still kind of vague instructions, so, it is no wonder, that censors could not calibrate in the expected manner every article. Moreover, some feedbacks coming from instructors were rather confusing, just see the following example:

> "[…] Comrade T. Gh. committed another unjustified intervention in the article *Attention, it is Falling*. The fact that a worker spent some days on the horns of a dilemma, he had a fight with his family and he left his brigade, which – according to the author – happened to other people too, should not have make You to intervene. The simple assertion that "it happened to others too" does not guides us to the conclusion that this characterizes the life of foresters in general."[194]

Let us turn now to the second block of the symposia, the activity reports of the DIC. Here the main points of the previously held lectures were reiterated; however, this time they were attached to a thorough analysis of the delegates' interventions in general for the last couple of months, followed by the examination of the collectives one by one. The praiseworthy interventions were highlighted; nevertheless, the attention was focused primarily on the weaknesses, missed and unjustified interventions. Much emphasis was put on unjustified interventions, which were considered to be "[…] the most sinful forms of the lack of responsibility."[195] The problem with these mistakes, according to the instructors, was that they either "harm the propaganda by hindering the popularization of some great achievements" or "lead to the distortion of the Party line by leaving the impression that our [the censors'] demands actually coincide with the Party's stance."[196] Furthermore, "unjustified interventions lead to the deterioration of the collaboration with editorial offices, and undermine the prestige of the institution [the GDPP]."[197] Besides identifying concrete mistakes, the instructors sketched general "unhealthy tendencies" too. For instance, they remarked that the amount of unjustified interventions showed a tendency for the censors to

[194] D. 16/1951, ff. 188–189.
[195] D. 9/1959, f. 93.
[196] D. 9/1959, f. 82.
[197] *Ibid*. The similar is said in 1976 too. See D. 28/1976, f. 26.

decide to cut out every piece of "suspicious" data, specifically figures, "due to fear of sanctions or taking responsibility for their decisions." Another problematic tendency identified by DIC instructors was the fact that delegates relied too much on the DIC's help in solving individual cases; furthermore, sometimes censors let themselves be convinced by editors or even intervened on behalf of the editors.[198]

At the end of the day, a "black sheep" could hear his or her name several times: during the lecture, the activity report of his or her collective, and the DIC's activity report, both in general comments and in the analysis of the work of the collective to which he or she belonged. The ironic comments addressed personally to the culpable delegates in front of the colleagues abounded, up to a detailed examination of how the censor had become an accomplice of the class enemy.[199]

The block of questions and answers of the symposia provided further opportunities for exchange of information, but also for making proposals. Although the repeated request to improve the Booklet of dispositions was never satisfactorily met, the Notes, as it was previously mentioned, were definitely the result of the delegates' pressure in this sense. Furthermore, the most active delegates constantly pinpointed domains where censorship did not work properly or at all. For instance, they indicated that there was no proper regulation regarding the control of amateur theater groups playing on the stages of Culture Houses, or the fact that delegates had no executive power regarding banned books sold at flea-markets, and so on. Attention was drawn also to the "unhealthy manifestation of certain authors," who, being refused publication in one locality, tried their luck in other places, until they got published. This feedback provided by local censors was an important element of the gradual expansion and development of the censorship mechanisms, because in most cases the DIC

[198] D. 9/1959, ff. 9, 43.
[199] D. 10/1955, f. 108, 9/1959, ff. 69–74.

took steps to eliminate these shortcomings. For instance, in the late 1950s, collectives working with literary journals started to exchange their lists of rejected writings.[200]

The references up to this point guided us to the 1950's, and all presented examples are marked by the very characteristic Stalinist jargon. Except for the language style, however, symposia from the 1970's show very similar features. For instance, the symposium organized at Cluj-Napoca in 1974 has been presided by the general director of the GDPP and were present the directors of the Direction of Literature and Arts, Direction of Social and Technical Sciences, Direction of Import–Export of Printed Matter, as well as the director of the DIC and two instructors.[201] The novelty in this symposium was that it was organized for a smaller number of local employees, this time for 15 Transylvanian counties, a principle that was fostered in the next years too concerning meetings of delegates.[202]

Following the traditional blocks of these events, in 1974, there were three presentations on the general tendencies observed lately by the leaders of the invited departments. So, in the domain of literary production there were depicted problematic aspects of the allegorical prose, as well as "negativist" poems reflecting pessimism, disappointment, impossibility of human accomplishment, sense helplessness and so on. The main topics handled in the domain of social sciences were: the concepts of "nation" and "nationality", criticism of Romania's demographic policies, legislation regarding abortion and social welfare. The expert on import–export issues answered to the most problematic points raised by local censors in their reports, which were related to the import of religious and pornographic materials, and single

[200] D. 13/1957, ff. 37–38.
[201] See D. 16/1975, ff. 1–96, representing attendance sheets and minutes of the symposium, as well as materials prepared by DIC for the symposium such as lists of unjustified and missed interventions of local censors in the period of February–September 1974, problems in the domain of import–export, proposals raised by local censors at previous symposia and their solutions, plan of main issues to be discussed, analysis of the activity of certain collectives etc.
[202] At the beginning of 1976 there was a usual country-wide meeting of delegates, than at the end of the year an annual assessment organized for groups of collectives in 8 regional centers. (D. 14/1976) This was followed next year by a more special meeting of censors dealing with "social-political" and cultural publications namely. (D. 42/1977)

issues (so, not intended for distribution) found in luggage, as well as their request to distribute lists of intercepted books at the customs. The presentations were followed by the analysis of the activity of the convoked collectives. Again, missed and unjustified interventions were thoroughly dissected: the problematic points, the persons involved (delegates and instructors), the checking procedure, as well as the sanctions were identified and discussed.[203]

Control through rewards and sanctions

Compliance with the norms of censorship was enforced with positive and negative inducements, rewards and sanctions applied to the operative staff of the GDPP.[204] These implied both symbolic and material measures.

The symbolic rewards were represented, for instance, by "being pointed out" in larger-scale reports, whereas the sanctions implied written admonishments. In the long run, appearing frequently among the laureates or on the blacklist could have material consequences too, because censors could be promoted or demoted on the status hierarchy, which implied an increase or reduction in salary. These measures, however, were not based solely on the accumulation of credits, as sometimes a single "exceptionally good intervention" or "extremely big mistake" sufficed for being displaced. Moreover, "in order to mobilize" or "to stimulate the collective," whole local staffs were promoted out of the blue in the 1950's. Another version of material reward was the "exceptional bonus" that could amount to half of one month's salary, according to information from the 1960's. But just as in the case of promotion, censors without any special merits could receive bonuses for stimulation and

[203]D. 16/1975.

[204] D. 14/1951, ff. 41–42, 70–79; D. 9/1952, ff. 23–24, 28–31; D. 10/1953, ff. 22, 51, 85; D. 11/1955, ff. 1, 12; D. 32/1961, ff. 10, 11, 12, 30, 31, 32, 42, 50–68, 74, 99–102, 107–111,113–114, 116, 127, 132–146, 151, 155, 160, 166–167, 171–175, 182–186, 189, 191–195, 204–206; D. 12/1962, ff. 4, 11–12, 21–22, 30, 39, 62, 145, 185, 194, 215–217, 236, 237, 249–250, 253, 263–264; D. 2/1971 ff. 43, 52–54, 57, 74, 81, 85–96, 106, 111–117; D. 14/1975, ff. 60–63, 66, 70–73, 159, 186, 192; D. 28/1976, ff. 15, 39–40, 52–54, representing documents containing the proposals and orders of bonuses and sanctions, individual cases and tables of promotions and demotions, and notices sent to the censors concerned.

mobilization. Moreover, the difference between the value of bonuses as rewards and bonuses for stimulation was almost negligible, about 15 percent.

There are not enough data about the actual application of rewards and sanctions for a comprehensive analysis; however, documents show that this system was uninterruptedly applied from the earliest years of the GDPP. Furthermore, one can observe an increase in relying on these measures as a means of control over the censors' activity towards the beginning of the 1960's, in the sense that more and more people were affected. Data from 1961 show that at least 40 percent of the delegates (33 persons) were promoted and there were 49 cases of rewards. Besides those cases, four censors were demoted and there were 20 cases of written admonishment.[205] Compared to these figures, it seems that less sanctions were meted out in the 1970's, and also positive stimuli (including the amount of the bonuses) were reduced. For instance, in the second half of 1970, only 6 delegates were sanctioned (five demotions and one written admonishment), and about the same number of persons in 1975, combined with 13 exceptional bonuses.[206]

Now let us see what types of interventions were qualified as "exceptionally good," worthy of an exceptional reward. First, all rewarded interventions were related to expressly political matters: that is, news concerning internal and external affairs (especially those involving the Soviet Union), the activity of or references to Party officials and Party documents, and so on. The second type of rewarded interventions concerned materials that were already checked elsewhere: consequently, the censors were tempted to handle them in a more superficial way (for instance, texts that had already received the "good for distribution" qualifier, reprints, materials received from the news agency or taken from the central press, and so on). Third, instead of rewarding interventions that implied a more "sophisticated" analysis, all these censored materials simply contained typographical errors that changed the meaning of the

[205] D. 32/1961.
[206] D. 2/1971, ff. 52–54; D. 14/1975, ff. 60–63, 66, 70–73, 159, 186, 192.

word, the absence or presence of the prefix "anti-" – which bore a special importance when considering the strictly polarized worldview of the communist propaganda (for instance, anti-capitalism, anti-Nazism, anti-cosmopolitanism) –, or fragmentation issues such as the "improper" succession of titles or paragraphs (for example, one paragraph ended with a sentence about squealers, followed by a paragraph that started with the name of the president of the state, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej).[207]

Turning to the sanctions, one can remark that censors were sanctioned, on the one hand, for "indiscipline" materialized in repeatedly missing the deadlines for sending the reports, regularly being late at the office, failing to perform some checks, whether or not the signaled problematic points were solved for instance. On the other hand, as is to be expected, they were punished for missed interventions, both those of a political-ideological nature and those related to dispositions. Concerning the content of missed interventions of a political nature, the same can be stated as in the case of rewarded interventions: namely, they were directly related to political events and Party leaders, and appeared in the form of typographical errors with serious consequences for the meaning, the usage of the prefix "anti-", and "suspicious" successions of different ideas. Again, there is nothing related to the more challenging aspects of censoring. Furthermore, censors were never sanctioned for unnecessary interventions. These two facts are fairly surprising when taking into account the importance attached to filtering out texts with possibilities for ambivalent interpretation and other tricky forms of the "manifestations of the class enemy," or minuscule slippages on the margins of the Party line, and the endless lectures about the problem of unjustified interventions.

Regarding the harshness of the punishment, two aggravating conditions can be observed. First, the fault implied material loss (for example, if it had already been put into circulation and had to be withdrawn, or it was already printed, although not released), and second, the

[207] See examples of these cases in D. 32/1961, ff. 42, 50, 74, 107–108.

fault was noticed not by the GDPP, but by somebody from the Party organs. The latter cases usually ended up with downgrading, preceded by special examinations, extraordinary visits of the instructors, a written admission of failure submitted by the culpable censor, and so forth.[208]

As a final aspect of employing this system of negative and positive inducements, one may remark, that many times cases of rewarding and sanctioning were interconnected. This was the situation when an "exceptionally good" intervention embodied a correction of the mistake made by a colleague, for instance, stopping a material at the distribution phase, which was read and approved for printing by someone else. But there were larger scale purges too. For example, in a piece of news transmitted by *Agerpres* three delegates from different cities noticed a "grave political mistake" (Hitlerist instead of anti-Hitlerist) and for this intervention each was rewarded, and concomitantly other fourteen people were sanctioned for not noticing the same problem.[209]

Now let us sum the main features of the rewards/sanctions system and try to estimate its stimulating effects. First, based on the available data it is clear that it was a regular means of control employed from the earliest times. Second, one may assess the asymmetry on behalf of positive inducements, thus motivating censors with extra incomes. One possible problem, however, is that there was not much difference regarding the value of bonuses given to "deserving" censors and the "lazy" ones who had to be "mobilized" somehow during the 1950's. Due to this "error in the system", positive inducements in the form of bonuses might have been a less important and effective tool in the hands of supervisors. Nevertheless, it is possible that upgrading, meaning a lasting higher income, indeed had a motivating force. Third, on the one hand, there were no cases of rewards or sanctions concerning more

[208] D. 32/1961, ff. 111, 113–114.
[209] D. 32/1961 p. 42, 50, 52–68, 74.

challenging interventions, and on the other hand, there were no sanctions at all for unjustified interventions.

To conclude, certain features of the rewards/sanctions system indicate contradictory motivating power. But in general, I consider that compliance with requirements imposed to the censors, were relatively weakly supported by different forms of positive and negative inducements. One can assume that instead of rewarding and punishing on the bases of "professional performance", bonuses for "exceptional interventions" and sanctions for missed interventions were based on the avoided problems or scandals with the Party.

5.3.3 Everyday life in the censors' office: coordination and control in practice

The previous subsections showed that there were various available and properly designed mechanisms keep individual censors informed, as well as an elaborated system to monitor their activity. The questions remains, however, to what degree coordination and control mechanisms fulfilled their role and how formal requirements were enacted in everyday practices. To clarify this point through an example, consider that in order for the Notes to be an effective tool of coordination it is not enough to be sent to local offices, but they must have been also read and applied. So the questions addressed in this section are the following: to what degree were specific tools capitalized by censors in their everyday work, and what importance did they attribute to particular measures?

