

Compare And Contrast Media Censorship In Russia And China

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Meaning and Purpose of Media Censorship

The media has become the main source of information for the 21st-century generation. People have become too dependent on mass media for information and entertainment. With this dependence on mass media for information comes censorship. According to the Oxford Dictionary, Censorship is the prohibition or suppression of some parts of films, news, books, and others that are seen as politically unacceptable, obscene, or a threat to the security of the people/nation. (Barker; Dewhirst; King et al.)

Comparative Framework for Russia and China

Censorship can also be defined as the suppression of speech, images, ideas, or words that are considered offensive. Media censorship is mostly done by governments on their citizens, where these governments restrict the amount of information that reaches the public. For a better understanding of mass media censorship, the censorship of media in both Russia and China will be analyzed. This essay provides a comparison and contrast of the media censorship in Russia and China regarding the internet, film censorship, and news censorship.

Internet Censorship in Russia and China

Firstly, this paper analyzes the key similarities and differences between Russia and China when it comes to internet content censoring. Internet censoring is done in both Russia and China to control and block sites that contain content that promotes drug use, drug manufacture, and pornography, and also to block the online activity of government criticism, which can bring mass demonstrations. In Russia, the government censors the Internet by controlling the information provided by websites using the Internet blacklist. This list contains websites that were reported to contain forbidden materials. The content of the blacklist was not initially available to the public until later, after the blacklist was executed, when the list was published in a certain live journal. Internet censorship in Russia has been on the rise in recent years, according to data published by the Russian Society of Internet Users. Many human rights organizations criticized the Russian government's censorship of the internet, claiming that it violated citizens' right to freedom of expression. They also viewed the blacklist as an attack on the right to access information in Russia. Internet censoring in Russia included incidences of internet blocking, forcing the shutdown of internet users by using police raids and physical beating to bloggers. Despite these, the Russian government feels that it cannot fully

internet content and would like to have internet censorship such as that of China. China, on the other hand, practices extreme censorship of the internet. There are a lot of administrative regulations and laws in China created by the government. Internet control in China is considered to be more advanced and more extensive than in any other country in the whole world. The Chinese government blocks website content as well as monitors individuals' internet access. These internet regulations have been referred to as 'The Great Firewall of China.' Internet censoring methods in China include keyword filtering, blocking access to some websites, and bandwidth adjusting. The Chinese government in early 2015 shut down VPNs (Virtual Private Networks), which made it harder to access U.S.-based sites such as Facebook and Google. The people of China do not mind the freedom of expression, and they respect the government's internet censorship. The difference between Russia and China in internet censoring is that while Russia censors the internet to protect the government from the people, China censors the internet to protect both the people and the government and to prevent the starting of a resistance movement. (Barker; King et al.; Council on Foreign Relations)

Film and Journalistic Censorship

Secondly, mass media censorship is also evident in both Russia and China when it comes to film censorship. The Russian government has proven to eliminate independent journalists, especially those who support the opposition. The murder of Anna Politkovskaya, an activist and reporter, in 2006 proved that being an independent journalist in Russia was no easy task. About 300 reporters have been murdered after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is intimidation, which brings fear among journalists and activists, which makes others even run for their lives in other countries. In China, the government used a wide range of methods to make journalists surveil themselves, including demotions and dismissals, fines, libel lawsuits, forced confessions on television, and arrests. In China, journalists were intimidated by arrests and fines, which controlled whatever they gave to the people. The similarities between the two nations in terms of this censorship were that they both intimidated journalists and controlled whatever was aired on television. The differences were that in Russia, journalists' lives were at risk, and the government put fear on them, while in China, journalists were imprisoned or fined. (Dewhurst; Rosenberg)

Restrictions on Foreign Media Ownership

Thirdly, is the key similarities and differences when it comes to foreign media censorship in both Russia and China. In Russia, the government limited foreign owners from owning any Russian media assets. A law that was signed in 2014 limited the stakes of foreign ownership of Russian media assets up to twenty percent by early 2017. For instance, the German Springer Publishing House had to sell the Russian Forbes edition to Russian executives as a result of this law signed in 2014. In China, the government demands foreign correspondents to acquire permission before they report to China, and it has used this as an administrative tool to prevent foreign journalists from reporting about topics that are politically sensitive, such as increasing economic and financial developments or even

corruption. Censorship of foreign media is, therefore, important to protect a nation's secrets from foreign journalists and spies. (King et al.; Zhang and Fleming)

Conclusion on Comparative Censorship

In conclusion, it is evident that both Russia and China censor mass media for different reasons, some of which are similar while others are different. The types of mass media censoring studied in this essay are internet censoring, film censoring, and foreign media censoring. (King et al.; Dewhurst)

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