

Conceptual and Methodological Issues in Media Monitoring

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Nongovernmental and governmental organizations around the world invest an estimated \$1 billion in media assistance projects each year, with the basic assumption that this assistance ultimately will bring about improvements in democracy in the recipient countries.

These media assistance initiatives are pervasive. At least 70 organizations in 25 donor countries outside the United States are involved in funding media assistance projects (Becker & Vlad, 2005). In the U.S., the number of donors is more than 50 (Hume, 2004). Donors are units of governments, nongovernmental organizations, including foundations, and multinational organizations. Spending is distributed around the world, with eastern and central Europe and African countries having been major recipients since the end of the 1980s.

A concern with the media in countries other than one's own is not new. Governments probably have been concerned with the type and quality of media that operate outside their borders since the development of media themselves. In the period after World War II, the United States and its allies invested heavily in the training of journalists and offered other forms of media assistance in order to control the media in the countries they occupied. Funding for media assistance has been a key part of the U.S. policy in occupied Iraq (Future Media Working Group, 2002; Internews, 2003)

Although the western assistance programs have been predicated on the assumption that development of free, independent media staffed by trained journalists leads to—or at least contributes to—the development of democracy, the evidence to support that assumption is not robust. Relatively little work has been done to empirically evaluate the media assistance programs. Most of the work that has been done has focused on the impact of the assistance programs on journalists, rather than on the impact of the assistance programs on the large media system. And almost no work has been done linking the media assistance programs to democratization.

This paper begins with a discussion of some common assumptions about the role of media in fostering democracy. Next it examines those assumptions in the context of more general theoretical discussions of the link between the media and democracy. The paper then looks at what is known about the amount of investment in media assistance. Then it reviews what is known about evaluation of that investment. In this context, it looks at concepts that might be appropriate outcomes and examines

measurement of those concepts. Finally, it offers some suggestions about future research and about the measures that should be used to monitor the media.

Assumptions about Role of Media in Fostering Democracy

Kumar (2006), a senior social scientist at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has explained the dominant western perspective lying behind media assistance projects. Media assistance, he writes, is based on the underlying assumption that independent media contribute to the building of democracy and to economic development. The assistance is directed at journalistic practice and the media itself, he continues,

“to lay the foundation for the emergence and consolidation of a media sector free of state editorial or financial control, relying on advertising and sales for its survival and growth. Media development efforts strive to achieve the ideal of a ‘Fourth Estate,’ in which the press serves as a complement and balance to the three branches of power—legislative, executive and judicial. The Fourth Estate, by virtue of its financial and editorial independence, is supposed to hold state authorities accountable by documenting the government’s actions and nurture democracy by encouraging an open but respectful exchange of ideas and opinions (p. 1).”

The language, of course, is that of western, liberal, normative theory, as articulated by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) in their classic work on normative press theory. Media assistance is expected to produce better journalists, better media organizations, and a better media system. That media system is supposed to produce, or at least contribute to, the development of democracy.

Kumar (2006) has stated this position clearly:

“(I)t is difficult to overstate the significance of media freedom and an unfettered flow of information. Without it, democracy is starved, markets are stifled, and public health suffers. Cultivating and nurturing a free media has to form an integral element of any effort to build

democracy. Once independent-minded news organizations find a foothold, a whole range of positive effects ripple through society and ultimately spread beyond the country's borders. (p. 166)."

Figure 1 is a representation of this perspective.

Much emphasis in the media assistance programs, in fact, has been placed on training of the journalists. The training is designed to produce more skilled and motivated workers whose work will help create media organizations that facilitate and distribute their work. Media assistance programs also are directed at these media organizations. Some such training programs even have created media organizations, such as radio and television stations and newspapers. Others have provided subsidies for existing organizations. These organizations are supposed to operate in a way that creates a free-or independent-competitive media environment. Finally, media assistance is directed at the media system as well. For example, assistance programs have employed legal advisers who have drafted laws to help create the legal environment in which free media can operate.

The free press-free media-are expected to create information that can be used by the institutions of civil society to create a functioning democracy and economy. The expectation is that the free media-free press-creates information that is functional from the point of view of governmental institutions, such as the judiciary, the legislative bodies, the executive institutions, and the various nongovernmental organizations that make up civic life. These institutions can make use of this functional information to create the democratic society.

The institutions of a civil society are thought to be the product of-or at least influenced by-assistance programs aimed at creation of a civil society. Often these programs have included the media as one type of civil society institution, and media assistance is viewed, in this perspective, as a subtype of civil society assistance. Certainly it is possible to question the ability of media institutions to create other civil society institutions, and the question mark in the model is meant to so indicate.

In fact, no standard definition of civil society exists, as Carothers and Ottaway (2000) have noted. While Carothers sees the media as separate from other institutions of civil society (Carothers & Ortaway,

2000; Carothers, 2004), others, such as Dalpino (2000), do not. For Dalpino, civil society is made up all groups and activities not legally bound to the state. She includes the media explicitly in her list of civil society institutions, which also includes religious organizations, advocacy groups, and social service organizations. Lederach (2001) says a civil society is a “web of human relationships made up of individual people, their networks, organizations and institutions around which social and community life is built (p. 842).” Certainly the media can be part of such a web.

In much of the current literature, democratic and economic institutions are viewed as linked. As Kumar (2006) wrote, the expectation is that media assistance would lead not only to democracy, but also to a “liberal” economy.

Putzel and van der Zwan (2006) have explicitly challenged the idea of any causal relationship between media freedom and independence and economic development, represented by the dotted line in the model. They label this a product of neo-liberal ideologies and say evidence of the relationship is tenuous at best. In what they term fragile states--that is a state susceptible to crisis, vulnerable to internal and extern shocks, and experiencing domestic and international conflicts--the relationship is unlikely to hold at all, they contend. Even more problematic are crises states, that is, a state under acute stress, or failed states, that is, a state that can no longer function.

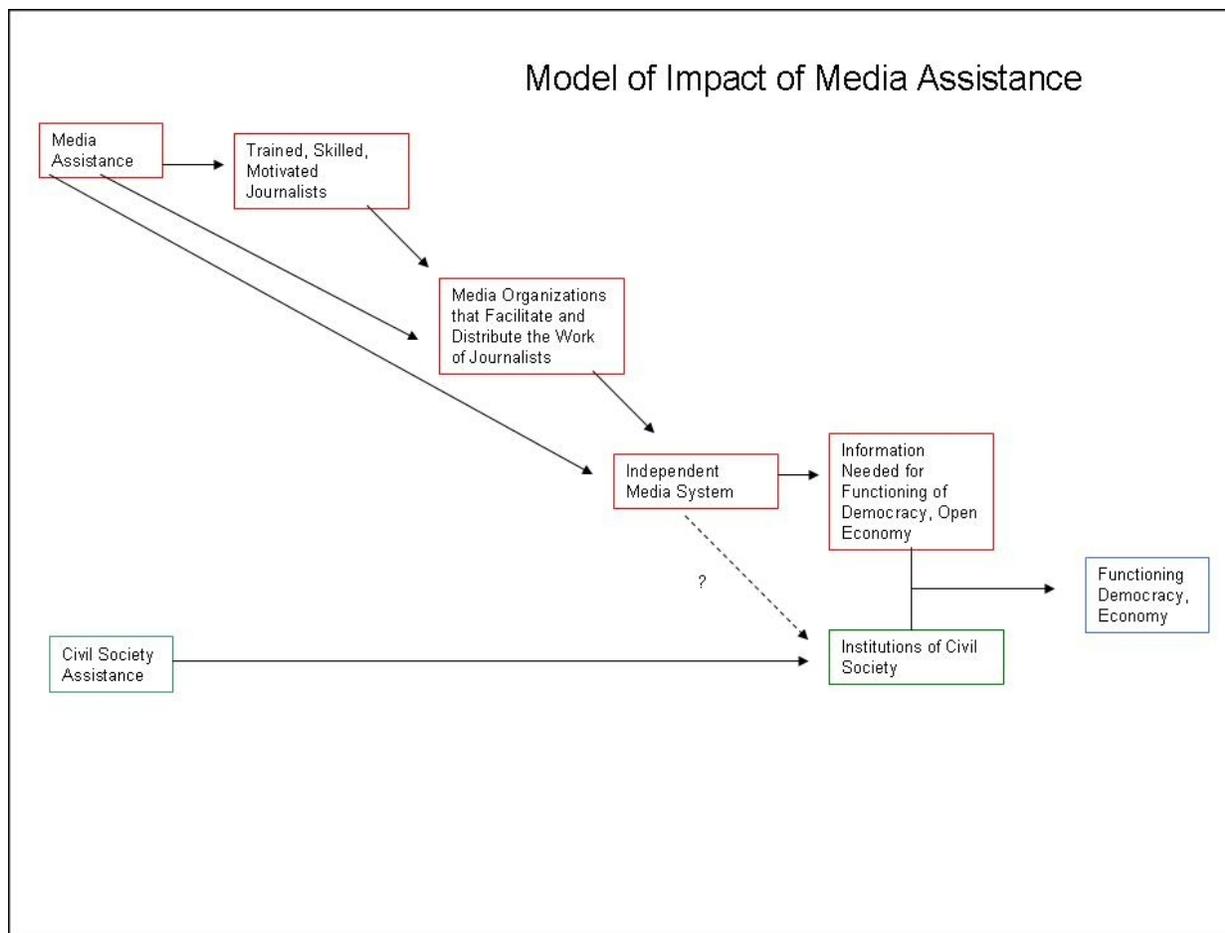


Figure 1: Theoretical Model of Impact of Media Assistance

Use of the media to promote conflict, war and even genocide in states that have experienced liberalization of, or unexpected lack of control over, their media has done much to challenge the simplistic view that media freedom should be the primary goal of developmental assistance. Much of the writing has focused on Rwanda, where the liberalization of media regulation resulted in media that contributed to and encouraged genocide (Berkeley, 2001; Kurspahic, 2003; Putzel & van der Zwan, 2006; Snyder & Ballentine, 1996; Thompson, 2007), and the Balkans, where the disintegration of the Yugoslav state and its media system resulted in the creation of media properties that incited conflict (Goff, 1999; Putzel & van der Zwan, 2006; Snyder & Ballentine, 1996; Thompson, 1994). Gross (2002) has argued that the media in all of Eastern Europe have failed to contribute to democratization in the period of change after 1989.