Let us start with the issue of recruitment, which based on the archive materials seems to be of core importance among other control mechanism. The conditions regarding "political maturity", "healthy origins" and education set by the GDPP were meant to have highly reliable personnel. In practice, however, recruitment was executed in a much more flimsy way. Many times recommendation worked on the basis of sympathy, rather than criteria of origins, qualification, political commitment, and so on. The friendly gesture contained in

providing the opportunity to the recommended person to work in the county's capital, and to earn good money with relatively little work. Recommendation could spring from Party officials, editorial offices (for many editors-in-chief wanted to work with their own people), or GDPP employees finding themselves a colleague or successor. (Koszta 2010, Kiss 2009, Horváth 2010, Koszta 2010, Censor B 2010) Many targeted persons accepted the offer for the formerly mentions benefits, or because this was the sole possibility to get in, or stay close to "the media." (Censor B 2010, Demendi 2009) The final decision was taken by DIC after a discussion with the recommended person. The Party did the screening before, so entrance examination could not be messed according to former censors, except with extreme ignorance regarding actual political situation. (Kiss 2009) The "political maturity" and "origins" criteria was interpreted rather loosely, and characterizations could be "cosmeticized", since even those persons were hired that were not allowed to become Party members, consequently had no perspectives in certain jobs, among others journalism. (Koszta 2010, Torma 2009) Actually, a review prepared within the context of transferring censors to new jobs in 1977 revealed that there one third of the local GDPP personnel had "spots" in their CV's such as relatives excluded from the Party, convicted relatives or relatives living abroad.[210] And this is not a characteristic related to center-periphery distinction regarding the implementation of directives, because apparently there were a couple of "odd" or "easy going" persons among the Bucharest employees as well. (Kiss 2009, Koszta 2010) Directives regarding the secrecy around recruitment were not respected either, and instead of blurry allusions people were usually asked rather directly if they want to join GDPP.

Once hired, censors had to learn the rules of the game. They familiarized themselves with procedural issues and the rules of thumb of their work at the training period held in Bucharest right after being hired. This lasted from two weeks couple of month. (Horváth 2010, Koszta

[210] See the handwritten notes next to the names of 27 delegates on the list of local GDPP employees in D. 37/1977, ff. 32–36.

2010, Kiss Jenő 2009, Censor B 2010) After this, according to testimonies, the most important source of information for their work were the directives received in various forms. However, in mapping the ideological frontiers, censors claim, they did not really rely on the GDPP's special tool, the models of good censorship practices. As they call it back, the Notes were primarily used in the training period in Bucharest, but actually not every collective received them regularly, and even if they did, not all censors pay much attention to their study. Still, some censors clearly remember reading materials that contained "issues from other localities, attempts to publish certain stuff, or some things were stopped" or "outlines and informative materials." (Horváth 2010, Kiss 2009, Censor B 2010) The next most useful source of information was represented by personal communication with instructors, especially those performed when visited by superiors. Apparently, this was far from being a stressful, traumatic event. All former censors interviewed vividly remember that besides jovial discussions, pub-crawling and playing cards, instructors let them know about new directives and relevant events, they received a couple of Notes and reanalyzed together previously corrected galley-proofs.

Surprisingly enough, according to the censors consulted, the less useful organizational tools were the reports and the feedback to these reports. Based on the theoretical expectations these should be one of the most important tools of personal coordination and control, and the archived documents seemed to confirm the existence of a very detailed reporting system. Nevertheless, the interviewees slightly contradicted this understanding. Writing the report and receiving the feedback was the task of the head of the collective. Except for regularly recording their interventions, the other members of the collective did not take part in preparing this document, and most often they did not read the answer of the instructors, instead they were processed when instructors paid them a visit, which however was considered a useful information as it was previously mentioned. (Kiss 2009, Censor B 2010,

Koszta 2010, Censor C 2009) Generally, local censors were not really concerned of what Bucharest thought about their performance. Regarding the quality of their work, censors did not learn from their superiors, but they deduced it primarily from the reactions of the local (the county level) Agitprop section. The rule of thumb was the following: until there is silence at the Agitprop section, there is no problem with their work. This was practiced in spite of the fact that the Party could not directly command or impeach GDPP employees. Nevertheless, it is very important to note that, despite not closely following the reporting procedures, censors were certain that they superiors possessed all necessary information about local activities.

Although based on archive materials symposia seem to be also important sources of information, some participants claim that this had much more the character of a field trip to the capital city. (Censor A 2009) The most interesting part of these meetings (and other joint meetings with Party cadres), according to former censors, were not at all the propaganda-lectures or the analysis of the activity of different collectives, but when they could have a look on internal (Party, ministerial or Agerpres) informational bulletins. These were top secret documents containing unmitigated internal and foreign news, as well as statistical data. High-ranked Party and governmental officials, and some editors-in-chief received on a regular basis these documents, but these were not available for rank-and-file censors. Therefore, they were excited by this opportunity, and did not care too much for casual castigation. (Kiss 2009, Koszta 2010, Censor B 2010)

So, how well were GDPP employees prepared to sort out improper content from printed matter? Did censors know better or less what is allowed to be made public compared to the editors-in-chief, for instance? According both to censors and journalists, GDPP employees were definitely not initiated persons of the power-system and they were not some special masters of Party-line. (Mórocz 2010, Madaras 2010)

Former censors admit that they could never be really sure regarding the current stance of the Party, so the current situation regarding the borders between forbidden and permitted topics, still they claim that they were considerably confident in their work.[211] First, former censors state that they worked primarily based on received directives, which referred to more or less clearly defined issues. Besides watching for these kinds of information, they were focused on correcting typographic errors that could have political implication. Supervising the political correctness of printed matter – the argument continues – was the task of editorials and the Party's specialized departments. Whereas emphasizing the non-political nature of their work may sound just as a transparent self-justification for executing a socially condemned job, it has to be borne in mind, that "guarding confidential information" was indeed the *differencia specifica* of their task as compared to other fora involved in censorship. In other words, in spite of the fact that the GDPP instructions clearly stated that censors had to exercise political control, local censors were particularly concerned with state secrets and other more or less accurately defined instructions. This is not to say that political considerations were totally left out, rather it was of secondary importance. Instead of considering it the essence of censorship, GDPP employees perceived pinpointing ideological and political errors as a favor given to the editorial staff. Can we accept this approach as a true or valid account about the censors' role? Though the answer obviously cannot be a clear "yes", as the activity reports of local collectives abound of political-ideological interventions, interview data with former editors-in-chief confirm this stance. Former journalists recall censors as the "people who leaf their secret booklet", and state that censors caused no real problems to the editorial work and most of the time they touched upon minuscule issues. (Keszthelyi 2009, Madaras 2010)

[211] It might be interesting to know that some censors from small collectives claim that their work was definitely far from being troublesome, rather it was easy and boring. The task of checking printed matter was unchallenging, and the others were also of small amount. They had office hours in the morning and in the afternoon/evening. In the morning they had to check press materials other than newspapers (flyers, propaganda materials, forms, school materials etc.) and read the daily press, which altogether had negligible sizes in smaller counties. So, "*you could measure idleness in years*", according to Kiss (2009), and very often they did nothing at all except for tending the phone according to Horváth (2010).

Second, censors felt relaxed and confident due to the fact that a text was controlled by many people before them and they were convinced that it was in everybody's own interest to stop "suspect" materials. All censors repeatedly emphasized that they had the task of controlling editors, and they were pretty sure that editors-in-chief and responsible journalists did their best to stay within the Party-lines. As former censor recalls it, relying on the vigilance of the editorial staff was learned already at the Bucharest traineeship:

> „Those people heading *Scînteia* [paper of the RCP's Central Committee], ... and its three hundred and something employees...! When the last person submitted the manuscript, that text was already immaculate. So, you did not have to think much. We used to play the cards and bet on which side the flicked box of matches will land. When the economical column came, I was told by senior colleagues to be attentive and they indicated to read a part where certain issues appeared. We were not interested in other topics. We just could not handle them, because you did not receive the pages as in the provinces, namely, the whole page in final layout, but there were about four columns in the incomplete page, then three of them could be suddenly replaced, for example. It was very malleable. And who was able to follow all this? We knew, however, that those who wrote and signed these articles were "highly reliable" persons. They just could not afford doing else, because at such a newspaper it would turned out immediately." (Koszta 2010)

This attitude is reflected in their thinking concerning sanctions. On the one hand, censors claim that they were sanctioned for "stupid" mistakes, like typographic errors. Of course, they were trying to avoid them, as the deduction in payment was discomforting, but these "small" mistakes could whenever slip in, so there was not much moral lesson in a sanction. (Kiss 2009, Censor B 2010) On the other hand, as it was just presented, a sense of comfort was given by the fact that it is the interest of the editorial offices to bring out the newspaper "clean." (Kiss 2009, Koszta 2010, Rebendics 2010, Censor B 2010) The sanctions were applied on two lines: sanctions for the censors on the institutional line of GDPP, and sanctions for the journalists through the Party. Both censors and journalists rank the Party

punishments harsher than the censors' office, and claim that usually it was accompanied by much more scandal.[212]

Still, what did censors do when felt really uncertain about the correct decision? Censors accept that this kind of situation indeed existed, and it could be both for interpreting state secrets dispositions and political-ideological issues. In these cases, personal information channels were put to work. Censors consulted either the nearby sitting issue-responsible at the printing house, called the editor-in-chief, or asked their co-workers from their own collectives. It could happen that they requested advice from sympathetic senior colleagues from other counties. (Koszta 2010, Kiss 2009) In critical situations they called their instructors from Bucharest, but this did not happen really often. (Koszta 2010, Rebendics 2010, Censor B 2010) There were however more careful delegates that called "day and night" their instructors. (Censor A 2009)

With some surprising details, the examination of everyday practices in various GDPP/CPP offices produced evidence that partially confirm and partially disprove results of the analysis of internal official documents presented in the previous section. Out of the coordination mechanism the specific directives and the guidance provided by superiors were recognized as really important information sources, likewise the training period spent in the central GDPP office, and to some degree the *Notes* promoting good practices. In cases of uncertainty, horizontal communication channels with peers and employees of editorial offices were also utilized. Conversely, the written feedback issued by instructors were capitalized to a much

[212] It happened, for instance, that for not noticing the reversal of two lines at the press house, aggravated by the fact that the unlucky split occurred in the name of "comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu", the censor was fined with deduction of payment, while the issue-responsible was fired. (Censor B 2010). Or, on the last page of *Hargita*, in one of the issues from 1973, it was announced a big ceremony including the wreath of two statues (Petőfi and Bălcescu) that were meant to symbolize the Romanian and Hungarian brotherhood. The article was signed: "The mourning family". It happened that by mistake the linotypist moved a row from the last column containing the obituary notices to the first column, because the issue responsible asked for some modification in the obituary. The case rippled big waves; the CC sent its own personnel to enquire and required central GDPP to take similar measures. The sentence: the assistant of the editor-in-chief, who was the issue-responsible at that night and the edit managing editor got a "last warning" from the Party, whereas the censor received admonishment. (Koszta 2010, Rebendics 2010)

lesser degree (this was, however, replaced by the visits at the workplace after 1965), and censors did not perceive large-scale meetings as particularly instructive either. Not to recognize as important information sources does not imply that they disregarded everything taught on these events. On the dimension of control, it was found that neither the recruitment strategy, nor the sanctioning system was entirely successful. Requirements of institutionalized "clan control" were not very strictly applied, and the sanctioning system did not produce all expected results. The detailed reporting system was also not flawlessly applied, as usually the collective's chief prepared the requested documents and received the written feedback. Still, it was a pretty suitable tool in the hands of superiors to follow local activities, and the "problem" of ignoring the written feedback was solved by more frequent visits and face-to-face consultation.

5.4 Conclusion

The empirical analysis reported in this chapter has investigated on macro and micro levels the formal organizational architecture of censorship in Romania. Besides presenting the evolution, main actors and basic processes in the censorship system, it provided a detailed account of the fundamental organizational mechanisms that ensured the coherent application of ambiguous censorship norms. The organizational mechanisms through which the censorship policy was ultimately implemented was studied on the extreme end of pre-publication control procedure, the local censors' activity.

For a systematic analysis, a theoretical framework originating in the field of organizational studies was employed. On the one hand, concepts borrowed from organizational studies were used in identifying the two core components of organizational structure on which performance rests, coordination and control mechanisms namely. On the other hand, particular claims formulated in the vein of structural contingency approach to organizational

design were employed to assess the fit between particular organizational solutions and the critical contingency identified in case of censorship, that is, task uncertainty. Identifying and characterizing organizational tools by which censors were kept updated with regards to expectations, as well as the ways their monitoring was executed, could have been put into a purely descriptive analysis; nevertheless, without theoretical and empirical insights developed in the field of structural contingency approach, one could have not evaluate their appropriateness to the nature of the tasks to be performed.

The analysis of official documents issued in the censors' office [GDPP/CPP 1949–1977] combined with testimonies of former employees resulted that organizational mechanisms necessary to dampen the negative effects of task uncertainty, hence crucial for an effective implementation of the censorship policy, were definitely materialized in the internal structure of the organization under scrutiny. Therefore, one can conclude that next to macro institutional and organizational characteristics (state and Party monopoly over resources, multiple filters etc.), policy execution and the high performance of the censorship system was maintained by properly designed fine-grained organizational mechanisms.

The analyzed organizational mechanisms were persistently present throughout the existence of the GDPP/CPP, but corrections in the system could be observed as well, such as introducing the *Notes* representing models of good censorship practices, or replacing the written feedback with oral communication, which released the supervisory staff of compiling lengthy texts on the one hand, but it was a more useful method of guidance according to the local censors too.[213]

In what concerns the characteristics of particular organizational tools employed within the GDPP/CPP, several important observations can be made. First, the hierarchical

[213] Additionally one can consult the records of incoming and outgoing materials of the GDPP Târgu Mureş for the 1962–1977 period. ANDJM, Fond CPT, D. 1, ff. 1–124.

organizational structure – a must of organizations challenged by task uncertainty when coordinated action cannot be achieved by setting targets or goals according to Galbraith (1974) – perfectly fitted the needs of an effective censorship. There was a specialized department above local collectives (the DIC namely, which, however, had its own superiors) that possessed a more comprehensive perspective (and its own channels for inquiry) about the know-hows of censorship, and constantly supplied feedback to local censors. Information regarding forbidden topics was centralized, and then distributed through various methods adjusted to the requirements of the tasks to be executed.

On the one hand, this implies that routine tasks of censors and particular confidential information were communicated through directives, whereas standards concerning the more ambiguous domains of censorship, political and ideological expectations namely, were set by promoting good practices. On the other hand, in terms of coordination modes, communication was realized through impersonal, as well as personal methods. As Van De Ven *et al.* (1976) and Argote (1982) demonstrated, effectiveness requires impersonal methods in case of tasks characterized by low levels of uncertainty, and personal methods of coordination (termed by Van De Ven *et al.* coordination by feedback or mutual adjustment) for reversed characteristics. These principles were clearly institutionalized within the GDPP/CPP. Impersonal methods were represented by various forms of directives (Circulars/Dispositions, Booklet of dispositions, Information Bulletin) and Notes. Besides, there were coordination mechanisms set up in order to convey extra information regarding the proper employment of censorship norms, which was realized by feedback, a necessary method under raised levels of uncertainty. These consisted in the continuous and direct guidance provided by instructors to individual censors through written documents, face-to-face meetings and by phone conversations, but mutual adjustment was made possible by large-scale meetings of censors too, which qualify to personal and group coordination modes,

respectively. Other mechanisms mentioned but not separately analyzed, such as the training sessions and local mentoring of novices, local group study and regular meetings of the collective, as well as the horizontal information exchange between peers, all qualify for organizational methods that provided a framework of information exchange and acquiring information about what to filter out.

