

usefully directs our attention to both similarities and differences in the language conflicts in Estonia, Latvia, and Ukraine. At the same time, her study highlights the need for further research on language policies in the post-Soviet countries and other world regions, tackling the ambiguity of the tool of language policy as a crucial dimension in nation-building processes everywhere.

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Mariëlle Wijermars and Katja Lehtisaari (eds.), *Freedom of Expression in Russia's New Mediasphere*. Routledge, 2019.

This edited volume is a comprehensive collection that approaches the issue of freedom of expression in the new media in Russia, as well as attempts to curb it, from multiple angles. Such an approach illuminates the multifaceted nature of the Russian media regime, which cannot be reduced to simple state-controlled censorship. Different parts of the volume complement each other to fully flesh out the issue. The first part maps out the regulations that have been adopted in the last decade, following the protests of 2011-2012, including the black-listing mechanisms and the “Iarovaya law” (2016), which signify the tightening of the state control over the media. The second part focuses on how traditional and new media outlets adapt and act in the new regulation environment, sometimes even subverting it (as in the case of trans-local urban lifestyle magazines). The third part provides a window into the audience reception of media content, both inside Russia and in the “near abroad.” The final part focuses on hybrid tactics and mechanisms employed by the state actors to limit citizens’ activity online—from existing laws against extremism, to “troll factories,” to the Russian Orthodox Church’s efforts to shape the discourse on freedom and security. No optimistic forecast for freedom of speech in Russia is given, but the authors present a more nuanced understanding of the complicated interplay between state, local and translocal actors,

citizens, and (semi)institutionalized entities, creating and re-producing regulations in the digital ecosystem.

The introductory contribution frames the issue of the new media regime in Russia through the tension between growing state control and the evasive, transnational and rapidly technologically developing nature of Rунet (the Russian internet). The authors successfully reach the main claimed goal of the book—to analyze the limits and possibilities for free speech in the Russian new media; how the outlets choose to keep their consumers engaged; and the experiences of media consumers.

The collection of chapters fits well together; the book starts with what is a comprehensive background retrospective for a reader who does not know all the intricacies of media regulation in Russia (Part 1). The first contribution (Linkila, Shpakovskaya and Torchinsky) provides a succinct outline of the main laws that limit freedom of expression in Russia, along with some quantitative data on the instances of regulation over the period of tightening of the state control (2008–2017). This is complemented by the third contribution (Lehtisaari), looking specifically into the case of the “Iarovaya law” (2016). The contribution by Sivets provides an interesting look into the novelty of so-called “new school” regulation mechanisms used by the Russian government (blacklisting), as well as their technological challenges.

While the first section takes a macro-perspective and focuses on the actions of the state, the second focuses on different media channels, fleshing out how new media forms and methods of storytelling co-exist with regulations. The chapters by Ratilainen, Lapina-Kratasyuk and Yagodin re-conceptualize some parts of the Russian media landscape (urban magazines, even federal television) as spaces of innovation and potential dissent, which surprisingly is driven by the need to achieve commercial goals.

The third section offers a perspective on the audience reception of the media messages, both abroad and inside Russia. Kazakov and Hutchings provide a timely analysis of the 2017 Eurovision debate; Kaprāns and Juzefovičs investigate Latvia’s Russian-speaking audiences’ attitudes towards the Ukraine crisis from a qualitative perspective, and Lassila looks into the discourses

of the Russian “alt-right,” through the example of *Sputnik i Pogrom*. The added value of these contributions is that they give a more audience-centered look at the process of public opinion formation, fleshing out the everyday aspects of agency of internal and external audiences of Russian media outlets. Far from uniform, the audience reception is shown to be (co)creative and, sometimes, challenging to the state narratives.

The final section provides an overview on the most controversial aspects of Russian policies in the field of new media: criminal punishment for sharing digital content (van der Vet), the existence of an array of online resources loosely associated with the government propaganda, including trolls (Zvereva), and the Russian Orthodox Church’s role in shaping the discussion on the internet freedom (Staehele). The contributions give the reader a timely update on what is most often criticized by Western observers when it comes to Russian freedom of expression. Moreover, each contribution delves into the mechanisms of these policy instruments, dissecting them on a case-by-case basis (e.g. how the law prosecuting social media users has been applied so far; how specific pro-government blogs operate).

Overall, the strength of the volume lies in its multi-stakeholder, multi-faceted approach to investigating the Russian new media regulatory space. It will prove invaluable to researchers who wish either to improve their background knowledge of main trends in the topic, or to update it with original perspectives on the non-state local, regional and national actors balancing between the demands of their consumers and public obligations. The volume calls for a focus on the (trans)local, the creative, the elusive—on those elements which possess opportunities for free expression, as opposed to traditional journalism in Russia. The volume contributions, focusing on various sectors and levels of new media, flesh out unexpected spaces of dissent, sometimes even in the state-controlled outlets. Ultimately, the volume authors rightfully emphasize that different segments and different forms of online media in

different regions of Russia are characterized by varying levels of freedom of expression, and this variability calls for further cross-sectional investigation.

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Nadja Douglas, *Public Control of Armed Forces in the Russian Federation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2017. 361 pp.

This study is devoted to the social specifics of the relationship between civilian and military actors in Russia, one of the determining factors of Russia's path towards its "sovereign democracy" model. These relations are influenced by societal attitudes and security/defense policies, as well as regime development. Rising to the challenge of tackling such a complex topic, this book is a really comprehensive work, providing a thorough and contemporary examination of the field and the various central questions within it. In particular, it offers up-to-date theoretical (Part I) and empirical (Part II) analyses of civil-military relations within key political-social contexts of Russia's "sovereign democracy."

To achieve this quite ambitious goal, the study is structured in a somewhat classical style. The author builds up her narrative in brief and readable chapters, each based on either a historical precept, a social axiom, or a political law. The chapters elaborate a wide range of issues.

The first chapter, which serves as a classical/typical introduction to the study, proposes a basic framework for the analysis of civil-military relations. Here Douglas also sets the findings of her research in the context of their consequences for some background theory revision.

Chapter 2, "Looking at the 'Bigger Picture,'" focuses on interdependent philosophical and praxeological approaches to contemporary Russian practices related to armed forces control. It