The counter argument is that the introduction of press freedom is a matter of timing. Before the system can be liberalized, that is, before a system of press freedom can be introduced, training of journalists and the creation of appropriately structured media organizations must be in place (Snyder and Ballentine, 1996). Such a position, of course, tolerates constraints on media freedom in the interim. This is a position argued explicitly by Allen and Stemplau (2005), who acknowledge the conflict between their position and traditional liberal press theory. (They also note the conflicted nature of U.S. media policy in Iraq.) It also is possible that other elements of civil society must be in place—such as established parties and governmental institutions, rule of law—for the society to be able to manage press freedom successfully (Waisbord, 2007). Snyder and Ballentine (1996), for example, argue that regulations on hate speech and for protection of minority groups may be prerequisites for a functional press system.

The use of media in war and conflict has created a new emphasis on training of journalists in coverage that is either conflict sensitive (Ross, 2003) or actually promotes peace (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Hanitzsch (2004) has challenged the logic of the latter, arguing that peace journalism may make unrealistic assumptions about media effects. Payne (2005) also has argued that in modern war media are always an instrument of war, regardless of the level of training of the journalists or the independence of the media organization.

Scientific Literature

Linz (1975) lists freedoms of association, information, and communication as essential components of democracy. Gunther and Mughan (2000) call mass media the “connective tissue of democracy.” O’Neil (1998) writes that without the freedom of communication mass media provide, the foundation of democratic rule is undermined.

Jakubowicz (2002), however, says that whether mass media lead or follow change, whether they mirror or mold society, and whether they should be conceptualized as agents of change or of the status quo have yet to be resolved. In their study of Spain, Gunther, Montero, and Wert (2000) found evidence that media aided in the transition to a consolidated democracy by helping to legitimate the new regime and by contributing to the socialization of the public in ways of democratic behavior. Not all media practices, though, may be beneficial to democratic development. In the case of Nigeria, Ette (2000) argues that

media can undermine democracy and states and that it is not even clear the press has a common understanding of how it should serve the cause of democracy.

Downing (1996) sees media as pivotal in the struggle for power in all regimes, including nondemocratic regimes. Media of all types facilitate the struggle that emerges between political movements and the authoritarian state in the process of regime change, and continues through the transition stage into the consolidation stage, with whatever regime emerges. Gunther and Mughan (2000) argue that most political elites, regardless of regime type, believe the media to be important in shaping the views of the public and have attempted to develop policies to suit their economic, social, and political purposes.

Rozumilowicz (2002) provides an elaborate argument for the relationship between the media and democracy. Five key points are offered. First, a media structure that is free of interference from government, business or dominant social groups is better able to maintain and support the competitive and participative elements that define democracy and the related process of democratization. Second, free and independent media buttress the societal objectives of democracy, a particular economic structure, greater cultural understanding and general human development. Third, free and independent media allow individuals to find a public forum in which to express opinions, beliefs and viewpoints to their fellow citizens. Free and independent media inform, entertain and enrich the life through the profusion of others' ideas, opinions and visions. Fourth, free and independent media provide for an expression of options so meaningful decisions can be made. And fifth, free and independent media guarantee access to the less privileged in society, giving them voice.

In sum, according to this argument, free and independent media are necessary for the functioning of democracy.

Appropriate Outcome: Press Freedom

While media assistance projects are most commonly oriented toward the individual media worker, generally a journalist, the ultimate goal, as reflected in Figure 1, is the improvement of the operation of the press system in the country. Historically, the ideal outcome has been termed press freedom.

The concept of press freedom is a contentious one in the literature of mass communication. Early

definitions of the concept reflected post World War II geopolitical construction and focused primarily on freedom from government control (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956). Lowenstein (1970) argued that “A completely free press is one in which newspapers, periodicals, news agencies, books, radio and television have absolute independence and critical ability, except for minimal libel and obscenity laws. The press has no concentrated ownership, marginal economic units or organized self-regulation.” Weaver (1977) identified three components of press freedom: the relative absence of government restraints on the media, the relative absence of nongovernmental restraints, and the existence of conditions to insure the dissemination of diverse ideas and opinions to large audiences. Piccard (1985), among others, distinguished between negative press freedom (the absence of legal controls, such as censorship) and positive press freedom (the ability of individuals to use the media).

Subsequent work (for example, Hachten, 1987) argued that definitions of media freedom should include other concepts, such as the role of media in nation building, economic development, overcoming illiteracy and poverty, and building political consciousness. Hagen (1992) focused on what she described as media democratization. She proposed altering the top-down, “one-way flow” of messages from contemporary mass media to the public by increasing citizen participation. Breunig (1994) viewed press freedom as one type of communication. Others were freedom of speech, freedom of opinion and information freedom.

Curran (1996) differentiated between a classical liberal perspective on media freedom and the radical democratic perspective. The former focuses on the freedom of the media to publish or broadcast. The latter focuses on how mass communications can “mediate in an equitable way conflict and competition between social groups in society.” Within the classical liberal perspective, according to Curran, is a “strand” arguing that the media should serve to protect the individual from the abuses of the state. Within the radical democratic perspective, he continued, is a “strand” that argues that the media should seek to redress the imbalances in society.

McQuail (2000) said that the concept of media freedom covers both the degree of freedom enjoyed by the media and the degree of freedom and access of citizens to media content. “The essential norm is that media should have certain independence, sufficient to protect free and open public

expression of ideas and information. The second part of the issue raises the question of diversity, a norm that opposes concentration of ownership and monopoly of control, whether on the part of the state or private media industries.”

For Price (2002), the “foundation requirement” for media freedom is that government does not have a monopoly on information. Rozumilowicz (2002) similarly contended that the question of who controls the media is critical to consideration of whether it is free and independent. There must be a diffusion of control and access supported by a nation’s legal, institutional, economic and social-cultural systems, she argues. Thus, free and independent media “exist within a structure which is effectively demonopolized of the control of any concentrated social groups or forces and in which access is both equally and effectively guaranteed.”

Rozumilowicz sees media independence as the outcome of a process of media reform. The general assumption is that the media “should progress ever nearer to an ideal of freedom and independence and away from dependence and control” (p. 12). In her view, a media structure that is free of “interference from government, business, or dominant social groups is better able to maintain and support the competitive and participative elements that define the concept of democracy and the related process of democratization.”

Rozumilowicz sees the ideal media environment as one in which there are two media sectors, a market-led media sector and a nonmarket-sector. Within the market sector, advertisers are free to present their goods to target audiences, programmers can use fees provided by these advertisers to draw in audiences, and audiences are informed and entertained to the extent the market allows. The nonmarket-sector provides balance by ensuring that the needs of non-dominant groups are met. It also creates a forum in which a common discourse emerges and which allows people to function within the society.

For these two sectors to exist, there must be both legal and institutional support for them as well as social-cultural support. For example, the market sector can exist only if laws are in place protecting media from government interference. Audiences also must be protected via defamation laws from media abuse. Also needed are anti-trust legislation, ownership laws limiting concentration, licensing laws, and rules on advertising.

For the nonmarket-sector to exist, there must be legal and institutional support for the right to publish and the right of access. Citizens are guaranteed the right to information, and the various voices in society are guaranteed the right to communicate.

For Rozumilowicz, socio-cultural support for free media comes from training for and professionalism among journalists, a general educational system that instills values of tolerance within society, and training for politicians on the workings of a free press in an open society.

Following from this conceptualization, Rozumilowicz outlines four stages of media reform. The first stage, labeled a Pre-transition Stage, lays the groundwork for subsequent change. During this change, there is an opening of freeing of a previously constrained media system. The regime signals a greater willingness to tolerate criticism and expressions of alternative points of view.

The second stage is termed a Primary Transition Stage. During this stage, there is a systematic change within the formerly authoritarian regime. Statutes on access to information, defamation, ownership, and the like are passed. The culture of censorship is disrupted.

The next stage is called the Secondary Stage. During this period both politicians and journalists participate in training seminars to explain and clarify the new institutional and legal order. Networks of media professionals develop. Journalists receive training in new skills of investigative and responsible journalism.

The final stage is called the Late or Mature Stage. At this point, legal and institutional questions have been resolved. Educational opportunities for journalists are well established. Instruction to provide support for open communication is incorporated in primary and secondary schooling.