The control mechanisms instituted in GDPP/CPP also corresponded to great degree to theoretical expectations. As it was observed, the control literature handles task uncertainty primarily from the point of view of task interdependence, which is not the case of censorship. Nevertheless, based on claims formulated by Ouchi (1979), Kirsch and Choudhury (2010), and Liu *et al.* (2010) the following were found: first, organizational effectiveness asks for bureaucratic control procedures for all observable (measurable) control targets, that is, input, behavior and output. Under task uncertainty, behavior and output control might be challenged, the latter, however, does not apply for censorship either. Second, human resource input control mechanisms were considered crucial under task uncertainty, which in Ouchi's term means exercising "clan control", though he referred to this method as primarily an informal mechanisms. The analysis of the internal GDPP/CPP control mechanisms resulted that all three control targets were administered by bureaucratic tools: the recruitment strategy was designed to accomplish clan control, whereas process and output control was implemented through a detailed reporting system and the close monitoring carried out by superiors on the field. Next to these mechanisms, there was a system of rewards and sanctions employed to induce compliance, which was, however, rather superficially applied.

One must immediately nuance the conclusions concerning the remarkable fit between the critical contingency characterizing the censors' job and organizational solutions by adding that, in practice, not all organizational tools fully reached the aims they were designed for. On the level of everyday practices, several elements of the organizational arsenal were not

applied as formally required; consequently, they could not have exerted the expected impact. To recall, the models promoting good practices were not thoroughly consulted, the recruitment criteria were not strictly applied, the sanctioning system was not taken seriously etc. Nevertheless, personal accounts indicate that vertical and horizontal personal communication were particularly useful in gathering necessary information, and censors felt that their activity was systematically and sufficiently monitored. Consequently, event by taking into account contradictory evidences, one can conclude that formal organizational mechanisms and processes were indeed properly designed for meeting the challenge of task uncertainty, which must have contributed to reduce undesired variation in the censors' work, and ultimately to an effective policy implementation.

Finally, I must address some issues concerning the limits of the present analysis, which are related to the fact that the analysis of internal organizational mechanisms covered just a slice of the functioning of the formal censorship system on the one hand, and the time frame covers only three thirds of the whole period of state socialism on the other. As it was presented in the first two sections of this chapter, there were other organizations deeply involved into the censorship process (the Party, the CSCE working in parallel to the GDPP/CPP, the parent institution of various publications etc.), and for a comprehensive analysis it would have been interesting to know what kind of coordination and control mechanisms functioned in their cases too, as uncertainties springing from ambiguous censorship norms certainly affected their functioning as well. Empirical analyses of other states cited in the first chapter of this dissertation point to the fact that similar efforts have been made to coordinate and control the work of editorial offices too. A research of that scale however would have gone beyond my possibilities in terms of time and energy for completing this dissertation. Moreover, a focus on the last linchpin in the pre-publication procedure can be fully sustained from a methodological point of view.

Conversely, the time-frame restrains, that is studying internal coordination and control mechanisms of the censors' office just until 1977 can be explained by the unavailability of primary sources concerning the activity of its chief successor organization, the CSCE namely. As there are no fonds (yet) in the archives dedicated to this organization, I consulted the Fond of Central Committee of the RCP where I have found a few dossiers concerning the activity of CSCE in the sections of Organization, and Agitation and Propaganda, respectively (1977–1989), as well as 28 dossiers comprising internal documents of the Covasna county CSCE (1977–1989). Unfortunately, the documents consulted do not offer sufficient information concerning the specific coordination and control of CSCE employees. The most I have found is that there were reports sent upwards on the hierarchical chain, which contrarily to the GDPP/CPP reports do not contain references to concrete censorship interventions, and a periodically updated document issued by the CSCE called *List comprising data and information not to be published* (*Lista cuprinzând datele şi informaţiile nedestinate publicităţii*) that was very similar to the Booklet of disposition used by the GDPP/CPP. (Oprea 2003) In short, the CSCE is still a "black box", and a comprehensive study on its functioning, as well as a comparison between the GDPP/CPP and CSCE, remains to be done after more official documents are going to be publicly available.

CHAPTER 6: INFORMAL PRACTICES IN THE ROMANIAN CENSORSHIP SYSTEM

As it was discussed in the theoretical chapters of this dissertation (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4), organizational performance depends not only on the employment of proper formal mechanisms, but also on the interaction of formal and informal practices. On the most general level, the literature review resulted that effectiveness rests on informal practices that advance formal organizational goals. While the previous chapter was concerned with the formal organisational solutions contributing to the effective implementation of the censorship policy, the present chapter aims to uncover the "social fabric" of censorship, made up of informal relationships and interactions between individuals involved in the censorship process, and the impact of these practices on the functionig of the censorship system.

The theoretical bases for this inquiry were elaborated in Chapter 4, which comprises the conceptual guidelines for identifying "informal practices", as well as a descriptive typology for clustering various practices. To recall, the working definition proposed for "informal practices" contained references to the existence of positive or negative personal ties, and making use of informal norms, particularistic considerations and obligations in performing the act. The same definition stipulated that informal practices relate variably to formal rule requirements and organizational goals. In its own turn, this variety was captured in the proposed descriptive typology that comprises four types of informal practices: complementary, substitutive, accommodating and competing practices, namely. The first two types are compatible with formal rule requirements, whereas the second two are incompatible. Furthermore, except for the competing type, the other contribute to effective

goal attainment, so, there is one type, the accommodating namely, in case of which organizational effectiveness is raised in spite of infringing formal rules.

According to these theoretical insights, and by employing a historical ethnographic approach, I processed a wide variety of unofficial (subjective) sources, interviews, memoirs, diaries and contemporary correspondence (details presented in Chapter 2) containing references to the censorship process in Romania. In these primary sources, I traced the personal relationships between the actors of the censorship system, the properties of these relationships, and the emerging informal practices.

It has to be underlined that the analysis is narrowed down to the domain emphatically neglected by the literature, that is, the positive interpersonal ties between the controllers and the controlled. In contrast to narratives that draw a clear demarcation line between the camp of censoring officials and the authors/editors, and concentrate on their "fight", my analysis highlights the positive relationships, and focuses on cooperation. Furthermore, it is important to note that the motives of cooperation discussed here do not imply on the side of authors/editors either enthusiastic support of the regime, or extreme caution materialized by staying well within the accepted boundaries. Instead, I discuss interactions based on trust, which spring out of a shared sense of collegiality, professional appreciation or friendship.

It seems useful to outline at the onset of the analysis of how the emergence of these informal practices was related to the formal structural features of the censorship system. These characteristics were already partially mentioned in Chapter 5, others are going to be substantiated further on in the analysis. First, censorship norms were vaguely worded and left large room for interpretation, which ultimately rested upon the decision of high-ranking Party officials. Second, the formal institutional design included pre-publishing and post-publishing control brought into effect by several agencies, each having a hierarchical structure that functioned as a multi-level filter. A third important characteristic of the formal system was

that many decisions were confidential both with regards to concrete censorship dispositions and the control process of particular works, which generated a sense of unpredictability and arbitrariness. Finally, transgressing the border between the domains of forbidden and permitted topics could be severely penalized by sanctions such as temporarily suspending the right to sign articles, demotion, firing, withdrawing the professional license, not issuing foreign travel permits, "blacklisting" the author etc. To alleviate uncertainty and avoid possible retaliation, as well as to increase the chances of acceptance for publication, people used personal networks to obtain information and influence decision making. Of course, reliance on informal sources of information was not just the consequence of the intricate and classified nature of formal administrative processes, but it was a general counter-reaction to the scarcity and unreliability of information released through official channels. Grapevine communication referred to all realms of life, among them to information relevant to editorial and other cultural activity too. Likewise, reliance of informal "arrangements" characterized other domains of organizational and everyday activities.

The presentation of the empirical evidence proceeds in three sections.[214] In order to cover theoretical aspects on the one hand, and to capture as many empirical details as it is possible on the other, I draw first the profile of the main actors involved into the censorship process, more exactly, the profile of the "good editor-in-chief" and the "good censor" as conceived by the editorial personnel. These traits contain emphatic marks that indicate engaging in informal practices. I include here a brief description of the "good report" too, a strategic tool used by editors-in-chief and editors in their dealings with controlling forums. In the second section some characteristics of the informal information exchange and informal nexuses harnessed by the main actors are presented, ties that span across formal organizations and fostered informal practices, hence, played a critical role in the everyday working of the

[214] An early version of the analysis was published in Kiss 2012a.

censorship system. In the third section further examples of informal practices are provided, this time however grouped according to the revised typology of informal practices. In the first subsection, I depict instances of competing informal practices, that is, practices which stretch the boundary between forbidden and permitted topics (negotiation, pulling strings) in a way to favour the publication. The following subsection contains the analysis of complementary, substitutive and accommodating informal practices, that is, practices which reinforced this border (informal information exchange between peers and controllers; preventive strategies employed by editors-in-chief: counselling and ensuring with controllers; censors leaking out confidential information). The final section of the chapter concludes by reflecting upon the novelty of empirical findings, as well as the theoretical benefits of employing the proposed conceptual framework and the proposed typology of informal practices.

6.1 The "good editor-in-chief", the "good report", and the "good censor"

Publishing under censorship resulted in some peculiar images of the main actors involved. Editors-in-chief were rated as "good" according to certain abilities and skills necessary to run smoothly a paper under censorship restrictions. Although it might sound like a contradiction in terms, allusions to good qualities of censors are not rare in narratives of publishing practices from that period either. Based on scattered appreciative remarks appearing in the primary sources used for this analysis, in this section I present the profile of the "good editor-in-chief" and the "good censor", both from the point of view of the editorial staff and individual authors, as well as a particular tool of the censorship process, the "good report". The purpose of constructing these profiles is twofold. On the one hand, what I want to demonstrate here is that expectations regarding the activity of the "good editor-in-chief" and the "good censor" contain references to activating ties and engaging in practices that belong to the domain of informality. On the other hand, one can observe, that these expectations

were rather stable during the whole studied period, in other words, they were not altered by formal changes in the censorship system.

From the official viewpoint, editors-in-chief were supposed to translate overall Party guidelines into specific decisions.[215] However, according to the expectations of the editorial staff and authors, "good editors-in-chief" were not mindless marionettes of the Party, but capitalized all their measures of latitude. For this, they did not avoid but consciously undertake the role of "administrator-politician", and had a good nose for maneuvering among overt and hidden political sensibilities and for identifying windows of political opportunity.[216] This ability presumed that they were well informed on current political issues, and to further their aims they nurtured proper contacts and spoke the language expected by their political partners. By capitalizing their nexuses related to their high social and political status, "good editors-in-chief" fought for their journal and staff, and guarded their employees against reprimands and prosecution. Furthermore, "good editors-in-chief" were responsive to their staff's professional interests and did not intervene too much in everyday work of the editors and journalists.[217]

[215] About the political-ideological role of the mass media, and the responsibilities of the editor-in-chief see, for instance, the press-law (Law no. 3/1974) discussed in the previous chapter.

[216] In a descriptive sense, the term "administrator-politician" applied to the role played by editors-in-chief was used by Dzirkalis *et al.* (1982: 43) analyzing the Soviet censorship system.

[217] For instance, according to his fellow workers, S. Huszár, editor-in-chief of the weekly newspaper *A Hét* (1970–1983), was not a very agreeable person, but he was considered a "good editor-in-chief". He had a very good cadre-file, and with the intervention of his friends and through his own contacts, he managed to recruit a good team, and at the start of the newspaper, in 1970, he even achieved to put in the position of the deputy editor-in-chief a formerly banned journalist (L. Földes). He organized the work in a way that hired a previous editor-in-chief from a Party newspaper (András Kovács, *Igazság*) who wrote impeccable political editorials, and two deputy editors-in-chief (Zsolt Gálfalvi and Andor Horváth, the first with a very good cadre-file, a solid, wide-ranging network of acquaintances, and a "smooth" style in his dealings) who were also talented in keeping the contacts with controlling officials. By and large, "Huszár fully undertook the 'policy' of the newspaper, carried the can, stood on the defensive and fought." (Interview with Á. Hugó in Bányai 2006: 23) He was willing to risk and was inventive in diverting attacks on the paper. Journalists claim that they felt trusted and protected, and they could develop their journalistic skills. Reasoning with the catchphrase of "atheist propaganda", Huszár succeeded to obtain the license, for a quarterly supplement of the newspaper with a profile of propagating natural sciences, which implied getting extra money, paper and jobs in 1977, in times when economic austerity measures were already imposed. The journalists, editors felt trusted and protected, and thought that he managed to create proper conditions to develop their skills and talents. See interviews with Á. Hugó, A. Horváth, Z. Rostás and A. Halász in Bányai (2006: 23, 24, 203–205, 224, 230, 290, 295).

Although in their characterization political abilities prevail over writing talents, and usually editors-in-chief had indeed a clear history from the point of view of the Party, implying that some of them fulfilled important Party positions and professional statuses, it is worthwhile mentioning that many of them, especially the editors of cultural journals and publishing houses used to publish and were indeed appreciated for their scientific or literary work.[218] Outsiders to journalism and publishing could be considered good editors-in-chief with the condition of not to encroach too much into creative work, rather to do the administrative-political job.[219]

Let me turn now to the topic of "good report". It was practiced already in the 1970's, and it became a requirement in the 1980's to attach reports issued by external specialists on certain manuscripts submitted for control. The specialist was sometimes appointed by the controlling forums, most of the time however was chosen by the editor/publisher. For increasing the chances of passing the manuscript, some strategic thinking was required on the side of the editor-in-chief (or editor) in order to obtain a favorable report. A "good report" was authored by a person who was recognized in party circles as obedient to the regime. At the same time the referee must had to recognize the "true value" of the work he/she analyzed, in other

[218] To mention selectively a few names: E. Gáll, editor-in-chief at Korunk between 1957–1984 was appreciated for his sociological-philosophical work published home and abroad. Nikolaus Berwanger was the editor-in-chief of the *Neue Banater Zeitung* (official German regional Party newspaper) between 1968–1984, member of the County Committee of the Party, secretary of the Romanian Writer's Union, vice-president of the Council of Working People of German Nationality of Romania, was a writer and a poet, a central figure of German literary life. Likewise, Dumitru Radu Popescu was in the 1980's editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *Contemporanul*, chairman of the Romanian Writers' Union, member of the CC RCP, as well as an appreciated novelist, poet, dramatist etc.