The political science literature also indicates that there are four distinct stages that a country or territory goes through on the path to becoming a stable democracy (McConnell & Becker, 2002). These four stages of societal development can be labeled pretransition, transition, consolidation and stable (or mature). The pretransition stage focuses on societal conditions under the old regime, while the transition stage is that historical moment when the previous regime no longer holds political power. A state becomes consolidated when the ideals of democracy are accepted and adhered to, and then is considered stable when democracy functions over a period of time.

Empirical Analysis of Press Freedom

Empirical research on press freedom goes back to at least the early 1960s. Nixon (1960), found that per capital national income, proportion of adults that are literate, and level of daily newspaper circulation were positively related to level of press freedom, as measured by two International Press Institute classifications of media systems around the world. Gillmor (1962), found little evidence that the religious tradition of a country was associated with press freedom, again using the IPI measures of the latter. Nixon (1965), using a panel to rank press freedom in countries around the world rather than the IPI ratings, replicated his earlier findings of the importance of economic development, literacy, and growth of the mass media. Farace and Donohew (1965), using the Nixon (1965) press freedom measures, found that additional variables such as life expectancy, population, and education also were related to press freedom.

Lowenstein (1970), working at the University of Missouri's Freedom of Information Center, developed a measure of Press Independence and Critical Ability, based on 23 separate indicators, including restraints on media through legal and extra-legal controls, ownership of news agencies or their resources, self-censorship, and economic hardship that could extinguish some voices. The rating was by judges throughout the world who received a survey from the Freedom of Information Center. The resultant classification of the media was found to match closely those of Nixon's earlier surveys. Kent (1972), analyzed the PICA measures and found them to measure a single dimension of press freedom.

Nam and Oh (1973), using Nixon's Press Freedom Index (1965), found that freedom of the press is a function of subsystem autonomy in the overall political system. In other words, in political systems in which the various players have freedom of activity, the press operates accordingly. Weaver (1977) used the Lowenstein (1970) and Kent (1972) classification of press freedom and found that increases in economic productivity lead to less stress in the political system, and this decreased political stress leads to increased press freedom. Weaver, Buddenbaum and Fair (1985) attempted to replicate the findings of Weaver (1977) but concluded instead that increases in economic productivity in developing countries may have negative effects on press freedom rather than positive ones. For these analyses, Weaver and his colleagues used the then relatively new measures developed by Freedom House, a nongovernmental

organization based in Washington, D.C.

Breunig (1994) examined the relationship between legal protection of communication freedom as written into the constitutions and related documents of nations of the world and another measure of press freedom, namely offenses against communication freedom. Breunig gathered data on offenses against communication freedom through a content analysis of the Bulletins of the International Journalism Institute in Prague between January 1, 1988, and October 9, 1991. He found a disconnect between the two sources of information. States that guarantee communication freedom in their legal documents did not necessary provide for more freedom.

The early empirical work on press freedom treated press independence as the dependent or outcome variable, predicted by political and social factors. Stevens (1971), in fact, states these relationships as a series of propositions about the determinations of press freedom.

Besley and Prat (2001) found that press freedom, as measured by the Freedom House index, is negatively related to corruption and to political longevity of office holders. Brunetti and Weder (2003), again using the Freedom House measures of press freedom, replicated the finding of a negative relationship between press freedom and corruption in a cross sectional study and established that the direction of the relationship was from press freedom to decreases in corruption using panel data. Jacobsson and Jacobsson (2004), also using the Freedom House index of press freedom, found that press freedom is the outcome of economic wealth and of low market concentration in the consumer goods industries. Islam (2002) reports a scatterplot for the relationship between Freedom House measures of Press Freedom and its measures of democracy score. The plot suggests a weak relationship exists. Similarly, Carrington and Nelson (2002) show evidence linking media “strength” and “strength” of the local economy. The analysis is based on the Wealth of Nations Triangle Index for developing countries.

Our Project

We have engaged in a number of projects in the last several years to better understand the role of the media in democratization. We have undertaken this work for two reasons. First, the Cox Center conducts small training programs to link the faculty of the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia and other communication professionals to journalism and

communication practice around the world. Knowing the impact of our work is important to us. Second, the Cox Center also has recognized the need for evaluation of formal journalism education and in post-employment settings, so an assessment of the impact of media assistance is a natural component of our larger evaluation enterprise.

Developing the model represented in Figure 1 has been an important part of our effort to understand the role of the media in democratization. Identifying the key concepts and how they have been used by others also has been a part of that. The perspective presented to this point in this paper, in sum, is an outgrowth of our work.

In reviewing the writing on the role of media in democratization, we have recognized that there are two distinct operating frameworks. For one group, the question of whether the media always play a positive role in democratization is still open. For the other group, that question has been answered affirmatively, and the issue is documenting that impact. The first framework is largely that of academic researchers; the second framework is largely that of practitioners, specifically of funders and organizations engaged in media assistance activities.

Though, as noted, we do engage in media assistance projects, we remain open to the possibility that such assistance may not lead to democracy. Our goal is to examine whether media assistance leads to democracy (and, if it does, under what circumstances), not to document that such projects in fact produce the desired democratic outcome.

Much of our research has been funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, based in Miami, Florida. The Knight Foundation funds media assistance projects, but it supported our efforts to explore whether such programs worked and under what circumstances.

Examination of Measures of Press Freedom

We recognized early the importance of developing indices at the national level of key media system characteristics. As Figure 1 shows, such systematic outcomes are the ultimate goal of most efforts at media assistance. If it were possible to know how much money had been invested in each country of the world and the nature of that investment, and if we had good indicators of changes in the characteristics of media systems across the time period of those investments, it would be possible to

provide an important test of any relationship between investment and type of investment and outcome.

Organizations Reporting on Media Freedom

More than 100 organizations throughout the world are currently engaged in some form of media system assessment and evaluation or media freedom promotion. Many of these are newly-formed in response to recent democratization in Europe and redemocratization in Latin America. The groups describe their missions variously as promoting free and independent media through activism, monitoring media freedom violations, evaluating media systems through indices and written reports, and defending and protecting journalists working in conflict zones and under repressive governments.

The organizations have applied rather than conceptual goals for their work. They are interested in media reform often because they believe it plays a role in the development of democratic states. Their work is often described and cited in the popular media, giving weight to their operationalizations--and consequent conceptualizations--of media freedom.

We have reviewed the activities of these organizations in our article in *The International Communication Gazette* (Becker, L.B. Vlad, T., & Nusser, N. , 2007). I will summarize some of the findings reported in that article for completeness.

Freedom House

Probably the best known of the press freedom indicators is that of Freedom House. A non-governmental organization based in Washington, D.C., Freedom House was founded more than 60 years ago to promote democracy globally. Since 1978, Freedom House has published a global survey of freedom, known as *Freedom in the World*, now covering 192 countries and 18 related or disputed territories. This indicator is widely used by policy makers, academics, and journalists. In 1980, as a separate undertaking, Freedom House began conducting its media freedom survey--*Freedom of the Press: A Global Survey of Media Independence*--which in 2003 covered the same 192 countries (Freedom House, 2004).

For Freedom House, the concept of interest is freedom of the media, which is defined as being linked to "the legal environment for the media, political pressures that influence reporting, and economic factors that affect access to information" (Freedom House, 2004).

To measure press freedom, Freedom House attempts to assess the political, legal, and economic environments of each country and evaluate whether the countries promote and do not restrict the free flow of information. Freedom House U.S.-based staff keeps year-round files on media activities for each country (Becker, Vlad & Nusser, 2007). The files contain news articles by and on media in each country and other reports from governmental and international organizations. These files are consulted prior to the production of the annual reports. To augment that information, Freedom House staff members consult local and international media organizations, multilateral and governmental organizations, and other NGO's. Staff members also rely on the Toronto-based International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), a global clearing house for media freedom organizations around the world, and on Freedom House's own *Freedom in the World* surveys.

In evaluating the collected material, Freedom House (2004) examines the legal environment, political influences, and economic pressures on the media. To assess the legal environment, Freedom House analyzes laws and regulations that could influence media, as well as governments' propensity for using those laws to manipulate media. It assesses the potentially negative or positive impact of various legal factors. Political influence is measured by evaluating the degree of political control over news media content. Economic pressures are measured by evaluating characteristics of the media system such as the structure of media, the costs of establishing media outlets, and the impact of corruption and bribery on content.

Freedom House staff members then score each country, using a 20-item questionnaire that includes questions in the three areas of legal, political and economic influences. Higher numbers indicate less media freedom. The legal environment is scored on a 30-point scale, political environment on a 40-point scale, and economic environment on a 30-point scale. The three subindices are summed to come up with a final score for each country.

International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)

IREX was founded in 1968 by U.S. universities to promote exchanges with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., IREX focuses on higher education, independent media, Internet development, and civil society in the United States and internationally.

In 2001, IREX, in cooperation with USAID, prepared its first Media Sustainability Index (MSI) to evaluate the global development of independent media (IREX, 2001). The report rated independent media sustainability in 20 states in four regions: Southeast Europe, Russia and Western Eurasia, Caucasus, and Central Asia. IREX has continued these annual evaluations, and, in 2005, added 18 countries in North Africa and the Middle East (IREX, 2006).

The concept behind IREX's empirical work is independent media sustainability, defined as the existence of sustainable, "independent media systems" (IREX, 2003, p. xxi). This is operationalized as the extent to which political, legal, social, and economic circumstances and institutions, as well as professional standards within independent media, promote and/or permit independent media to survive over time.

IREX assesses independent media sustainability using five criteria or objectives: 1) legal and social norms that protect and promote free speech and access to public information; 2) journalism that meets professional standards; 3) multiple news sources that provide citizens with reliable and objective news; 4) independent media that are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence; and 5) supporting institutions that function in the professional interests of independent media.

To determine how well a country meets those five objectives, from seven to nine indicators for each of the objectives are assessed. The range of scores is from 0 to 4 for each of these indicators. The scores for each of the indicators within the five objectives are averaged to obtain a single score for the objective. The scores on the five objectives are averaged to arrive at a final score for each country.

To conduct scoring, IREX assembles in each country a panel of experts—local media representatives, members of NGOs and professional associations, international donors, and media development workers. Each panel is provided with the objectives, indicators and an explanation of the scoring system. Panelists review the information individually, then assemble to come to a consensus on scores. The panel moderator, in most cases a representative from one of the country's media or an NGO, prepares a written analysis of the discussion, which is edited by IREX representatives. IREX staff (in-country and in Washington, D.C.) also review indicators and objectives, scoring countries independently. The final score for a country is an average of the panel score and the IREX staff score.

Reporters sans frontieres (RSF)

The non-profit RSF works to defend journalists and media outlets by condemning attacks on press freedom worldwide, by publishing a variety of annual and special reports on media freedom, and by appealing to governments and international organizations on behalf of journalists and media organizations. The group, based in Paris and including a network of 100 correspondents, works to reduce censorship, opposes laws devised to restrict press freedom, supports journalists and media outlets with financial aid, and has recently developed a judicial branch to promote effective prosecution of crimes against journalists. On an annual basis, RSF publishes comprehensive regional and country reports that assess political, economic, and legal environments for media freedom. In 2002, RSF released its first Worldwide Press Freedom (RSF, 2002a) report and ranking of individual nations.

The RSF concept is respect for media freedom, defined as “The amount of freedom journalists and the media have in each country and the efforts made by government to see that press freedom is respected” (RSF, 2002b). The concept is operationalized as the extent to which legal and political environments, circumstances, and institutions permit and promote media freedom and the ability of journalists to collect and disseminate information unimpeded by physical, psychological, or legal attacks and harassment.

To create the index, RSF sends out a 53-item questionnaire to in-country sources, usually members of domestic and foreign media as well as legal experts and members of NGOs involved with media freedom. RSF receives an average of three to four completed questionnaires for each country, and if it does not receive at least three, the country is not included. The questions fall into the five categories of physical and psychological attacks on the journalists, legal harassment of and discrimination against journalists, obstacles to collecting and disseminating information, and government manipulation of the media.

After questionnaires are returned, RSF staff members in Paris score the surveys. Each of the questions is weighted. Lower scores indicate more media freedom. Points are summed and averaged to arrive at a final score.

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

Formed in 1981 by a group of foreign correspondents, the New York City-based CPJ reports and investigates attacks on journalists and lobbies domestic and foreign governments on their behalf. With a full-time New York staff of 22 and one Washington, D.C., staff member, CPJ (2004) monitors media in countries in five different regions: the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Developments are tracked through independent research, fact-finding missions, and contacts in the field. CPJ has published annual reports on attacks on the press since 1987 and country reports on more than 100 nations since 1993.

The concept of concern to CPJ is freedom of the press, defined as “The rights of journalists to report the news without fear of reprisal” (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2004). The concept is operationalized as the number of attacks or restrictions on journalists.

Annual reports are prepared by a New-York CPJ regional director and sources in the country. CPJ checks each case from the field identified as a violation of press freedom by more than one source for factual accuracy, confirmation that the victims were journalists or news organizations, and verification that intimidation was the probable motive. Journalists are defined as people who cover news or write commentary on a regular basis.

Methodology

The Freedom House and Reporters sans frontieres indices are based on similar concepts, namely the existence of press autonomy and independence. The IREX Media Sustainability Index includes freedom of expression as one of its five components. The remaining four elements of the index are potentially quite distinct, incorporating the idea of durability of press operations in a competitive market. The Committee to Protect Journalists index focuses solely on attacks on press operation, rather than on support for the media.

In general, the Freedom House and Reporters sans frontieres evaluations should produce quite similar responses. They are undertaken by representatives of media interests in two distinct, though decidedly western, countries. A comparison of these two measures should give some sense of their commonality and the generalizability of the classifications of the media systems.

A comparison of the evaluations by Freedom House and Reporters sans frontieres with the Media Sustainability Index should give a sense of how successful IREX has been in expanding its measure to include more than simple press freedom. Similarly, a comparison of the Committee to Protect Journalists measures with the others should give an indication of how much the other indices have incorporated positive, rather than simply negative, indicators of freedom into their measures.

Finally, an examination of the Freedom House Press Freedom Index across time gives a sense of the extent to which this measure reflects variability across time, particularly in the period of the late 1980s and early 1990s when systemic change was taking place in governmental systems, most notably in eastern and central Europe.

To undertake these analyses, a data base was created in which country was the unit of analysis and the index score for each of the four measures was recorded. Where possible, subparts of the indices were included into the data base as well.

Specifically, data from the Freedom House Press Freedom Index from 1981 to 2004 were included. The Freedom House Press Freedom Index in a given year is for evaluation of the media system a year earlier, so the 1981 index covers the 1980 period. During this time period, only an ordinal level measure was available, with countries being classified as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. From 1994 to 1999, the Freedom House Press Freedom total index was recorded, with a theoretical range of from 1 to 100. In fact, the lowest score (indicating freedom) was 5 during this period; the highest score was 100. From 2000 to 2004, data were available not only on the total index score, but also on the three subparts, legal environment, political influences, and economic pressures.

The Reporters sans frontieres indices have been reported only for 2002 and 2003. In each year, the period covered was from September 1 of the previous year through August 31 of the listed year. Only the total index, ranging in theoretical value from 0 to 100, was available.

The IREX Media Sustainability index for three years, 2001, 2002 and 2003, was used. The reports, released in the following year, cover the listed year. The index covers 20 political entities: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and

Uzbekistan. In creating the file, the data for Montenegro and Serbia were averaged to create a single score for that country. In each of the three years, the MSI score and each of its five subparts were entered into the data base. Those subparts are: free speech, professional journalism, plurality of news sources, business management, and supporting institutions. The theoretical range of scores for the total index and each of its parts is 0 to 4.

Data from the Committee to Protect Journalists were available only for 2003, covering that year. Both the total number of attacks on the press and the individual components making up that total were entered into the data file. Included were the number of: physical attacks on journalists or facilities, cases of censorship, expulsions, harassments, imprisonments, murders of journalists, murders of journalists not documented as related to their work, legal actions against journalists, missing journalists, threats to journalists, and cases of kidnapping of journalists. Actual scores for the total index ranged from 0 to 46.

Findings

The Reporters sans frontieres ratings and the Freedom House ratings are empirically quite similar. In 2002, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient between the two ratings was .81. In 2003, the coefficient was .84. In other words, about 70% of the variance in ratings is shared. Despite the differences in measurement techniques and between the countries of the organizations, the two groups mostly agree on the classification of the media systems of the world.

More surprising is the strong relationship between the IREX Media Sustainability Index and both the Reporters sans frontieres and the Freedom House ratings. For the 18 countries rated by IREX and by the other two NGOs (Kosovo was not rated by either Reporters sans frontieres or Freedom House), the correlation coefficient was .82 and .91 respectively in 2003. In 2002, the figures were .72 for RSF and .89 for Freedom House. In 2001, the correlation between the Freedom House index and MSI was .84.

Only the tally of attacks on the press by the Committee to Protect Journalists produces evaluations different from those of the other three groups. In 2003, the only year for which these comparisons are possible, the CPJ tally is correlated .30 with the RSF rating, .31 with the Freedom House rating, and .08 with the IREX Media Sustainability Index. The suggestion is that the CPJ data provide new information not fully incorporated in the other indices. The IREX Sustainability index seems to include

more of the positive features of press operation than do the RSF and Freedom House measures. The Committee to Protect Journalists is a wholly negative measure. The lower—really almost trivial—correlation of the CPJ and the Sustainability Index is, in this sense, not surprising.

The analysis shows that the RSF index correlates equally well with the three subparts of the Freedom House Index (.81 for Legal Environment, .82 for Political Influences, and .80 for Economic Pressures). The RSF index, however, correlates less well with the business management part the IREX Sustainability Index (.62) than with the other parts.

The CPJ tally of attacks correlates best with the Political Influences part of the Freedom House index. The lowest correlation is with the Economic Pressures. These findings are consistent with the argument that the three components of the Freedom House index have some distinctiveness. The CPJ tally is more strongly related to the IREX Free Speech, Professional Journalism and Plurality of Sources subcomponents than to the Business Management and Supporting Institutions components, where the relationship is really nonexistent.

The interrelationships of the Freedom House and IREX subparts do not show clear patterns. The Freedom House Legal Environment is more highly correlated with the IREX Business Management item than with other IREX components. The Freedom House Political Influences component is least correlated with the IREX Free Speech component. The Freedom House Economic Pressures component is highly correlated with the IREX Plurality of News and Supporting Institutions measures. The easiest interpretation is that the Freedom House and IREX measures have much in common internally as well as in the sum.

The part-whole correlations for both the Freedom House and the IREX indices show that each total index is roughly evenly influenced by the subparts. The three subparts of the Freedom House index also are very highly correlated, meaning that little new variance is obtained by any one of the three components. For the IREX index, on the other hand, more variance among components exists. IREX's sweep is a bit wider, it seems, in gathering components for its index.