[219] After Huszár's demotion in 1983 based on made-up charges the editor-in-chief's position was given to E. Lázár, transferred from *Előre*. According to the team of the journal, she was not even comparable to Huszár, yet they recognized the fact and considered it as one of her virtues that she did not hinder them in their professional work. Interview with Z. Rostás in Bányai (2006: 95)
Interview data about the profile of the "good editor-in-chief" are nicely confirmed by contemporary documents, like G. Cseke's "professional-managerial codex" compiled for his successor in 1978, who was parachuted by the Union of Communist Youth to the chief editor's position at *Ifjúmunkás* without any prior journalistic credentials. (Cseke 2009: 24–27) This codex included: "warding off malevolent attacks", "knowing the Hungarian and Romanian mass media, being informed on all current events", "solving the problems in-house, not with the help of external powers", "focusing on the substantive, existential problems of the newspaper […] distribution, extension […] relationship with guiding organs, control, representation, protection of interests", because "the rest is done by the members of the editorial office." (Cseke 2009: 25–26)

words, he/she wrote a positive report even if the text contained ideas at odds with the prevailing ideological expectations. Finally, the analyst was able to argue in favor of the publication in the expected ideological jargon and eventually the final product did not indicate any dissension compared to the current political-ideological stance of the Party.[220] One can add that the similar qualities were expected of inside reports too issued by editors, who (after checking and modifying the text) forwarded the manuscript to the controlling forums accompanied by their own report.[221]

Finally, I present the characterization of the "good censor". Censors, irrespectively whether they were members of the GDPP/CPP, CSCE or the Party, earned the "good" qualifier from the editorial staff if they accomplished the following conditions.[222] "Good censors" had a respect for creative work and "knew their own place", meaning that they approached the journalist/editor with certain esteem. They were not subject to the whims and fancies of their

[220] This "trick" is mentioned, for instance, by G. Domokos in the interview by Bányai (2006: 154–155). This strategy is illustrated in Ianoși's (2012) memoir too. He claims that he was a "referee liked by the parties," so, writing reports became almost his "third job" in the 1970's and especially in the 1980's. (Ianoși 2012: 589–590, 632, 678, 721)
There were instances when the referee forgot about his role. (Domokos 2000) It happened once that J. Kovács, a trusted and carefully selected analyst, wrote a positive report about a novel to be published in 1986 (J. Pusztai: *A csapda* [TheTrap]), yet in his enthusiasm included the following sentence too: "The most important message of the novel: despotism dooms people to vegetation, and forces them to abandon their peculiarities – individual and national too –, to drop their true nature." Naturally – according to Domokos –, this report could not be sent to the controlling forum. Eventually, the novel was stopped after the second check by CSCE in 1986, claiming that the "political–ideological orientation is elementary wrong". During negotiations over the financial sanctions imposed on the publisher for this book, one of the editors of the book addresses to the CSCE the following: "The novel written between 1979 and 1981 often reminded me of the dictatorship from Chile, Argentina or Nicaragua. In my opinion, by these details Pusztai raises hatred in the readers against the war, the political message is unambiguous: disapproves all kinds of oppression." Domokos considered this representation a very shrewd tactic to fool the censors. (Domokos 2000)

[221] See this in D. Verona's (1998: 173-175) or Blandiana's (2012: 22) account on their experiences with censorship.

[222] It worth pointing out that when I asked in the interviews about local GDPP censors (both in general and by specifying their names), characterizing them in depreciating terms appeared just sporadically. (Jámbor 2010, Pongrácz 2009, Keszthelyi 2009, Madaras 2010, Kühn 2010, Muncian 2009, Almăjan 2009) Even more importantly, in their professional relationship, according to journalists, GDPP censors were "ingenuous" and "harmless". But one can consult published subjective accounts in this sense. Next to negative evaluations such as "exigent politrucks, faithful to the regime", "body of torturers" (Melinescu 2012: 87), "shallow, uncultivated activist" (Bittel 1998: 163), "people alien to culture, who acted randomly, not governed by criteria, but whimsically and out of instinct" (Popescu 1998: 225), subjective accounts of censorship contain many positive appreciations concerning censors (GSPP, CSCE and Party officials) such as "he [talking about censors in general] was affiliated not just with evil" (D. R. Popescu 1998: 84), "a person who loved and really fought for good books" (Mălăncioiu 1998: 105), "normal people" (Verona 1998: 186), "a very nice lady" (Crăsnaru 1998: 207), "really cultivated people", "they were human after all: some would negotiate, others could even close an eye" (Comănescu 1998: 219) etc.

own opinion or state, but could point to a specific censorship disposition, and were willing to communicate the reason of interventions.[223] "Good censors" were aware of the interpretability of propagandistic guidelines and were open for debates. These debates were not at all about contesting current ideological issues or dispositions, rather discussions of political-ideological nature with the purpose to reach an ideologically sustainable decision that would cover both the censor and the editorial office against later criticism.[224] The censor open for debate was expecting to obtain from the editor: "persuasive literary or political-scientific arguments, precedents – possibly the most recent ones, – themes rived off from the speeches of the general secretary of the Party, newly issued party documents or simply from *Scânteia* that could be applied *pro domo* and would ideologically support his/her decision." (Domokos 2000)

So, "good censors" did not exaggerate in their job, yet they judiciously and accurately executed the censoring work. In other words, good censors neither deleted in excess nor did they leave issues in the paper that could endanger the papers' future appearance or could end up with sanctions against the editorial personnel.[225] In addition, "good censors" facilitated

[223] Among examples for "[…] moments when one could find a way of collaboration with the censors too […]", P. Bodor (editor-in-chief at the Hungarian TV editorial office) mentions a case when the censor finally told him what the problem was with a program: "He criticized a sentence in the TV recordings of a *Korunk*-meeting from Oradea. Then he put another sentence to be cut. Finally he said between him and me '[…] I don't want to search for a third pretext. Edgár Balogh cannot appear on the screen, that's our strictly confidential order. But I cannot play any longer with you; this is the real reason I have to take out this material'." Interview with P. Bodor in Bányai (2006: 54) The material was not released, still from the narrative it seems that the editor-in-chief was partly contended. This was probably due because the censor could provide a justification, he shifted the blame to some other, higher forum, and confidentially disclosed a piece of classified information, all this indicating his cooperative attitude.

[224] There were many situations (including the Pusztai-case previously cited) when the controllers knew exactly what the message of the writing was; still the editors continued the empty talk, bringing up rather absurd arguments. I tend to believe that not the arguments themselves convinced sometimes the censors, but they just pondered again the risks they are taking for releasing the writing. For instance, to the call to stop insisting on topics that imply Hungarian religious persons, a reply considered smart was that Ferenc Dávid (first bishop of the Unitarian Church from Transylvania) was neither Hungarian, nor a religious person, but a German and a revolutionary. This case was settled, the article passed. (Interview with A. Halász, in Bányai 2006: 205) In another case, it was objected that on a wall calendar appeared too many Hungarian floral motives. The editor tried to argue that the tulip is not at all a Hungarian flower, but it is a plant with Iranian origins brought by Dutch to Europe. In this case, the "trick" did not work, and all the tulips were replaced with carnations. (Madaras 2010)

[225] Former editor-in-chief at *Fáklya* (Hungarian local Party newspaper, Arad) R. Péterfi recalls in appreciative terms the accurate work executed by the head of the local GDPP collective: "I worked mostly with Mannheim,

editorial work by informing in advance the editorial staff on classified dispositions, by warning or counseling them even before the control procedure started.[226] Finally, in case something slipped through, "good controllers" were expected to hush up somehow the incident.[227]

To be sure, there were more rigid and watchful, as well as categorically "bad censors" too, names that appear more frequently in stereotype-like accounts of censorship compared to that of the names of good censors.[228] From the point of view of editorial offices, "bad censors" were those who out of simple self-interest (such as avoiding potential criticism) were excessively zealous in fulfilling their tasks, persons who were vicious towards particular authors or publication, did not explain the reasons of interventions, or gave "impertinent" answers, such as "I don't like it!" or a concise: "No."[229]

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and I would like to note, that *he was a very reliable and decent man*, and very cultivated too. He was completely deaf; therefore, he read the newspaper without being disturbed by external conditions. […] *He read the paper very carefully, than went to the issue-responsible and uneasily said: 'I have found a couple of errors, if you want so, correct it.' Of course, everybody wanted to correct it, and immediately jumped to make the change*." (Péterfi 2010)

[226] Deputy editor-in-chief of the same newspaper (*Fáklya*), T. Mórocz emphasized the helpful gestures of local censors "They knew each other with the journalists, some were even friends. Though they were not really erudite people… But *to facilitate our work, they let us know certain issues. They came to the editorial office once a month and told us about their new dispositions. We knew what could be done*." (Mórocz 2010). Interestingly, using almost the similar words, journalist of the *Banatske Novine* (Serbian local Party newspaper, Timişoara), I. Muncian mentioned that "working with censors was in general a matter of trust, after all we were colleagues", and more specifically, "He [the censor] used to tell us what topics to avoid in the articles, for instance, economic and technical issues, in order not to waste our time and spend the whole night at the press house." (Muncian 2009). The same is recalled by Kühn working at the German radio broadcast in Timişoara. (Kühn 2010)

[227] Regarding the monitoring activity of the Party officials, M. Milca, journalist at *Scînteia Tineretului* (central Party newspaper, Bucharest) pinpoints their protective pursuit: "The supervision was not done in a militaristic manner, in the sense that there was somebody who watched us all the time. There were discussions on the leaders' level of the editorial office with the "tutor" from the press section about a series of headings for a longer time period, two or three month, if there were certain campaigns. Our attention was directed towards some accents that had that be put, […] and, *of course, they saw to recommend in certain situations to protect an author who committed a mistake, to take him/her a bit out of the spotlight*. […] *There were not just forms of reprisal; sometimes there were forms of protection of the journalist concerned.*" (Emphasis added. Interview with M. Milca in Boboc (2010)

[228] Names most frequently associated with an evil repute: M. Dulea (deputy president CSCE), S. Gîdea (president CSCE), S. Koppándi (CC RCP), and S. Pezderka (CSCE). One of the Hungarian "star" censors was V. Fülesi (GDPP, CSCE), but the name of E. Docsănescu (GDPP, CSCE), J. Rădulescu (CSCE), and R. Constantin (CSCE) regularly appear among the good censors too. (See also Rad 2012: 15)

[229] See Gáll about the "cynical and impertinent" new CSCE censor from 1984. (Gáll, 2003: 128) Unfortunately, shortly after getting this CSCE official, another "totally incompetent" person was assigned to supervise his journal at the level of the local Party, which made Gáll to request his former censors back, who were regarded by him competent for analyzing his journal. (Gáll, 2003: 126, 134)

To summarize, a "good editor-in-chief" was required to maneuver on the rand between the permitted and forbidden topics and to extend the publication possibilities, and for this aim he/she was expected to play on his/her professional and personal contacts too. This trait clearly points towards the domain of informality. Likewise, there are a few elements among the characteristics of the "good censor" that indicate activities of informal nature: negotiating on manuscripts, leaking out confidential information, counseling or protecting the editorial staff. Logically, these practices do not characterize just the censors' activity, but they emerge between the two concerned parties: the controllers and the controlled. The next sections will further nuance these informal nexuses and practices.

6.2 Informal information exchange, informal ties

When reading contemporary records and recollections, one faces a striking amount of references to "it is said", "it is whispered" or "I have heard from …", thus to information circulating through informal channels. It seems safe to argue that people looked for alternative and reliable sources of information as a counter-reaction to censorship and propaganda, as well as to the secretive nature of decision processes and outcomes.

These sources comprised the official media of other states too; however, concerning internal Romanian issues information was obtained primarily through informal channels.[230] Obviously, some information required at least one person to be in a proper formal position; otherwise he/she couldn't have access to it. As a piece of information was leaked out it could rapidly spread in the intricate and gossipy media-world.

This is not to say that editors-in-chief (and people involved in publishing in general) did not follow official media from Romania. On the one hand, they were stimulated by professional

[230] As alternative formal sources of information of editors-in-chief used foreign periodicals and books (Hungarian and Soviet, but also some Western European journals) acquired through formal ways (mail) or through personal networks, listened to official radios and TV's of neighboring countries (Hungary, Soviet Union, Bulgaria) or Radio Free Europe.

interest, curiosity and vanity: who is publishing what, public reflections on their journal or own publication, (lack of) appreciation, (lack of) criticism, overt press-attacks and so on. On the other hand, all people involved in publishing, especially editors-in-chief scrutinized the Party-press in order to document on current political matters. They paid special attention to reports on Party congresses, exposés of the general secretary of the Party, N. Ceauşescu, in order to trace the game of restrictions and concessions, but also to hunt for ideas that could be exploited in discussions over manuscripts.

Regarding its content, information going around through informal channels covered a wide domain: from natural calamities and anomalies in the functioning of the industry and educational system to the activity of the secret services (about informers, inquiries of the *Securitate*, events of search and seizure), the relationship with Party officials and their activity (calls to account, dispositions), personal qualities and attitudes of leading officials, classified disposals or disposals under preparation, everyday life of editorial offices and censorship practices (prohibitions, deletions, and so on). Some of this information could not be released at all, or could not be discussed in a critical tone in the official media. Yet it could not be informally debated with random people either.