In sum, the Reporters sans frontieres, Freedom House and IREX measures all seem to be measuring much the same thing. The Freedom House gain for including the three components is not

great, at least as far as the 2003 measures are concerned. The IREX MSI does seem to include components not represented as fully in the other indices, but, in terms of the total index, little is gained from the exercise. The IREX index is more strongly related to the Freedom House than the Reporters sans frontieres indices, perhaps reflecting an American bias in the evaluation. The Committee to Protect Journalists tally of Attacks on the Press is not the same as the other three indices. The relationship is particularly weak between it and the IREX index. The suggestion is that the Committee to Protect Journalists adds information not redundant with that of the other indices.

These findings speak to the distinctiveness of the measures, or, in the reverse, to the consistency and the reliability of the information they provide. What evidence is there that they vary in significant ways across time, that is, reflect real changes that take place in the media environment of a country?

Only the Freedom House measure has been used for a long enough period to allow for an assessment of this question.

In general, the data show that the Freedom House measures are related from year to year, suggesting more stability than change, as one would expect. Across time, however, the size of the relationships declines, again as one would expect if real change is taking place in the system. This also suggests that the evaluators are not simply using the rating from the year before to evaluate the current year. The relationship between the 1981 evaluation and the 1982 evaluation is .92, but by 1993 (when the scale changed), that relationship had dropped to .62. This pattern is repeated across the years and across measurement type. The 1994 measure of Press Freedom by Freedom House is correlated .91 with the measure a year later, but that relationship dropped to .85 by 2004.

It is clear from analyses of these measures that there has been more consistency than change reflected in the Freedom House measure across the more than 20 years that it has been reported. The mean scores for the index changed not at all from 1981 to 1989, nor did the standard deviation of the measures. Treating the data as appropriate for computation of means and standard deviations is a stretch, of course, as the measure used during that time period was truly ordinal. (Correlation computation also assumes better measurement than exists.) Given the small range of the measures, however, median change can hardly be expected.

In the 1989 to 1993 period—a crucial one in world history and in the history of media democratization—the Freedom House index of Press Freedom did change in the expected direction. The overall scores for the nations ranked move in the direction of press freedom. The standard deviation, as would be expected, did not change. Change from 1994 to 2004, based on the full 100-point scale, was not as dramatic, but it was in the direction of increased press freedom. The standard deviation has increased slightly as well.

In 1981, the mean for all six countries Warsaw Pact Countries (Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria) was 3. There was no variance, as all countries had that score. In 1990, there was evidence of change, which continued through 1993. (East Germany dropped out of the analyses after 1989.) Based on the new scale used from 1994 to 2004, change continued to be in evidence. (The division of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia created six states again.) In other words, the Freedom House measure across time seemed to pick up what most would argue was real change in the media environments of these countries across the 20-plus years it has been used.

These same analyses were repeated for the 15 states evolving from the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The data for 1981 to 1992 reflect the evaluation only of the Soviet Union. From 1994 on, the 100-point measure reflects the situation in the 15 new states. The measure shows a deterioration of the media landscapes in terms of press freedom. The change has not been overly large, but it is noticeable nonetheless. Absent other evidence, one would conclude that the media environment in these states as a whole did not improve, and that the Freedom House evaluators did not get swept up in the euphoria of the moment in reaching their assessment. (The ratings for the three Baltic states did improve during this time period, but it was offset by deteriorating media situations in other states, according to the Freedom House data.)

Summary and Conclusions

Since the details of the findings are in Becker, Vlad and Nusser (2007), I'll only summarize here.

The empirical analysis of the numerical ratings of four of these organizations—Reporters sans frontieres, Freedom House, IREX and Committee to Protect Journalists—shows that at least the first three of these organizations largely come to the same conclusions about the media. The RSF and Freedom

House ratings for 2002 were correlated .81 (Pearson Product Moment), while the figure in 2003 was .84. The IREX index correlated .72 with the RSF index and .89 with the Freedom House ratings in 2002. In 2003, the figures were .82 and .91.

The correlation of the IREX measures with those of Reporters sans frontieres and Freedom House is surprising, given that IREX tried to create a distinct concept, namely media sustainability. The goal was a measure that incorporated press freedom, but focused more heavily on the economic and social environment of the country thought necessary for the development of a durable, independent media. The comparisons are only for the 18 countries rated by all three organizations, but they suggest that IREX has had limited success in getting beyond the media freedom measurement—or that the RSF and Freedom House measures were already broad enough to capture the meaning sought by IREX.

The higher correlation of the IREX measure with Freedom House's measure both years also suggests a nationality bias, as both IREX and Freedom House measures are the product of U.S. organizations, while RSF is a French-based NGO. This at a minimum raises a question about the independence of the evaluations of country perspectives on press freedom reflecting domestic, political concerns.

The Freedom House and IREX measures are designed to be multi-dimensional. In the case of Freedom House, the subindices are very highly correlated internally. This argues for internal reliability. But it also suggests that the measures do not sample elements of the concept widely—at least not as widely as is the case for the IREX MSI, which has lower internal consistency. In other words, the internal consistency of the Freedom House measure is at the cost of the face validity.

Clearly the Committee to Protect Journalists, through its measures of attacks on the press, has gathered information that is not redundant with the RSF, Freedom House and MSI indices. The CPJ counts of attacks correlates weakly with the first two measures and very poorly with the IREX measure.

One option would be to incorporate the CPJ data into a global index, perhaps one that also combined the RSF and Freedom House measures. Combining RSF and Freedom House into a single, averaged, index would improve the reliability of the measures—if each has random error associated with it. Adding the CPJ measure, on the other hand, would increase the breadth of the measure, that is,

potentially improve its validity.

The evidence is, in the case of Freedom House, which has reported data across more than 10 years, that the measurement is consistent. The evidence also is that it has varied in meaningful ways across time, picking up the dramatic change in the media environment of the former Warsaw Pact countries following the fall of communism in 1989.

The usefulness of the Freedom House measure, or any amalgamation of the Freedom House measure with that of RSF, CPJ or other organizations, is its match to the theoretical concepts of interest and to other systemic variables, such as the evolution of a civil society and key democratic institutions.

It is possible to make some assessment of the first of these issues by reflecting back to the definitions of press freedom identified in the scientific literature on the media. McQuail (2000) has said that a free press should have sufficient independence to protect free and open public expression of ideas and information. It also should be diverse. Others, such as Curran (1996) and Rozumilowicz (2002) have added additional requirements about mediation of societal interests and balance between commercial and public components. None of the existent measures seem adequate to address the diversity argument of McQuail let alone to respond to the broader concepts of press freedom called for by Curran and Rozumilowicz.

The relationship of the existing measures—or a broader measure incorporating already existing information on new information gathered to reflect the broader concepts of McQuail, Curran, Rozumilowicz and others—to other measures is virgin territory. The findings of this analysis suggest it is territory worthy of exploration.

Using IREX Index to Study Impact of Competition

In a series of workshops that we conducted in Romania approximately a decade after the fall of communism in that country, we heard repeatedly from journalists about sensationalism in the media, about corruption and bribes involving journalists, and about the influence of powerful political figures and business elites on the media. We also were told about western media assistance projects that supported the establishment of new media organizations in these markets. We also were told, and could observe, the very high level of competition in the media markets in that country.

These comments and observations, as well as similar comments and observations from other settings, led us to conduct two related studies that looked at the impact of excessive market competition on media performance. In the second study, we used the IREX Media Sustainability Index, and, in doing so, were able to gain indirect evidence of the validity of that measure.

The first of these studies has been reported in two reports (Hollifield, Becker & Vlad, 2004; Hollifield, Becker and Vlad, 2006). The first report (Hollifield, Becker & Vlad, 2004) was based on detailed interviews with the managers of two newspapers from an African nation, one daily and one weekly, and four newspapers from a former Soviet bloc nation, one daily and three weeklies. Both nations are low in income and have limited economies. The second report (Hollifield, Becker and Vlad, 2006) was based on interviews with the managers of 13 radio and television networks in six countries with developing, but limited, economies. Six of the 13 networks were public broadcasters, seven were commercial broadcasters, and four were in organizations converting from a public broadcasting to a commercial model. The study was designed to learn about management strategies these media organizations were employing to survive in their markets. The managers spoke often of extremely high levels of competition for viewers and advertisers, aging and shrinking audiences and of concentrated and unstable advertising markets. In the view of the managers, the competition hindered the development of strong independent journalism.

This exploratory work led us to examine more carefully the theoretical and empirical research on the effects of competition on news media performance. What we found is that, contrary to classical economic theory, there is evidence that more competition may not always improve consumer welfare in media markets if consumer welfare includes the socioeconomic effects of news products (Jacobsson, Jacobsson, Hollifield, Vlad & Becker, 2006). The review suggests that a combination of supply-side competition for resources and demand-side vertical and horizontal product differentiation strategies may result in excessive sameness of low-cost, low-quality content that either focuses on celebrity and sensationalism or slants news to appeal to the audiences' ethnic, political, or religious biases. In short, it may well be that under conditions of hypercompetition, media that survive in the market may do so at the expense of their journalistic product and their larger contributions to society.

In fact, there is some reason to believe that the relationship between media competition and media performance might be curvilinear (Hollifield, 2006). Under this model, monopoly markets would be expected to produce the highest level of market performance in the form of profit for media organizations, but not the highest quality of news for consumers. The underlying assumption is that with virtually no direct competition, media will have the resources to produce quality information products but will have little incentive to do so.

Low-to-moderate levels of competition are expected to stimulate media organizations to invest in improving the quality of their news products in an attempt at vertical product differentiation. The increased investment produces an optimal combination of outcomes in the form of more balanced, enterprising, diverse coverage of important issues, and solid market performance in terms of audience size, advertising revenues, and organizational profits.

Finally, as competition among news providers becomes extreme, the organization's financial commitment to quality news is expected to decline as will the market performance of the organization. The quality and diversity of news content should fall, as will journalists' wages, the size and quality of the editorial staff, and the numbers of bureaus and subscriptions to wire services and other external sources of content. Journalists and the media organizations that employ them are expected to become more subject to capture by outside actors, and the organization is expected to pursue low-cost product differentiation strategies.

Methodology

I will not go into the theoretical rationale for this argument, but turn instead to the methodology, which is most relevant to this paper. To test our expectation about the relationship between competition and media performance, we used the IREX Media Sustainability Index as our measure of media performance.

IREX, as explained above, assesses media sustainability using five criteria or objectives: 1) legal and social norms that protect and promote free speech and access to public information; 2) journalism that meets professional standards; 3) multiple news sources that provide citizens with reliable and objective news; 4) independent media that are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence;

and 5) supporting institutions that function in the professional interests of independent media. We used the second criterion, journalism that meets professional standards, as our measure of professional performance.

The measure of professional performance contains the following seven criteria: 1) Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced; 2) Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards; 3) Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship; 4) Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption; 5) Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming; 6) Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient, and 7) Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

IREX's 2004 (IREX 2005) report contained additional data on the media in the countries studied, including the number of media outlets. IREX attempted to gather information on the advertising market in the countries as well but, in most cases, was unsuccessful.

An alternative source of data on advertising markets is World Press Trends, produced by the World Association of Newspapers (WAN, 2004). Advertising data on the countries rated by IREX, however, also were incomplete in the WAN report. An analysis of the WAN data for 47 countries where the data were available, however, showed that there was a Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient of .87 between total advertising revenue and the country's Gross Domestic Product, taken from the CIA World Factbook (2003). Gross Domestic Product, then, can be treated as a rough surrogate for advertising resources.

For this study, Gross Domestic Product (purchasing power parity) was obtained from the CIA World Factbook (2004) and used as a surrogate for the size of the advertising market. The GDP was divided by the total number of media outlets to provide a measure of market competition. In a highly competitive market, this ratio should be small compared to a market with a low level of competition.

The nine states included in the 2004 IREX assessment from Southeast Europe were Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. Kosovo is an international protectorate that was technically part of the federation of Serbia and

Montenegro. IREX in 2004 treated these as three separate countries. Three countries from the Caucasus were included: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine were included from Western Eurasia. From Central Asia were Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Findings

IREX reported inconsistently on the number of media outlets for the various countries, sometimes giving precise numbers for daily newspapers, nondaily newspapers, radio stations and television stations, but often giving only total print and total broadcast. For that reason, total print and broadcast outlets were used in this analysis. For one of the countries, Georgia, no data were reported by IREX on the number of media outlets. Data for Georgia were taken from the BBC web site (BBC, 2005). The range of scores was dramatic, with Russia reporting 42,167 media outlets, and Tajikistan reporting 42.

Gross Domestic Product also varied widely, from Kosovo's \$5.7 billion to Russia's \$1.3 trillion. The GDP figures for Serbia were taken from the IREX report, rather than from the CIA World Factbook, since the latter did not differentiate GDP among the three parts of the Serbia and Montenegro federation. For Kosovo, GDP was taken from United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK 2007). Purchasing power parity was computed by using the conversion factor for neighboring Albania, taken from the World Bank (2006a). Neither the CIA Factbook nor IREX had a GDP estimate for Montenegro, so it was dropped from the analysis.

To create the measure of competition, the GDP was divided by the number of media outlets. Ukraine had the lowest score (meaning the highest level of competition), with just under \$13 million in GDP per media title, while Azerbaijan had the highest score (lowest competition), with \$168 million in GDP per media title.

The IREX professional journalism scores ranged from Uzbekistan's 0.54 to Bulgaria's 2.56. The mean and median were both 1.78, while the standard deviation was 0.50.

The simple correlation (Pearson Product Moment) between the measure of competition and the IREX professional journalism index for the 19 countries included in the analysis was $-.092$ (R square = $.008$; adjusted R square = $.05$). In other words, the relationship predicted by the dominant thread of the literature was not correct. Competition clearly was not associated with improved journalism, as measured

by the IREX index.

Evidence that the relationship is, in fact, curvilinear, as predicted, does exist, though the pattern clearly is not perfect. Low levels of competition were associated with low levels of journalistic performance, consistent with the dominant arguments about the negative effects of monopolistic markets. Moderate levels of competition produced higher levels of journalistic performance than did lower levels. There also seemed to be evidence that higher levels of competition produced a drop-off in journalistic performance, as expected. A comparison of a linear model, a quadratic model (inverted U), and a cubic model indicates that the cubic model is the best fit. The R squared figures, respectively, are .008, .021 and .054 (unadjusted).

Five different regression analyses were employed to explore this relationship more fully. Here, a measure of urbanization was used in the regression analysis to correct for a potential problem in the measure of competition used in the initial analysis. Two countries with identical GDPs and numbers of media outlets might have very different levels of competition if those populations were differently dispersed. In one country, the media outlets and population could be spread around the country, and real competition could be low, while in the other, both the population and media outlets could be highly concentrated, indicating real competition. The measure of urbanization was taken from the World Bank (2006b) and reflects, for 2004, the percent of the population that resides in an urban area. (The estimates are based on national definitions of what constitutes a city or metropolitan area, making cross country comparisons more difficult than is ideal.) No urbanization measures were available for Kosovo and Serbia.

To capture the inverted u-shape with respect to competition in these analyses, the GDP per media outlet measure of competition plus the square of the same were used. The two measures of competition, the simple score and the square of that score, are highly correlated (.96). When the two measures are used in the regression equation, with the IREX Professional Journalism score as the dependent variable, the two measures show the expected relationships, meaning that more competition is actually bad for professional journalism. The squared variable indicates a decreasing positive slope--probably ending up with a negative slope. Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro have been eliminated from these analyses.

Introduction of the urbanization measure does not have any impact on the findings. Urbanization

is not a predictor of the dependent variable, and it does not alter the relationship between the two GDP measures and journalistic performance.

Models three to five introduce three other components of the Media Sustainability Index as controls: Supporting Institutions that function in the professional interests of independent media, legal and social norms that protect and promote Free Speech and access to public information, and independent media that are well-Managed Businesses, allowing editorial independence. These three measures hold constant the effect of the media environment generally, thereby allowing for a more sensitive examination of the impact of competition on media performance.

It appears that the IREX control measure of Supporting Institutions is relatively well suited to capture the country specific institutional situation. It is also clear that this measure dwarfs the other variables in explanatory power. The adjusted multiple R for the third equation was .813. The multiple R figures (adjusted) actually decline with introduction of the two other components of the Sustainability Index.

At the same time, it is clear that these three controls do not appreciably alter the relationship between competition and media performance. There are indications that more competition after a point is bad for Professional Journalism even when urbanization, as well as the basic level of press freedom is controlled.

Conclusion

The data presented here challenge the dominant argument in the literature that increased competition in the media market is always a good thing. At best, the study finds evidence that high levels of competition have little effect on the quality of journalism produced in the emerging media markets studied. At worst, the data suggest that competition, after a point, may have negative consequences.

The findings are tentative for a number of reasons. First, it was not possible to get a precise measure of the advertising market from existing sources, and GDP was used as a surrogate. The measures of number of media outlets also were less precise than would be ideal. In the dynamic media environments studied, measurement of this sort is necessarily problematic. Titles come and go literally daily.

The measure of journalistic performance also does not capture the full meaning of that concept. As our earlier analysis had found (Becker, Vlad and Nusser, 2007), the performance measure also was highly correlated with other components of the IREX index, which raises the possibility that the evaluators did not strongly differentiate among the components of Media Sustainability.

At the same time, the fact that a relationship, consistent with the expectation, was found lends support to the validity of the media performance component of the Media Sustainability Index.

Mapping Media Assistance Projects

These two studies provided evidence that it is possible and profitable to measure characteristics of the media system and that the existing measures, focusing on media freedom and media sustainability, are useful indicators of the possible outcome of media assistance projects. While working on these analyses, we also focused our attention on media assistance itself.

Despite the high level of interest in media assistance on the part of many western governments in the years after the end of the Cold War, these investments were made without a comprehensive plan or even much coordination among the donors (Hume, 2004). The consequence was that some countries received much aid and others, also with considerable need, received little.

Only in 2002 did anyone make a serious effort to document the nature of that investment. Price, Noll and DeLuce (2002) examined the assistance activities of governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, foundations and associations from Europe and the United States in 14 program areas. These are listed below:

Price, Noll and DeLuce Categorization of Media Assistance Projects:

1. Journalism training and education for reporters and editors in print and broadcast news.
2. Training in marketing, business management, and efforts to ensure financial independence.
3. Training that focused on transforming state broadcasters into genuine public service networks, including journalism training for editorial staff and technical advice for the broadcaster's managers and producers.
4. Training in professional media ethics, accountability, and professionalism.