Consequently, most of the information exchange took place through personal affiliations based on mutual confidence, via face to face encounters, phone calls and correspondence among members of the press, publishing intellectuals, and other personal acquaintances not being members of the guild. Meetings took place in entirely informal situations (such as personal visits, running across on the streets), but officially organized events (for instance, central meetings of the writers or editors-in-chief, or events of "meeting the readers") also offered the possibility for gatherings where people could receive and share information not circulated through official channels. Larger-scale meetings convoked by central organs offered an opportunity for editors working in the provinces to meet colleagues from

Bucharest and employees of the central organs, events that were capitalized to collect information about their paper, their own situation and general issues of concern, as well as to "arrange stuff". On the whole, informal links draw professionals together outside their workplace, allowing them to discuss their problems and options, to counsel each other on proper strategies that included proposals of who to contact from higher circles in case of problems.

It is very important to note that these contacts were not confined to the sector of colleagues in publishing, but personal relationships overlapped with formal relationships that span across formal organizations, namely, those existing between editorial offices, the censors' offices and the Party. In a sense, this was already given by the norm of interlocking memberships, the fact that editors-in-chief usually bore nomenclatural positions. Although one might had engage in carefully planned networking and nurturing nexuses out of sheer opportunism, a significant part of these relationships were based on sincere professional appreciation or personal sympathy. It is a fact that even a superficial personal contact was preferred to simple formal, bureaucratic nexus.[231]

So, due to their formal scope of duties and political positions, editors-in-chief were in constant contact with party and state officials even on the highest levels of the hierarchy. Through years of joint work and social contacts with leaders and their assistants, formal professional nexuses could evolve to personal acquaintances, even friendships. This applies

[231] In 1971, J. Méliusz (writer, vice president of the Romanian Writers' Union) warned Gáll that he should not delay anymore introducing his assistant at the "most important places" in order to prevent the situation that the first encounter takes place when he is called for a strafe. He proposed visits to: Dumitru Popescu (chief ideologist, secretary of the CC, president of CSCE), Dumitru Ghişe (vice president of CSCE), Pavel Nicolescu, Gheorghe Stroia (instructor at the CC), Paul Niculescu-Mizil (member of the CC Secretariat and the CC Executive Committee), Andrei Vela (deputy chief of the Press Department of CC), Miron Constantinescu (member of the CC Secretariat and deputy member of the CC Executive Committee), Mircea Maliţa (minister of education), yet Méliusz suggested to Gáll to consult J. Szász too (their common friend, that time the secretary of the Romanian Writers' Union) in this respect. (Letter of J. Méliusz to E. Gáll on the 7th of December, 1971)
To cite another example, former editor-in-chief L. Madaras explained that he could continue his predecessor's work at *Brassói Lapok* due to the contacts nurtured by the previous editor-in-chief with CC people. „These contacts lasted. Sándor Albert [former editor-in-chief] retired, and a short time after he passed away. I overtook these contacts. He [S. Albert] commanded and introduced me to everybody. With this background, he managed too to make a good newspaper …" (Madaras, 2010)

not just to the relationship between the editorial offices and the Party officials, but also to their relationships with the state officials of the GDPP/CPP and CSCE. Frequent encounters, closely located offices, and common objectives (like avoiding sanctions or a genuine concern to publish a piece of work) made some "good censors" appreciated partners of editorial offices.[232] It was also a possible scenario that personal contacts preceded the appearance of the formal nexus in the censorship system, for instance, knowing each other from the times of their studies, membership in the similar academic or political organizations. Turns and shifts in professional carrier, rotation and multiple memberships resulted that personal and professional networks grew, as well as cross-organizational informal networks.[233]

It has to be emphasized that changing the role of controlled to that of controller does not imply radical shifts in personal allegiances. Many officials who monitored publishing used to work in the media and continued to nurture cordial relationships with their former colleagues.[234] Naturally, the depth of these relationships depended to a large degree on the

[232] According to the interviews I conducted, the personal and professional relationship between local GDPP censors and editorial personnel was, in general, rather cordial. Even if the term "friendship" would not fit to each relationship, their professional nexus was mostly characterized by collegiality, correctness and patience. Though all GDPP collectives had their more "rigid" members, they also had the "good censors" liked by the editorial personnel. (Jámbor 2010, Raffai 2009, Pongrácz 2009, Almăjan 2009, Kühn 2010, Madaras 2010, Keszthelyi 2009, Muncian 2009, Wittstock 2010)
The importance of face to face encounter is literally mentioned in Cseke's memoir too. He notes that during his job as editor-in-chief at *Ifjúmunkás* they had no problems with censors in general, "tiny rashes were always cleared in a joint agreement through phone conversation." (Cseke 2009: 221) Nevertheless, already working at *Előre*, he shared his office with "one of the most experienced media controller from Bucharest" who was hired in 1977 specifically with the purpose to continue his job as a censor. Cseke writes about his new colleague as follows: "[…] the living censor I became to know was blender and more human than the bogey-man we imagined and as sometimes we used to depict. […] The censor was a quiet fellow worker. Sometimes, when we had nothing to do, he gladly spoke about his family, youth, professional experiences, the beginnings of the young workers' movement. He confessed that he knew Hungarian just on reading level, […] we introduced together, with one accord, incidental corrections to the typographic pages." (Cseke, 2009: 252–253)
[233] These relationships are illustrated with exceptional details in Ianoși's memoir, which includes short biographies, a focus on personal traits of persons invoked, as well as observations concerning professional and personal relationships among them. (Ianoși 2012)
[234] Here is another example from Cseke's experience. (Cseke 2009:281–289) He published a reportage in *A Hét* that equally outraged local readers and Party officials. Complaints were made to the editor-in-chief of *A Hét* (S. Huszár), the editor-in-chief of *Előre* (where Cseke was employed) and to the CC Press Department asking to sanction Cseke. The two editors-in-chief were rather irritated, but took no measures against him. Moreover, at the same time the head of CC Press department was protecting him too. About this official and their nexus Cseke writes: "[…] *he was leading for many years the Romanian youth journal, and we had our apartments in the same tower block, similar stairwell: he lived on the fourth floor, me above, on the fifth, and often he came up or I went down to him to discuss our shared concerns. Formerly we were both leaders of the youth organization,*

personal habitus of the actors involved. Yet apparently all editors-in-chief had a number of useful contacts, friends and "protectors" among politically influential persons, while the same official could be more or less hostile to others.[235]

These nexuses could be activated with different purposes. Perhaps the most frequently mentioned phenomena is that due to their networks editors-in-chief and other leaders of cultural institutions managed to intervene on behalf of their acquaintances in issues of employment, averting or attenuating sanctions, acquiring passports, recommendations, gaining and delivering medication, and so on. These networks were equally important from the point of managing everyday work of editorial offices, like securing proper amount of paper supplies and other raw materials used in the typographic industry, solving bureaucratic impasses and pressing the pace of approval-process or in protecting their staff.

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and our editorial offices were located close to each other at the Press House [*Complexul Casa Scânteii*]. He was a circumspect and master person of press, later entourage member to Ceauşescu, prim-secretary of the party – president of the state, press correspondent on his [Ceauşescu's] trips abroad, there he was remarked, and soon he became the press head of the Party." (Emphasis added, Cseke 2009: 288–289) Regarding the problematic issue "He asked me on the *familiar tenure of old companionship*, with no swaggering at all, what to do with me, because he cannot cope anymore with local complains and pressures." (Emphasis added, Cseke 2009:289) Eventually nothing happened. In an attempt to calm them, editor-in-chief Huszár visited local officials and a slightly critical article appeared in the newspaper against the reportage. The CC press department got a new head who dropped the issue.

[235] For instance, Koppándi (CC Press Department), who was in general considered by some of his contemporaries the biggest enemy of the Hungarian cultural life, was a close friend of Győző Hajdú, who was considered the biggest traitor. (JEF Dossier K571) However, he kept close contacts with a couple of editors-in-chief (Sándor Dali, Antal Albert, Sándor Albert), his former journalist colleagues at *Előre*, who managed to run decent local newspapers in the 1970's by benefiting from Koppándi's support. (Madaras 2010, Rebendics 2010, Koszta 2010)

Let me present some further examples: Gáll kept close contacts with M. Kallós, who was in charge with cultural and press matters for a long period at the local party apparatus in Cluj, being a "special lector" after 1977. In parallel, both were professors at the Faculty of Philosophy from Cluj. He considered Kallós a competent person for analyzing his journal and remarked his willingness to help in critical times such as issues related to the journal and Gáll's retirement. (Gáll 2003: 102, 106) In his diary he literally mentions two names as his "contacts to higher circles": V. Roman and M. Constantinescu. (Gáll 2003: 117) Old ties linked him to D. Ghişe as well, who was also a former colleague teaching at the university, secretary of propaganda of the region, vice chairman of the CSCE in the 1970's, and working in the central party apparatus in the 1980's. (See also the editors' footnote 31/1983 in Gáll 2003: 427)

S. Huszár mentions two names as his main "supporters": J. Fazekas (vice-prime minister of Romania from 1975 to 1989; Huszár wrote the speeches of Fazekas) and Dumitru Popescu "Dumnezeu" ("the God"). Huszár was demoted in 1983 based on made-up charges, and he links this event to the fact that Popescu was not there anymore to protect him. "In '83, he [D. Popescu] could not protect me anymore, he was already removed, despite the fact that till then he wrote Ceauşescu's speeches." Interview with S. Huszár in Bányai (2006: 241)

P. Bodor, journalist and director of the TV Hungarian department had as a contact M. Gere, his brother in law who was a CC member; A. Vela was his former classmate from the high-school, deputy of the Press Section of CC. Interview with P. Bodor in Bányai (2006: 77–78)

Nevertheless, personal ties were of paramount importance in the flow of information regarding the functioning of the censorship system, and had an important impact on its functioning too. G. Domokos, perhaps the most important chain in the relationship between editors from the provinces and cultural life from the capital city within the Hungarian cultural sphere said that a particular importance of staying close, for instance, to the Writers' Union was that: „[…] one could receive important information: what laws and party decisions are taken, what expectations are formulated in party circles, what is to be especially minded, regarding censorship for instance, what are the news within the literary circles in the capital city […]"[236] Peers used to share these information, as well as their grim experiences. But there were various other informal practices too, which were previously mentioned, like "good censors" leaking out relevant information, negotiating over manuscripts or pulling strings to foster the chances of a publication.

Before turning to the deeper analysis of informal practices however, I wish nuance the previously depicted picture concerning informal ties between media people and controlling forums by pinning down that neither the camp of media people, nor the controlling forums can be considered a unified camp. Professional rivalry but also political intrigues were frequent between editorial offices as well as within the staff, and restructuring the censorship system produced even more new conflicts.[237] The obvious discrepancy between the declared policy of censorship (that is, no more pre-publishing censorship) and the actual practice in the 1980's gave birth to dilemmas regarding the acceptance of external intervention into the publication process. The main tormenting questions were if they defended strenuously enough their position against the intervention of controlling forums, do the compromises pay off or not, and so on. (Gáll 2003: 60) This was a recurrent topic of disputes between more

[236] Interview with G. Domokos in Bányai (2006: 151)
[237] For exmple, within the Hungarian media the permanent denouncers were considered to be editors-in-chief D. Szilágy (*Előre*) and H. Győző (*Igaz Szó*). For inside struggles see the example of E. Gáll and the deputy editor-in-chief Gy. Rácz at *Korunk* (Gáll, 2003).

cautious and rebellious staff, and although there was virtually no editor-in-chief that was not involved in making compromises, all were quick in pointing to the "cowards".[238]

Furthermore, there was always a strain between the state officials and the party officials in charge with supervision. On the one hand, this is due to the status of the Party as the supreme forum of control that meted out the penalties too. As a result of the post-publishing control, both the editorial offices and the censors could be sanctioned for not properly applying censorship norms. On the other hand, forceful interventions of the Central Committee into pre-publishing control after 1977 also gave birth to tensions and rivalry between the two controlling forums. This is primarily due to the fact that parallel reading did not always result similar opinions on the text. The CC supervision was a sensitive issue for the employees of the CSCE, among others because they felt questioned in their professional competence.[239]

[238] After striking the following balance for *Korunk* in 1983: 60 articles (240 pages) removed mostly on CC level, and a quickly deteriorating situation that forced Gáll to retire in 1984, he is extremely offended by the refusal of publishing his article in *Utunk* (literary journal), and calls in his diary the editor-in-chief L. Létay „coward and opportunist" for accepting the newly issued CC disposition, according to which *Utunk* is entitled to publish only belletristic. (Gáll 2003: 121, 150) In his letter to L. Létay on the 15th of April, 1985, Gáll urges him to deploy all his influence as a CC member and the secretary of the Writers' Union to abolish this provision. As Gáll sumarizes his main point at the end of the letter: "I know very well what does this mean in terms of stress, responsibility and nerves. Nevertheless, you have a considerable political capital and credence in official circles, and you could/should capitalize it better."

[239] For an incident occurred between CSCE and CC RCP officials see the letter of S. Huszár to Gáll on the 25th of October, 1982. Since this letter mirrors several phenomena discussed up to this point in the chapter (for instance, informal information exchange between the controllers and the controlled, grapevine communication between peers, "good censors"), I shall cite almost the entire text.

"Ernő!

You should know the followings: Tamási [Gáll's article on the writer Á. Tamási] (a month now) was removed from the journal because of Koppándi [official of the CC press department]. A kind of justification [was] that the Council [CSCE] (Júlia Rădulescu, Radu Constantinescu) should inform itself better. As a consequence, these – because they were also humiliated by Koppándi's methods – translated your writing and presented to I. T. Ștefănescu, first deputy president [at CSCE], who regarded it as good. Júlia called me on Friday, that she was called by Radu from the Central Committee, and asked me to go to the Council, because soon he is arriving there too. That was the time when we discussed your manuscript. This means that he discussed it at the White House too. He didn't tell me with whom, but it seems that it was with Vincze (as a participant), because the observations […] indicate that. If this is true, then it means that they challenge Koppándi. When I was up there I was told several times that K's methods are humiliating. So there is an issue that can be used as occasion serves: the Council rebelled against Koppándi. Of course, we have to be careful because this thin footbridge can collapse in no time. The moral strength of these guys is, unfortunately, low.

By the way, I have also heard from them, that Florescu [Eugen Florescu] leaves the [CC] press department (according to some, he is going to be editor-in-chief at *Scânteia*, TV-director according to others). It is also said that Mitea [Constantin Mitea] would replace him, which is good, because M. is a straight person. Naturally, in a new situation, we should immediately bring up the Koppándi-issue.