5. Material assistance aimed at helping build the infrastructure needed to ensure continued media independence.
6. Assistance in developing networks of independent media including providing assistance in program sharing arrangements, linking production, distribution, and management of broadcast material.
7. Assistance and advice in building democratic legal and regulatory frameworks for media.
8. Trade association development, including assistance in the creation of professional associations of journalists and trade associations of broadcasters or publishers and support for the organization of lobbying campaigns aimed at reforming restrictions on media freedom.
9. Legal Defense. Support or training for the legal defense of journalists and news organizations facing harassment by a particular regime.
10. Conflict prevention initiatives that attempt to educate journalists about reporting on alienated communities and overcoming religious, ethnic, or national prejudice.
11. Security training for journalists, mainly in areas of conflict and where there are significant security risks for journalists.
12. Support for legal advocacy, including the establishment, training, and support for media monitoring and watchdog groups that monitor press freedom and provide protection for journalists.
13. Social and cultural development. This includes programs that seek to develop community radio and journalism.
14. New communications assistance in developing information technology, building new Internet sites, establishing Cyber cafes, and helping ensure unrestrictive regulation, and promoting Internet access.

While the team was able to provide a broad overview of the nature of the work and was able to identify many of the key donor organizations, assistance providers, and recipients, it was not able to identify the overall level of funding. Among the challenges for the field identified by Price, Noll and DeLuce

was a need for planning and coordination of efforts, conflicting philosophies about assistance, lack of expertise on the part of assistance providers, uneven geographic spread of projects, and inadequate evaluation of the programs funded.

In a subsequent study, Hume (2004) provided an overview, largely from the perspective of U.S. organizations, of media training assistance efforts. The title of the report, *Media Missionaries*, seemed to reflect the perspective of at least some of those involved in the international initiatives. Hume estimated that U.S. donors had spent “at least \$600 million and probably much more” in media assistance projects over the previous decade. Despite Hume’s acknowledgment that the figure was a very rough estimate, it has been used by others in discussing media assistance projects (e.g., Kumar, 2006).

Methodology of Project to Identify Amount of Funding Outside U.S.

To provide an estimate of funding by donor organizations outside the U.S., we undertook another study in 2005, with the support of the Knight Foundation in Miami.

International Finance Corporation (IFC), which is a member of the World Bank Group, identifies 26 countries as Donor Countries. These are Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Included are all 22 members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The European Commission, which is a member of the DAC, was included on the list of 26 Donor Countries.

During the early stages of this project, efforts were made to identify all organizations in these 26 countries involved in some phase of media assistance, either as a funder of these projects or as provider of some form of assistance, such as training, support for media organizations, or assistance in the development of law in support of operation of independent media. Researchers in the Cox Center used a “snowballing” tactic of checking linkages among these organizations in their web and printed documents. Organizations providing training often partner in projects. These partnerships resulted in the identification of additional organizations. The training organizations can get funding from multiple sources. The identification of funding sources provided new information on organizations involved in media assistance.

The most difficult challenge initially was organization of the information. The government agencies and trainers were uneven in the amount of information they reported on their web sites, in their printed reports, and in interviews, so it was difficult to know what the final data base would look like. Researchers in the Center explored a number of options for the creation of a data base and ultimately decided on a relatively open structure for the records. This allowed for modification as the project developed.

As the project evolved, work focused most heavily on the funding organizations in the 25 donor countries other than the United States, consistent with the project goal. Two documents that surfaced as part of the "snowballing" procedures provided considerable assistance. The first was the draft report by Price, Noll and De Luce (2002). The second was an OECD report on international development (IDS, 2005).

The definition of media assistance used by Price, Noll and De Luce (2002) was simplified slightly and used for this project. Media assistance included the following:

1. Journalism training and education.
2. Training in marketing and business management and efforts to ensure financial independence for the media.
3. Training to transform state broadcasters into public service organizations.
4. Training in professional ethics, accountability and professionalism.
5. Material assistance to help build the infrastructure needed for media independence, such as printing presses and transmission facilities, as well as the development of Internet sites and capability.
6. Assistance in the development of networks of independent media and in development of trade associations.
7. Assistance and advice in building the legal and regulatory framework for media operation and in legal defense.
8. Assistance in development of models for coverage of conflict and conflict resolution and of security measures for coverage of conflict.
9. Support for media monitoring and watchdog groups.

10. Development of community support for media independence and of community use of media technologies.

To identify organizations in countries on the OECD list but not found through other techniques, we made telephone calls, sent e-mail messages, and traveled to meet with key sources of information on media assistance.

Outcome of the Research

We identified 70 organizations and foundations in the 25 countries outside the United States involved in the funding of media assistance. Of these, 27 were units of governments in a single country, 22 were nongovernmental organizations, including foundations, and 21 were multinational organizations.

At least one organization providing funding for media assistance was identified in 24 of the 25 countries. Bahrain is the single donor country without an organization involved in media funding. Germany had the most organizations, with 10, the United Kingdom had six, followed by Japan with four and Norway with three.

An effort was made to obtain detailed financial information from each of these funding sources. Some of the governmental organizations directed Cox Center researchers to the OECD web site for their records. Others provided them directly. Where possible, estimates provided directly were compared with those on the OECD web site. Where conflicts existed, the estimates obtained directly were taken as more accurate.

In the end, 38 of the 70 funders provided a figure for the amount of media assistance they had funded in at least one year from 1999 through 2004. Most of the estimates were for 2003 or 2004. Based on the most recent year, it is possible to say that \$0.75 billion was being spent each year for media assistance projects by these 38 organizations. The actual tally for the 38 organizations was \$776,609,000.

An additional nine organizations provided total disbursement funds for a year but did not provide data solely for media assistance, indicating that spending is not broken down in that fashion. Of the 38 organizations that provided a figure on the amount of media assistance, 23 also provided a figure representing their total assistance disbursement that same year. For these organizations, the media assistance component represented 2.5% of total assistance spending. If the nine organizations not

providing media budgets are spending at a similar ratio to those that provided data on media assistance and total assistance, these nine organizations have been spending \$42.5 million in media assistance in recent years .

Of the 23 organizations that did not provide any type of data, six were government organizations and 17 were private organizations. One of the organizations, a foundation, explicitly refused to provide the data. The others, despite repeated telephone and e-mail contacts, simply did not provide the information. Five of those six government agencies were units within the European Union, and much of their funding actually was accounted for by other EU units to which they transfer funds and for which data were provided. Foundations generally provide lesser amounts than government agencies. For this reason, it probably is a reasonable estimate that about \$1 billion was being spent by organizations outside the U.S. each year on media assistance programs.

If Hume's (2004) estimate of \$600 million per year by the U.S. is added, our estimate of at least \$1 billion per year in spending for media assistance in the early part of this decade seems quite reasonable. The Hume estimate is almost certainly too low, suggesting that the figure is probably considerably more than \$1 billion.

U.S. spending since 2003 has been shaped by the country's invasion and occupation of Iraq. Serafino, Tarnoff and Nanto (2006), in a Congressional Research Service report for Congress, said \$28.9 billion was spent for Iraqi assistance from 2003 to 2006. About 17.6 billion went for economic and political reconstruction assistance, with the remainder going to Iraqi security. No figures are available for media assistance spending. Barlett and Steele (2007) report that one media assistance contract alone, to the contractor Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) was worth \$82 million.

Evaluation of Investments in Media Assistance

We also undertook a systematic examination of what already is known about the impact of media assistance projects by examining available evaluation reports on those projects. We looked at the impact of these programs on the individual journalists, the organizations for which they work, and the media system itself. We also wanted to know if the evaluation offered any evidence of the impact of media assistance on development of a civil society or on democratization.

Evaluation has not been prominent in the media assistance landscape (Price, Noll and DeLuce, 2002). Relatively few efforts have been made (or at least publicly reported) that do more than simply tally the number of persons trained. The exceptions are noteworthy.

Carothers (1996), in his assessment of democracy assistance to Romania, included an evaluation of two major media assistance projects in that country. In 1990, the U.S. government underwrote the purchase of a printing press and provided newsprint and other supplies for the newspaper *România Liberă*. Between 1990 and 1993, the International Media Fund helped the newspaper get the press in working order. The International Media Fund also from 1990 to 1993 helped launch the first private television station in Romania, SOTI. Carothers concluded that the support for *România Liberă* “failed to contribute to the development of independent media” and “has not contributed to the development of professionalized media” in the country. SOTI failed in 1993. Carothers believes the lessons are two: it is very difficult to develop an organization in a setting where the foreign interest in its survival outweighs the local interest; and the management expertise needed for such an organization is not likely to exist locally.

In 1999 and 2000, the Cox Center conducted an evaluation of the Knight International Press Fellowship Program, operated by the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) in Washington, D.C. (Becker & Lowrey, 2000). The Knight International Press Fellowship Program, which began in 1994, every year sends a group of about 15 journalists from the United States to assignments around the world for periods of up to nine months. The trainers, known as Knight International Press Fellows, work in conjunction with local hosts to provide a wide variety of training.

To obtain reports of impact from those with whom the Knight Fellow worked, three evaluators from the Cox Center attempted to find as many of those who worked with the Knight Fellows in the 11 countries as possible and to conduct interviews with them. The evaluation focused on self-reports of impact and reports of observations of impact on others, on media organizations, and on the media system in the country. Evidence from the 11 countries in which the Knight Program had a significant presence in the 1994 to 1998 period was of impact.