We should talk indeed.

Doing something would be even better.

Having this clarified, in what follows I shall discuss informal practices emerging in the censorship system classified according to the revised conceptualized typology of informal practices. The presentation proceeds in two subsections according to their impact on the working of the formal system: informal practices that stretch the borders of censorship and informal practices that reinforce these norms, that is, informal practices that undermine (competing) and those that contribute to the effectiveness of censorship (complementary, substitutive and accommodating), respectively.

6.3 Four types of informal practices

6.3.1 Competing informal practices. Stretching the borders of censorship

As M. M. Bunea, former reporter at *Scânteia* succinctly worded the essence of this practice: "You looked for proper persons in proper positions to promote materials you believed in."[240] Sometimes, due to informal contacts and practices, the norms of censorship could be favourably interpreted, and as a consequence, certain manuscripts could be published or were protected from interdicting their circulation. On the one hand, this implies discussions, negotiations between the "good editors" and the "good censors", the "good censor" closing an eye before or after publication, as well as the commonly known activity of pulling strings on the other, that is targeting the proper persons who could intervene (directly or through their own contacts) on behalf of the texts.[241] Acquiring information on secretly prepared

Greetings:
Huszárúr [Mister Huszár]" Names in square brackets were included into the text by the editors of the volume, whereas I added the official function.

[240] Interview with M. Bunea in Boboc (2010).

[241] It also happened that the weakest chain in the censorship apparatus was targeted. "Try to make your manuscript reach Z [CSCE employee]. He is not too smart and you will reach an agreement with him. He doesn't usually change much in a book." – advises editor Mugur the author Verona about a problematic volume of poems. (Verona 1998: 180) The contact person Verona finds is one of his colleagues at the broadcasting corporation, who was in the same faculty cohort with the head of the directorate dealing with publishing houses at CSCE. The argument transmitted to the CSCE official is that Verona prefers Z. because he is quick. "The book reaches Z. indeed, and it returns intact to the publishing house." (*ibid.*)

decisions was equally important, because countermeasures could be taken before the final verdict was born. These practices qualify for the competing category of informal practices as they imply resisting formal rules and procedures in a clear attempt to divert expected formal outcomes, hence, one can consider that the effectiveness of censorship was decreased.

The following examples for personalized networks used for influencing pre-publishing and post-publishing control illustrate these well. Actually, the first story to be presented here ended up with a complete fiasco. However, most probably precisely because of the failure it was preserved both in the correspondence and diary notes of the editor-in-chief involved, Gáll namely; furthermore, it is a proper example of a case when more people were mobilized on behalf of one piece of journal article.[242] It was an interview for the *Korunk* with the well-known writer J. Méliusz to be published at the beginning of 1980, which implied some personal recalls of the Second World War, issues following the Second Vienna Award, and the labour movement from the 1950's. According to the Party-dispositions in force, this topic required special approvals, implying a report issued by the Party History Institute. The "terrible tug of war" (according to Gáll) happened in the following way: the editor-in-chief agreed with the employees of the CSCE (L. Hegedűs and B. Szász) that instead of contacting the Institute from Bucharest the editorial office would approach an employee of the local branch of the Institute (Gh. I. Bodea), who – according to the calculus of the editor – could have written a proper report, a "good" one in the sense presented in the first section of this chapter. Besides the editor-in-chief, the CSCE instructors were contacted by the interviewee and a journalist, who formerly was high-ranking official of the CSCE (Zs. Gálfalvi), both relatively close friends of the editor-in-chief. All agreed that the local report would suffice to cover the CSCE. Apparently, the CC official in charge with checking the journal (S.

[242] See the letter of J. Méliusz to E. Gáll on the 4th of February, 1980, and E. Gáll's response on the 27th of February, 1980. See also Gáll 2003: 60–62. Information presented in this story were checked and completed by an interview with József Aradi, former editor at *Korunk*, who edited and submitted the article at stake. (Aradi, 2012)

Koppándi) was also informed about this decision, furthermore, the local historian accepted to make the report. After all settled, the editor-in-chief was still hesitating (among others because of an approaching party control) and contacted again the CSCE, who eventually decided to follow the safer course: they proposed to request the approval of the central Institute. The hesitation resulted that the CSCE officials started to suspect that the article is hiding some "terrible bomb" and the editor-in-chief was trying to shift the responsibility for that to the CSCE.[243] In the end, the editor-in-chief decided not to challenge CSCE, but wait for the report issued by the central Institute. Typically, withholding the article from publishing stirred a storm of indignation on the side of the journalist and the interviewee. The verdict of the Institute arrived a couple of month later, and was showed to the editor-in-chief by one of the officials contacted before (B. Szász). In Gáll's interpretation: "There are qualifiers marking the good old 50s. It is not about Romania, does not follow the Party line, moreover, as it [the conversation] would suggest that the period after the 23rd of August [1944] was worse than Horthy's fascism. Otherwise, it is not allowed to write about Stalinism, Trotskism and the Catholic bishop Á. Márton…" (Gáll 2003: 65)

The next example is a success-story from the domain of book publishing. More exactly, it is about the monumental project of Attila T. Szabó's *Erdélyi magyar szótörténeti tár* [Historical Thesaurus of Transylvanian Hungarian], for what the publishing started in 1976 at the Kriterion Publishing House. After sever pre-publishing control,[244] the work and the author was repeatedly attacked and saved by chains of interventions that included coincidental and permanent links.[245]

[243] According to Méliusz, the interviewee involved.
[244] The *Thesaurus* contained as examples sentences cited from contemporary written sources. According to the editors working at the publishing house, these primary sources could not have been separately published, but entire texts could be reconstituted by matching together sentences included in the *Thesaurus*. The controllers figured it out too, and commanded the rarefaction of examples. Interview with L. Csik by Bányai (2006: 93–94).
[245] About intervening on behalf of the author see the interview with L. Demény in Bányai (2006: 123).

In 1980, somebody denounced in front of the national Ideological Committee the second volume of the *Thesaurus,* published in 1978.[246] The Ideological Committee was led by the Party's ideological secretary, while the members were the editors-in-chief of the main Party journals, people of the CSCE, the Union of Communist Youth, and so on. The secretary of propaganda of the Central Committee of UCY was also a member of this committee, but he did not speak Hungarian, so he privately asked J. Varga, who was formerly his subaltern at the CC UCY, now editor-in-chief at *Ifjúmunkás*, to make a short report on this issue. Having to complete the job but knowing nothing about this lexicon, Varga despairingly contacted G. Cseke, the former editor-in-chief of his journal, now deputy editor-in-chief at the central Party daily *Előre*, and under strict confidentiality showed him the text of denunciation and asked him to make the report. Cseke urgently wrote it, arguing with the entire propagandistic arsenal on behalf of the project. Yet, instead of one copy, Cseke wrote three: one for Varga, one for G. Domokos, general director of the Kriterion publishing house, and one for Dezső Szilágyi, his own boss, who was also a member of the ideological committee. Domokos, having no previous knowledge about the offence, immediately contacted his trusted friend, Valter Roman, that time director of the Political Publishing house and a member of the ideological committee. The meeting of the ideological committee took place, but the request for stopping the circulation of the published volume was rejected. A couple of years later, however, another volume was contested in front of the same committee.[247] Allegedly, this time it was denounced by the previously mentioned D. Szilágyi. The already finished condemnatory speech of the CC secretary arrived to P. Bodor, the director of the Hungarian department of the TV through M. Gere, who was a CC member, but also his brother in law. The speech of Gere was prepared by Bodor, and as a consequence of this intervention the CC secretary recalled his report.

[246] The upcoming events are described in Cseke's memoir. (Cseke 2009: 27–30)
[247] Interview with P. Bodor in Bányai (2006: 60).

Activating contacts to intervene on behalf of particular texts or the editorial offices sometimes was successful, other times not. For instance, as the control of *Korunk* became tighter and more and more chaotic in 1983–1984, after consulting a couple of friends, E. Gáll tried to obtain the support of a few influential acquaintances, among them D. Ghişe and C. Mitea.[248] The first person, Ghişe was approached as an academic, a publishing colleague. Gáll devoted large parts of his letter to praise Ghişe's last university presentation as a guest lecturer and his newest book, and recommended him one of his own freshly published articles. At the end of the letter, Gáll asked Ghişe to inform about the situation of his journal the "comrade rector" of the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy, D. Popescu, "who seemed always receptive" in what concerns their problems. Their political statuses are nowhere mentioned in the letter, yet both were senior party officials, and Popescu („Popescu "the God") was one of the most influential figures in press issues.

The letter sent to Mitea contained a detailed (about 3000 words long) description of the major problems faced by *Korunk*. Mitea was one of Ceauşescu's counsellors on press issues;[249] however, he was regarded by editors-in-chief a "straight person",[250] who also appreciated Gáll's work, as Gáll learned from his acquaintances working in central party offices.[251] On a face to face meeting marked by Mitea's "complaisant" and "benevolent" attitude, Mitea and Gáll agreed that the latter should put everything on paper, and based on that Mitea was going to inform Ceauşescu. (Gáll 2003: 124)

[248] Gáll's letter to Dumitru Ghişe on the 3rd of January, 1984. Gáll's letter to Constantin Mitea on the 26th of February, 1984. See also Gáll 2003: 124–126, 130.
[249] On Mitea's carrier see Christian Levant 2006.
[250] See Huszár's letter to Gáll on the 25th of October, 1982 cited almost integrally at the end of the 6.2 section. Some Romanian journalists also recall Mitea as a "brick" (*pâinea lui Dumnezeu*). (Levant 2006)
[251] József Illés was working at the CC Press Department and he repeatedly assured Gáll that C. Mitea "earnestly respects" him, which stimulated Gáll to contact Mitea. (Gáll 2003: 119)

Eventually, all these attempts failed, and because of the "stifling mistrust" manifested by the controlling forums, Gáll decided to resign.[252] Nevertheless, this seems to add to the general tendency of the 1980's: personal contacts became less and less useful, the latitudes shrank on every level of the hierarchy.

6.3.2 Complementary, substitutive and accommodating informal practices. Reinforcing the norms of censorship

When formal ties and positive personal relationships overlap, thus the superior and inferior, the controller and the controlled were friends, good acquaintances or just sympathetic to each other, their informal cooperation could also reinforce the norms of censorship. Due to the nature of their relationship, the "command" could be easily transubstantiate into "forewarning", "notifying" or "help" interpreted mutually as benevolent gestures. Moreover, psychological pressures could also play a role in implementing control.[253] Yet in the course of informal personal and professional contacts the editors-in-chief received directions that were entirely in line with those that could have been also transmitted and enforced through formal channels. In other words, these informal practices simply supplemented or replaced the formal means of censorship; consequently, they can be considered complementary or substitutive informal practices.

These benevolent acts of informing and counselling each other were present among peers too, and it seems safe to argue that all these information could ultimately contribute to the self-censorship of authors and editorial offices. Relying on friends, colleagues and social

[252] See the letter addressed to Mitea, and diary entries form 1983 and 1984 (Gáll 2003), and Gáll's letter to J. Szász on the 11th of September 1984. Gáll consulted his friends on this situation, mentioning in his diary Zs. Gálfalvi, A. Horváth, and G. Domokos. (Gáll 2003: 124)

[253] M. Sorescu, a well-known poet, writer and translator recalls: "But the censor often happened to be a friend. He would come to you complaining that his career would be destroyed if you did not get rid of this passage or that one. When an official edited my text, I got terribly angry. But when the same person came begging that he would be ruined if I did not change something, asking me to understand him, saying that those things might be published later, in a better context, then I found it hard not to give in and give up the passage in question." (Sorescu 1998: 92) For similar arguments coming from censors see Verona's (1998: 187) account. Apparently similar considerations occurred on the side of authors towards the staff of editorial offices, to protect editors from possible retaliation namely. (Bittel 1998: 163)

acquaintances as a source of information and advice was recorded by many persons; however, their contribution to self-censorship is rarely openly acknowledged.[254] Still, as G. Domokos said about the mechanism of self-censorship: „ [...] based on the example of his/her friends or peers, or from rumours, he/she [the author] knew the prevailing winds, what goes now and what rather does not, partly or entirely, what are those topics or style that are allowed." He points to the fact that these information flows also allowed to the spread of information about "[…] methods and tricks that make possible a manuscript to be published […]", and succinctly concludes that"[…] these were taken into account and pondered – this is self-censorship".[255]

As it was already mentioned when constructing the profile of the "good censor", in order to "alleviate" editorial work, that is, to overcome superfluous work of journalists or not to hinder work at typographies, "good censors" told them in advance about forbidden topics, names and works, in spite of the clear commands not to share some of these information. It also happened that censors communicated confidential information during the control procedure. Given that the censor was considered to transmit higher orders, furthermore, censors and editors shared a sense of connivance when talking about confidential information, journalists and editors more readily or light-heartedly complied with the norms communicated. It is readily observable that these practices involved violating internal working dispositions of the censors' office, yet it clearly fostered organizational aims. Hence, these practices qualify for the accommodating category of informal practices.

Let me present an example of gestures considered to be helpful acts coming from a high ranking CC official in charge with monitoring the local press. This person, József Illés,

[254] "We talked about this aspect many times. Could this or that text be accepted by the censors?" (Doinaș 1998), or Ianoși's observation about the meeting of "muscovite literates" (including Domokos, who attended the Maxim Gorky Institute in Moscow) that implied "[…] exchanging opinions related to their current work, at the CSCE, editorial offices and journals, cinematography and literature." (Ianoși 2012: 399)
[255] Interview with Domokos in Bányai (2006: 153).

originated from a Transylvanian town and nurtured particularly good relationships with the Hungarian editorial staff of local Party newspapers from Arad, Timiş and Bihor counties, but he also used to collect information and share it with other editors who contacted him with this purpose.[256] Regarding his role in leading party structures, he mentions in a very bitter self-critical article published after 1989 that he did not leave his job because, however limited, this way he could help in some instances. This is a rather typical excuse formulated by former officials, however, it worth paying attention to the specific acts enlisted by him: "Oh, that help with what I beguiled myself, it was nothing. Frequently just a more human, sympathetic voice, a well-intentioned piece of advice, a hint, a signature, forcing somebody's assent. Bagatelle." (Illés 1990)

Yet the former editors and journalists recall his help definitely in more appreciative terms:

> "Jóska Illés, a man from Oradea, was a very decent person. He was in charge with Hungarian newspapers. *He was taking such a good care of us...* In case he learned about something, something that happened somewhere, he immediately called us. *He called me and Gherasim* [editor-in-chief at *Szabad Szó*, Timişoara] *out of his own initiative, and warned us to be careful with this and that*." – emphasized R. Péterfi, editor-in-chief of *Vörös Lobogó* in Arad. (Péterfi 2010)

> "[Local] Party organs preferred to announce the *Crişana* [Romanian local Party newspaper, Oradea] about the topic of the editorial, they have kind of forgotten about us [the Hungarian editorial office]. Then, *when F.I.* [Ferenc Illés] *became editor-in-chief we could learn easier on the topic of the day, because his brother* [József Illés namely] *worked at the Press Committee of the Party in Bucharest. He called his brother there to know what was discussed on that day, and hence we found out too what was the topic of the editorial*."– recalls a journalist of *Fáklya* from Oradea. (Emphasis and explanations added, Plainer 2012: 9)

Besides indicating a close cooperation based on informal ties between the controlling forum and the editorial offices, the two quotes point to two different, but interrelated phenomena. While the first shows some gestures of the controlling officials gratefully accepted by editorial offices, the second already suggests to a preventive strategy employed by editorial offices in order to avoid failure and potential criticism.

[256] As it was already mentioned, Illés offered information to E. Gáll regarding the situation of *Korunk*, clarified gossips about his retirement and plans of removing one of his editors (Lajos Kántor), or as it was mentioned in the previous section, he assured Gáll that C. Mitea "earnestly respects" him. (Gáll 2003: 102)

A distinctive mark of the preventive strategy is that the moves were taken before the formal control procedure started, that is, before the manuscript was officially forwarded to the persons in charge with checking it. One can include here two types of action: counselling with the censors, and trying to obtain advance approval, respectively. The second type implies taking one step further from counselling, because it resulted in some sort of informal agreement too. Obviously, editorial offices could obtain information or approval through formal channels too, so informal practices had their formal counterparts. This makes them to be evaluated as substitutive informal practices.

So, out of their own initiative editors sometimes contacted trusted censors with their manuscript long before submitting it for checking and adjusted their writing according to the changes proposed by them.[257] As M. Milca, former journalist of *Scînteia Tineretului* noticed: "Interventions of the activists from the press department could also occur when the texts where sent by us in order to insure that their point of view is in line with what we write."[258] Or here is a more concrete example that indicates the fact that Gáll personally discussed with a censor regarded by him a "benevolent" and "decent" person, who pointed to the objectionable parts of an article, which were modified by Gáll accordingly.[259] In a letter sent to the publisher, Gáll emphasized that most of the pieces included in the submitted volume were already published, and the new writings, including the article mentioned before, carefully cut, and not simply by reclining upon personal intuitions, but according to the advice of a professional.[260] The point of the recommendation is that the manuscript is "clear" and the checking procedure should not be problematic, whereas the request is to start editing as soon as possible.

[257] See Gáll's letter to G. Domokos on the 1st of March, 1978.
[258] Interview with journalist M. Milca in Boboc (2010).
[259] About these appreciative remarks see Gáll 2003: 95, 124, and the letter sent to J. Szász on the 11th of September, 1984.
[260] Gáll's letter to G. Domokos on the 1st of March, 1978.

From the letter to the publisher:

> "For your knowledge [G. Domokos, director of the publishing house], 80–90% percent of the texts from this volume are from the old volume, and except for two writings the new materials were already published too. A section from that about stereotypes was published in *Utunk*, and a different version of it in *Valóság* from Budapest. *I reworked it, and though there was nothing to object in that either, I radically deleted everything that could possibly irritate somebody's hypersensitivity. In the last months I talked about the article with Fülesi, who was the censor of the book those times, and in that quality he notified me that they revised their stance, and with the price of some modification the article is publishable here* [in Romania] *too. Now the censor does not exist anymore, but I performed myself the self-mutilation* [sic!]." (Emphasis added)

Ensuring with controllers was also routinely practiced by editors. This consists in approaching the person in charge with checking to get advance approval for writing on a questionable topic. Sometimes informal agreements emerged between the controller and the controlled: if elaborating the topic within the limits they came to an understanding, the controller will not raise objections against the manuscript during the checking procedure. These agreements could be used as a safety net in case the writing was hampered on different levels and forums of the formal control procedure.

Although the bargaining could be exploited to bend the borders of censorship in favour of the editorial office, these informal procedures also replicated formal control. Informal advice on what to modify or cut were strictly followed because, on the one hand, the interaction itself was based on the voluntary involvement of the editors, on the other hand, they were careful to stick to the agreement and not to spoil these relationships.

As former editor-in-chief Madaras (2010) of *Brassói Lapok* recalled, he and some of his colleagues from other journals routinely visited Koppándi at home and discussed articles they intended to publish. In case local Party officials objected they could argue that it was already discussed at the CC level. However, they were careful to ensure themselves on the side of the local officials too. After agreeing even on the details editors were "very attentive not to offend them" and were "all bent to observe [the indications], because this way they could not pick at [the editors]". (Madaras 2010)

As it was already noted, these insurance schemes could operate through formal channels too. In order to overcome waste of energy and time, editors-in-chief could and indeed used to inquire controlling officials whether or not they are allowed to publish on certain topics.[261] For instance, before the 40th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp from Buchenwald, Gáll (himself a survivor of Buchenwald) asked Koppándi "whether or not it was any deportation according to them", but Koppándi did not consider himself the competent forum to decide on this issue and directed Gáll to the CSCE. So, Gáll wrote an official letter to the director of the CSCE proposing this topic for one of the forthcoming issues of his journal. (Gáll 2003: 130–131)

Having illustrated the three types of informal practices that reinforced the norms of censorship two final remarks seem at place here. First, the examples in this section illustrate that editors-in-chief could obtain information or approval both through formal and informal ways. Hints on acceptable and forbidden topics were transmitted by peers and by controllers, yet most of the relevant information could have been received through formal channels too. Why preferring informal substitutive practices to formal ones? It seems safe to argue that, on the one hand, control was rendered more acceptable and manageable on a psychological level. On the other hand, one of the benefits of communicating off the record with more or less trusted officials was that there were no traces left of the possible "ideological-political deviations" of the author/editor/editorial office concerned, which otherwise could be later invoked against them.

Second, one can observe that there are differences in the level of awareness concerning the effects of these pursuits. Informal warnings coming from controlling officials or peers (complementary practices) and leaking out confidential information (accommodating

[261] The closing paragpraph of the document entitled *List comprising data and information not to be published* distributed to editorial offices in the 1980's contained phone numbers to the Directorate of literature and publishing of the CSCE where editors could inquire about problematic issues.

practices) were intended to help and definitely not to strengthen the censorship. Moreover, it left the players with the impression that it is a felicitous activity run at the back of power-holders. Contrarily, counselling and ensuring with controllers (substitutive practices) may have implied a more conscious alignment to the formal expectations. Nevertheless, all these practices were voluntarily employed within the coercive controlling system, and regardless of the intentions they contributed to the effective functioning of the formal system.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter uncovered some components of the social fabric and informal mechanisms through which the effectiveness of the Soviet-type communist censorship was maintained. Instead of focusing on the strains and conflicts between the controllers and the controlled as the dominant narrative on the functioning of Soviet-type censorship would suggest, or describing their behaviour based on the instructions enclosed in official documents, the analysis was focused on the positive relationships and the informal practices emerging out of their personalized ties.

Interview data, memoirs and contemporary documents concerning editorial life and censorship practices revealed that the administrative structures of censorship were heavily impregnated by informal practices; furthermore, people involved in publishing tended to develop similar and rather stable responses to uncertainties and dangers related to formal censorship norms and practices. Informal practices built on trust centred relationships served with extra information about official expectations and the employment of ambiguous censorship norms on the one hand. On their own turn these information contributed to censorship executed by editorial offices or self-censorship proper. On the other hand, good personal relationships were used to collect information about the secretive and intricate censorship process, and to influence particular censorship decisions.

The most important and interesting empirical result of the analysis that part of the practices that were based on positive interpersonal ties contributed to the effectiveness of censorship. Although one would be inclined to believe that positive nexuses were primarily used to undermine the effective implementation of the censorship policy, actually there were various informal mechanisms based on the same type of relationship that enhanced the functioning of censorship. To put it sharply, these practices actually had the same effect as the negative relationships and the activity of extremely cautious or devoted censors, or committed leaders of media and cultural institutions for that matter. Of course, it cannot be claimed that cutting too much corresponded to the actual expectations of the Party leaders, yet the grip of censorship was surely sustained by these practices, and were tolerated by the regime in general.

Returning to the theoretical contribution of the analysis, I must recall first that informal practices were categorized according to a descriptive typology of informal practices, which represents a combined version of three typologies available in the domain of sociological economics and comparative political science – see Nee and Ingram (1998), Lauth (2000) and Helmke and Levitsky (2006) namely –, all being initially developed to capture informal "institutions". Contrarily to the prevailing perspective in the political science that is centred on (formal and informal) "institutions", I proposed to focus on the conceptually broader phenomena of "practices", and argued – inspired by Radniz (2011), O'Donnell (2006), Ledeneva (2006) – that even if informal occurrences in the policy domain under scrutiny do not cluster into institutions, they can considerably influence policy outcomes. This way it was also opened up the theoretical possibility that the actors switch between different informal ways to follow implying contradictory impacts on the functioning of the formal system, a phenomenon that is inconsistent with the logic of informal institutions.

In the case of Romanian censorship, I have found all four different types of informal practices simultaneously appearing, out of which one undermined, whereas the other strengthened the functioning of the formal system. The competing informal practices, such as negotiations between the "good censors" and "good editors-in-chief" and intervening through personalized networks on behalf of the manuscripts could result in expanding the publication possibilities, in saving certain texts from interdiction. But there were the three other types of informal practices that furthered the formal scopes. Complementary informal practices contributed to the spread of information regarding censorship norms via peers and "good censors". Some of these practices qualify to the accommodative category, because censors might have even infringed formal rules in an attempt to "help" editorial offices. Finally, there were the substitutive informal practices, such as the preventive strategies employed by editors-in-chief, which worked in parallel to formal control and ultimately doubled official command.

It is important to remark that these activities, despite being widely used and, as a consequence, exerting an impact on the functioning of the censorship system, could not have been described in terms of consistently enforced informal rules. Therefore, an approach based on informal institutions would have provided only a partial account. Rather than consistently enforcing certain informal rules that would have undermined or strengthened the employment of censorship, actors engaged in informal practices based on practical considerations, and consciously or unconsciously their activities had opposite impacts on censorship they disliked: sometimes they reinforced, other times undermined it.

Furthermore, the revised typology proved to be applicable for informal practices too, in spite of the fact that there were no formal and informal rules to compare. Still, I could assess the relationship of informal practices to formal rules and procedures, and place different practices with relative ease into the cells of the typology.

The increased analytical power of the revised typology might be illustrated while considering that by accepting the typology of informal institutions offered by Helmke and Levitsky (2006), these activities would have automatically (yet not without problems) fallen either into the complementary or the accommodating categories. The main feature of the relevant formal institution is constant, effective namely, as actors surely believe that non-compliance with censorship norms will be punished. Consequently, the practices have to be categorized depending whether or not the formal and informal outcomes are divergent or convergent.

Informal practices	**Helmke and Levitsky**	**Revised typology**
1. Spread of information regarding censorship norms via peers and "good censors"	Complementary	Complementary
2. Preventive strategies employed by editors-in-chief: counseling and ensuring with controllers	Complementary*	Substitutive
3. Censors communicating confidential information	Accommodating**	Accommodating
4. Negotiations over texts and intervening through personalized networks on behalf of the manuscripts	Accommodating***	Competing

*Problematic placement, as these practices do not "fill in gaps", but actually double formal procedures. This is captured by the revised model based on Lauth's (2000) understanding of substitutive informal institutions.

**Problematic placement, as these practices clearly imply formal rule infringement, which was not intended by Helmke and Levitsky to be incorporated into this category. The similar label of the revised typology implies a redefinition of this category based on Nee and Ingram's (1998) approach (i.e. formal rules are infringed and more effective functioning of the formal institutions).

****idem*. The label of the revised typology captures the fact that certain formal rules are infringed, which decreases the effectiveness of formal institutions.

To summarize, the analysis reported in this chapter has a twofold contribution. On the one hand, it provided novel empirical insights into the functionig of the Soviet-type censorship systems. On the other hand, it substantiated theoretical claims regarding the study of

informality, more precisely, the usefuleness of a focus on informal practices (instead of, or next to informal institutions), and the applicability of the proposed typology of informal practices.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Censorship revisited

Although the Soviet-type censorship systems have been extensively studied, the micro-foundations of their effective functioning have been remained largely unexplored. In this dissertation, the underlying formal organizational solutions and everyday informal practices contributing to the effective implementation of the censorship policy have been presented and discussed in detail.

I went in quest of these issues by observing that the administration of the censorship system is actually a considerable challenge. Monitoring cultural activity implies indefinite variety of inputs and low repetitiveness in task execution by the nature of the products subjected to evaluation. In the case of Soviet-type censorship, the censors' job was rendered even more difficult by targeting control over all public information on the one hand, and vaguely worded and constantly changing proscriptive and prescriptive censorship norms on the other. The smooth and effective operation required that operative employees shared a common understanding of the censorship norms, otherwise diverging interpretations would have resulted in severe inconsistencies, that is, ineffective functioning. Considering the high performance of the Soviet-type censorship systems under the circumstances of poorly formulated policy prescriptions, as well as the important role played by censorship in sustaining the state socialist regimes, how the system managed to administer uncertainties concerning the actual implementation of the censorship norms, and how the main actors coped with it is surely a provocative and pertinent object of study.

Guided by the general theoretical claim that from the point of view of organizational performance both formal and informal mechanisms matter, the present dissertation

contributed to a deeper understanding of the functioning of the Soviet-type censorship systems by answering the following questions:

1. What kind of formal organizational mechanisms were employed in order to maintain effectiveness under the circumstances of vague guiding norms? Was the formal design of the censorship system appropriate for implementing the censorship policy?

2. What kind of informal mechanisms functioned within the censorship system and how did they relate to the effectiveness of the censorship?

The intensive analysis of the Romanian censorship system (1949–1989) resulted that the effective implementation of the censorship policy was maintained by a complex set of formal organizational coordination and control mechanisms that were appropriately designed to meet critical contingencies, as well as by various informal practices based on positive interpersonal ties between the main actors involved in the censorship process. These findings complement accounts of the functioning and effectiveness of the Soviet-type censorship system primarily focused on macro institutional and organizational configurations. Furthermore, the results shed light on practices constituting the domain of "self-censorship", which is also claimed by the literature to represent an important factor contributing to the effectiveness of censorship. Finally, by focusing on positive interpersonal ties and allied practices, the findings considerably alter the dominant narrative centered on negative relationships between the controllers and the controlled, yet they also show that many interactions based on positive ties had the same effects as their negative counterparts: raising the performance of the censorship system.

It is also worth to underline that the analysis was triggered by shifting the conventional perspective on the ambiguity of censorship norms as an opportunity for political intervention to a way of regarding it an administrative challenge. Next, it implied breaking with the dichotomous approach prevailing in the literature of censorship about the relationship and

interactions of the "censors" and "authors", and looking beyond the stereotypical "oppressors" vs. "victims" interpretive framework, and their "fight" respectively. Finally, the inquiry incorporated a systematic analysis of both formal and informal components of the censorship process. The research was designed to combine two methodological approaches, that is, institutional analysis and historical organizational ethnography, which involved processing data derived from official and subjective (private, unofficial) primary sources. Eventually, changes in perspective over main themes related to censorship and the research methods employed brought my findings close to the everyday realities of the censorship processes, and yielded insights that are rather counterintuitive and nonconventional from the standpoint of the mainstream approach in the study of Soviet-type censorship.

The dissertation worked through the two topics proposed to be explored, the ground level formal and informal mechanisms namely, by presenting the research design in Chapter 2, setting a theoretical framework for each branch of empirical analysis, which were discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, and reporting on the empirical analyses, which were also enclosed in two separate chapters, in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 respectively. In the following section, I will first briefly reiterate core theoretical arguments and corresponding particular empirical findings, while in the section afterwards, I will outline the implications of my findings.

7.2 Theoretical perspectives and empirical findings

For a systematic analysis of the formal organizational solutions employed in the censorship system, I used mid-level theories developed in the vein of the structural contingency approach to organizational design (e.g. Galbraith (1974), Van De Ven *et al.* (1976), Argote (1982), Ouchi (1979), Kirsch and Choudhury (2010), Liu *et al.* (2010). (See Chapter 3) The central tenet of the structural contingency approach is that for high organizational

performance there must be a fit between organizational structure and situational factors, and the theories are specifically elaborated to assess specific organizational mechanisms from the point of view of appropriateness to specific organizational challenges. Therefore, they offered proper foundations to evaluate the coordination and control mechanisms utilized within the organizations involved in censorship, whereby the task uncertainty was claimed to represent the critical contingency. The challenge in developing the proper theoretical framework was to bring together claims substantiated by empirical research.

The focus of the empirical analysis was narrowed down to a single organization (General Directorate of Press and Printing/Committee of Press and Printing, 1949–1977), which constituted the last linchpin in the pre-publication censorship process, and even within this office to the activity of censors working in the provinces. The inquiry consisted of processing various internal materials circulated within GDPP/CPP and interviews with its former employees by focusing on formal solutions by which the individual work of censors was coordinated and their activity controlled. The analysis of official records and interviews resulted that there was a remarkable fit between the critical contingency and specific organizational mechanisms, even by taking into account that, in everyday practice, several organizational tools were not applied as formally required. (See Chapter 5)

Effective policy implementation was furthered by the hierarchical structure that included a specialized department to instruct and monitor local censors. Information regarding updated censorship expectations was centralized, and then distributed through various methods adjusted to the requirements of the tasks to be executed, that is, to routine and non-routine task of censors, implying low or higher levels of uncertainty, which require impersonal or personal (coordination of feedback or mutual adjustment) modes of coordination, respectively. Impersonal methods of coordination were materialized in various forms of directives (Circulars/Dispositions, Booklet of dispositions, Information Bulletin), which

comprised clearly definable issues pertaining to the field of "state secrets and other information that were not indicated to be publicly available", and the documents entitled Notes, which were designed to promote good practices in the more challenging domain of political-ideological problems. Personal coordination (coordination by feedback or mutual adjustment) consisted by direct guidance provided by superiors, whereas group coordination mode was realized by large-scale meetings of censors. But there were other mechanisms such as the training sessions and local mentoring of novices, group study and regular meetings of local collectives, as well as the horizontal information exchange between peers, all qualifying for organizational methods that supported the information processing capacity, and provided opportunities for information exchange about the proper employment of censorship norms.

On the dimension of organizational control the analysis resulted that all three control targets were administered by bureaucratic tools within GDPP/CPP: the recruitment strategy was designed to accomplish clan control, whereas process and output control was implemented through a detailed reporting system and the close surveillance carried out by superiors from distance or at the workplace. Next to these mechanisms, there was also a system of rewards and sanctions established to induce more thorough work.

Personal accounts of former GDPP/CPP employees suggested that the contribution of these organizational mechanisms to effectiveness should not be overemphasized. For instance, there was not much moral lesson in a sanction, the Notes were not scrupulously studied, and the actual recruitment practices diverged from official expectations. Nevertheless, the importance of methods specifically needed under task uncertainty (i.e. personal modes of coordination) were validated, as well as attempts to check the censors' work, because censors' felt closely monitored despite the fact that specific organizational tools did not achieve their initial goals. Moreover, having the informal relationships and practices examined too, one can consider that certain shortcomings of the formal working were

compensated in the domain of informality. If not the commitment towards the political regime (a core recruitment criterion) or fear of sanctions, loyalty towards the editorial office induced censors to more careful work.

The study of informal practices emerging in the censorship system was guided by theoretical insights offered by the comparative political science literature. Unlike the theoretical framework inspired by organizational studies, the literature review on informality resulted reconsidering central concepts and extant typologies of formal-informal interactions. (See Chapter 4) I decided to use the conceptual framework of "informal practices" instead of "informal institutions". The revised conceptual typology of informal institutions/practices capitalizes insights of three available typologies (Helmke and Levitsky 2006a, Nee and Ingram 1998, Lauth 2000). It borrows the labels used by Helmke and Levitsky, and contains four types that are characterized in terms of compatibility between the formal rules and informal rules (or practices) and the effects on the formal functioning. The definitions capture two situations of compatibility (complementary and substitutive) and two of incompatibility (accommodating and competing) between formal and informal rules, but three cases that contribute to effective functioning (complementary, substitutive and accommodating) and one that undermines formal organizational functioning (competing).

To uncover the hidden aspects of censorship life, I employed a historical ethnographic approach, and processed a wide variety of subjective sources created after and concomitantly with the events, that is, interviews, memoirs, diaries and contemporary correspondence. These written and oral testimonies cover the entire spectrum of players of the censorship system.

What I found was robust evidence for good personal relationships between the main actors of censorship (editors-in-chief, editors, individual authors, censors form the state office and Party activists namely), and an extensive use of informal practices. (See Chapter 6) The

informal practices were categorized according to the revised descriptive typology, and the examination resulted that all four types of informal practices were simultaneously pursued. The types of informal practices that furthered the formal scopes of censorship actually constituted the building bricks of editorial "self-censorship" or self-censorship proper. Complementary informal practices contributed to the spread and clarification of information regarding censorship norms via peers and censors. Some of these practices qualify to the accommodating category, because censors might have even breach formal rules in an attempt to "help" editorial offices by sharing confidential censorship directives. There were substitutive informal practices too, such as the preventive strategies employed by editors-in-chief, counseling and ensuring with controllers, which worked in parallel to formal control and ultimately doubled official command. The fourth type, the competing of practices was comprised by interactions that eventually undermined the effectiveness of the censorship policy, practices such as negotiations between the censors and editors-in-chief, intervening through personalized networks on behalf of a publication, or taking a risk by turning a blind eye to problematic issues.

7.3 Theoretical contributions and implications

Theoretical and empirical inquiries reported in this dissertation make noteworthy contributions to various areas such as the study informality in comparative political science and the functioning of the censorship systems.

In what concerns the study of informality, I demonstrated that a broader conceptual framework of "informal practices" as against the more frequently used "informal institutions" can be sometimes more useful to shed light on the complexities of everyday activities, which implies intricate relationships to formal organizational aims, as well as a disjuncture between particular practices and supposed broader interests of the actors involved. The further

important contribution concerns the critical review of extant typologies of informal institutions and the elaboration of a revised version that seems to accommodate better salient forms of informal occurrences, and can be used to characterize both informal institutions and informal practices.

With regards to the implications of analytic arguments employed in the study of the Romanian censorship system, it is safe to claim that they can be smoothly replicated to the Soviet-type censorship cases. Information extracted from monographs of the Polish, Soviet, Hungarian, Czechoslovak and East German censorship cases presented in Chapter 1 were used first to illustrate attempts to coordinate and control activities within the censorship system and to map the domain informality. In other words, they were used to substantiate my research interest with empirical data, but they were also reviewed to underline the common structural features of the censorship systems of state socialist countries. Now, the cited formal and informal practices can be re-evaluated in terms of organizational design and effectiveness, moreover it seems safe to argue that a similar analytical perspective could be fruitfully applied to censorship systems where no single "censors' office" existed, but the task of preventive censorship was dispersed across various organizations.

More concretely, having the Romanian case analyzed, similarities on the level of concrete organizational solutions by which the censors' office operated in Romania and Poland, and within the limits of available data in the Soviet Union too, are even more sharply outlined. Concerning the domain of informal practices, the Romanian case study strongly suggests that good personal contacts and allied practices have to be taken into account when analyzing the functioning of the censorship system. Hence, these findings confer relevance to the scattered notes with regard to the good personal ties and interactions of the controllers and controlled appearing in analyses or personal accounts of other censorship cases. Instances of informal

practices from Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union cited in the introductory chapter are very much in line with the practices identified in the Romanian case.

For broadening the perspective over the implications of my findings, one has to consider the context in which formal mechanisms were employed and informal practices emerged. Core features of the censorship system included a strong commitment of the political regime to control public information (that implies harsh penalties for transgressors), ambiguous censorship norms, and personal contacts across the actors of censorship. These can be considered the scope conditions under which the political regime will be most probably careful with the formal design of the organizational structures, and informal practices similar to those discussed in this dissertation are likely to emerge in order to mitigate uncertainties and to avoid sanctions, as well as to broaden publication possibilities. As it was elaborated in Chapter 1, serious attempts on the side of the political regime to control public information and the ambiguity of censorship norms are not a specific problem of the Soviet-type regimes. As far as coordination in the censorship system does not occur out of the blue, the analytical framework of the present research can serve as a starting point to evaluate the mix of ground level formal and informal mechanisms that sustain(ed) the functioning of various non-democratic censorship systems.

7.4 Limitations

Finally, a number of limitations of the present research need to be acknowledged. First, as it was already mentioned, the in-depth analysis of the functioning of the censors' office did not cover the entire period of the Communist Party rule due to the paucity of data concerning the GDPP/CPP's (1949–1977) successor organization, the CSCE (1977–1989) namely. There might have been some differences between the internal functioning of the two organizations, because the CSCE was much deeply involved in the daily management of media and cultural

organizations. Second, the empirical research was limited to a single organization, which does not allow pointing immediately to analogous mechanisms in states where no corresponding organization existed, such as Hungary or the German Democratic Republic. Third, the nature of the sources and data does not allow assessing the frequency and relative importance of various types informal practices, which is an important question due to the opposite effects exerted on the performance of the censorship system. All this said, I remain confident about the added value of my findings both in terms of the methods applied and to the body of knowledge about censorship.

7.5 Avenues for further research

The research has raised several questions in need of further investigation, but it also opened up perspectives for setting novel research aims. Primarily, the limitations discussed in the previous section should be tackled. This implies more field-research into the organizational aspects of the Romanian censorship system in the last decade of the state socialist regime, which might become possible in the upcoming years with the opening of new archive fonds, as well as paralleling the kind of inquiry I have done in other Soviet-type censorship systems. This way, further research might also explore in a comparative perspective the particular mix of informal practices across different countries. But narrowing the focus on sub-national level seems also a useful option. For instance, the differences between the operating conditions of particular media organs could be explored in details from the angle of the relationships between their leaders and authorities.

Research could be focused on formal and informal mechanisms employed in other macro-institutional contexts as well, that is, the censorship systems other types of non-democratic regimes. As it was demonstrated in this dissertation, studying the micro-level organizational solutions and everyday informal practices mediating the implementation of the censorship

policy provides interesting details about one of the basic pillars on which non-democratic regimes rest.

Having this said, I wish to emphasize that, by putting into the center of my account the positive interpersonal ties between various people involved in censorship, I did not mean to minimize the losses suffered by individual authors, the staff of editorial offices and cultural institutions endured because of censorship. Furthermore, my aim was neither to incriminate leaders of cultural institutions by "collaboration", nor absolving "censors" in general. Rather I wanted to nuance the inveterate narrative about censorship, and to intrigue research interest into micro-level formal and informal practices in this policy domain, and perhaps other non-democratic institutional and organizational settings as well – a goal I hoped to achieve by this dissertation.

APPENDIX

I. Official sources

Archive materials

Central Historical National Archives (Arhivele Naţionale Istorice Centrale), Bucharest, Fond Press and Printing Committee (Fond Comitetul pentru Presă şi Tipărituri)

National Archives – Mureş County Branch (Direcţia Judeţeană a Arhivelor Naţionale Mureş), Târgu-Mureş, Fond Press and Printing Committee Tîrgu-Mureş (Fond Comitetul pentru presă şi tipărituri Tîrgu-Mureş)

National Archives – Covasna County Branch (Direcţia Judeţeană a Arhivelor Naţionale Covasna), Sfântu Gheorghe, Fond Press and Printing Committee Tîrgu-Mureş – General Directorate of Press and Printing (Fond Comitetul pentru Presă şi Tipărituri – Direcţia Generală a Presei şi Tipăriturilor)

Collections of documents

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Corobca, Liliana (Ed.). (2010). *Epurarea cărţilor în România (1944-1964). Documente*. [Book purge in Romania (1944-1965)] Bucharest: Tritonic.

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