Thompson (2000) reviewed efforts by Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to reform the broadcast media of the former Yugoslavian states. Thompson concluded that efforts

at media assistance were not well coordinated, did not recognize that the media in Yugoslavia were some of the most sophisticated in a communist state, as were the audience members, and the United Nations Protection Forces had little understanding of how to implement a coherent communication policy. In his view, there was little evidence of the effectiveness of the media assistance programs.

Berger (2001), in a study of trainees who had participated in a variety of journalism programs in southern Africa over a two and a half year period, found that trainees reported that they had gained from the programs, that female trainees had more impact on their newsrooms, that some were frustrated they could not implement their skills because of the work environment, and that training took time to have impact.

The International Center for Journalists (2002) contracted Philliber Research Associates to conduct an evaluation of Free Press Seminars it conducted in Latin America between 2000 and 2002. Before and after the workshops, participants were asked to rate how familiar they were with the Declaration of Chapultepec, a free press manifesto for the Americas, and other key free press documents or restrictions. After the ICFJ workshops, familiarity with Chapultepec, Article 19, the First Amendment, and legal restrictions on freedom of expression in the United States and in the home country of the workshops increased significantly. After the workshops, the participating journalists in most countries were less likely to feel the press should be legally restricted, though the differences were not great. Participants also rated the workshops highly overall and rated individual components highly.

Nelson and Stinson (2004) provided USAID in 2004 an assessment of the impact of media training programs in Kosovo funded by USAID and other sources. Much of that investment has been in training, according to the report, and the training has produced mixed responses. Some trainers were judged to be unqualified and course content did not always respond to local needs. ARD faulted USAID for not investing enough of its resources in evaluation of the work that was done.

Press Now, a non-governmental organization (NGO) located in Amsterdam, in 2004 analyzed the media development work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Manro, Palmer & Thompson, 2004). Press Now relied on "media experts" in the countries studied to serve as critics of the programs of OSCE. Most of the comments were

focused on the assessment of program process, though these experts did offer comments about impact as well. For the most part, Press Now concluded that the programs were effective, though no systematic evidence was provided of this.

USAID has conducted a number of assessments of media programs it has funded around the world. Kumar (2006) reported the findings of those assessments of media assistance projects in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Central America, Indonesia, Russia, Serbia, and Sierra Leone. USAID also issued individual reports on a number of these projects (De Luce D. , 2003, September; Kumar, K., & Cooper, L. R., 2003, August; McLear, R., McLear, S., & Graves, P., 2003, November; Rockwell, R., & Kumar, K., 2003, June). The media assistant projects reviewed by Kumar (2006) took place between 2002 and 2004. The evaluations examined both the process (implementation) and outcomes (impact) of the media assistance projects (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004).

Kumar (2006) reported that a large number of persons completed training programs that were part of the project and that surveys conducted by USAID and interviews with others involved in the media in Central America indicated that the training made a major contribution toward improving the technical and professional skills of journalists. He also concluded that the project contributed to democratization directly and indirectly.

The USAID project in Russia was designed to encourage the growth of independent, regional television stations. Kumar (2006) reported that large numbers of persons attended the training courses offered and that the project contributed to improved management at participating television stations.

In Serbia, USAID and other donors worked to increase the technical and logistical capabilities of media organizations so they could provide alternative information in the 2000 election, when Slobodan Milosevic was turned out of office. In 2002, USAID commissioned a national survey that showed that about half of the respondents said they watched at least one of the programs of the independent television stations, about three-quarters reported reading one or more of the independent newspapers, and nearly six in 10 said the independent media were an important source of information in the election (Kumar, 2006). In Bosnia-Herzegovina, donor countries established a commercial, multi-ethnic television network to provide balanced and comprehensive coverage of the entire country. The network failed as a

commercial network, but Kumar concluded it had, during its operation, provided access to the airwaves for people who would otherwise have been excluded. A number of lessons were learned from the project, Kumar (2006) reports, including that a “top-down” approach to building media entities managed by international organizations is unlikely to succeed.

In Indonesia, USAID focused on improving independent radio news coverage by enhancing the skills of those in existing radio stations selected for the project. Kumar (2006) again reports that large numbers of persons participated in the project and that interviews with media owners, journalists and local experts said that the training programs improved professional expertise in the radio stations. He acknowledged, however, that there is no hard evidence that the skills and techniques taught actually were utilized. The program also attempted to expand the amount of news coverage by participating radio stations. Prior to the program, only five of the 50 selected stations broadcast news bulletins on regular intervals in their programming. After the program, all 50 stations had established news departments and broadcast news at regular intervals. Kumar (2006) noted, however, that only stations interested in expanding or developing their news capability were selected for the program, so they may have increased news broadcasts even without the assistance of the project. In addition, the demand for greater news coverage by the audience put pressure on all stations to increase their news broadcasts. No control group of stations not part of the project was used in the evaluation.

The Afghanistan project also focused on radio. USAID established a network of community radio stations to air local and national current affairs programs. Fourteen local radio stations were created for the network. Kumar (2006) reported that the quality of programming and local reporting remained poor at the time of evaluation of the project. Also unclear is whether the stations could survive once international assistance was removed. Establishment of the stations and the network, however, was considered to be a significant accomplishment.

In Sierra Leone, donors created a broadcast studio to produce radio news and entertain program for distribution in the country. Kumar (2006) reported that interviews with informants indicated the programs were reaching a national audience, that they covered a broad range of topics, and that the programming was giving a voice to poor and other people with no other access to radio. Persons

interviewed, who represented various groups in the war-torn country, indicated that they felt the programs had contributed to democratization in the society. The studio is entirely supported by donors, Kumar wrote, and its sustainability is in question.

Another study conducted in the Cox Center examined the impact of media assistance programs in Ukraine. Mussuri (2005) compared how four online publications supported by international donors differed in their coverage of the country's Orange Revolution of late 2004 from four other online publications that had not received support from international donors. Included in the support by international donors was a variety of training programs. The researcher sampled stories in these eight publications in October and November of 2004. What she found was that the media with outside support and training were more likely to cover the political events taking place in Ukraine at that time. Though each of these media covered the opposition in those stories, the stories in the media supported by outside donors were more likely to provide balanced coverage of the opposition. The stories about the opposition in the media not getting outside training and support were often sarcastic in tone, the writers often mixed their personal opinions into the news stories, and language choice presented the opposition in a negative way. The web sites that had been given outside training and support did not use biased language, presented more than one point of view, and did not mix editorial comment with reporting. She concluded that the style of reporting in these media was "very close to the western style of reporting, or to what is usually taught in training sessions."

Takeuchi (2005) completed an evaluation of a program that the Sasakawa Peace Foundation funded from 1991 to 2004. The program brought 81 journalists from the Pacific Islands to Japan for visits of differing duration. The purpose of the program was to expose the journalists to Japanese culture, politics and media. Takeuchi surveyed participants and reviewed stories written upon their return to assess impact of the program. The evaluator concluded that the program undoubtedly was successful in exposing a group without prior experience to Japanese life, but there was little evidence the program had an impact on the professional development of the journalists. It also had limited impact on what the journalists wrote or did after they returned.

The Cox Center (Becker & Vlad, 2006) also studied the impact of a two-year project media

assistance project it conducted in Philippines on conflict-sensitive journalism. The analysis examined media coverage of the ongoing conflict in the south of the country and the impact of two workshops conducted with journalists covering the conflict. The research showed a gap between the ways the journalists described media coverage of Mindanao and what the content analyses showed. The journalists from Mindanao described their coverage as rich in detail and background. The content analyses showed just the opposite. The journalists there, as well as those working in the capital, Manila, complained about the lack of coverage by the Manila media of anything but conflict in Mindanao. The content analyses showed the Manila media coverage to be more complete than that criticism suggests. Evidence of strong impact of the workshops on the actual stories written by the participating journalists was minimal. Despite this lack of strong evidence of the impact of the workshops on the story product, however, other evidence from the post-session questionnaires suggests the workshops did have impact. The journalists in both workshops said they found the workshops helpful and positively assessed the value of the workshops to them and their media organizations. In addition, the questionnaires returned by the journalists four months after the second workshop provided specific examples of how the journalists actually used the workshop in their work. The research found that the journalists recognized that they can gain from being in contact with each other. After the second workshop, the journalists, on their own, created an online discussion group. The group seems to have been active for only a short period of time, yet the potential was considered to be immense.

The Next Steps

Obviously, our project is far from complete. In the ideal, we would apply the same methodology we used to identify the level of funding from U.S. sources as we have employed for non-U.S. sources. We next would begin a detailed mapping of investments of all of those funding sources across time. We have learned that such an undertaking is possible. It also will be expensive, and we have not identified any funding source interested in providing the necessary resources. Dr. Kwame Boafo, former chief executive officer for the Communication and Information Sector at UNESCO, told us that it would need one person working full time for a year to put together detailed information about its media projects.

We also have a lot of work to do on measurement. The research we conducted using the

Freedom House, Reporters sans frontieres, IREX and Committee to Protect Journalists measures largely provided evidence of the reliability and comparability of the measures. We found the measures to be consistent across time. The Freedom House, RSF and, to a lesser extent, IREX measures were judged to be highly comparable. We did find some evidence of an effect for country, but it was not overly large. Only the CPJ measure seemed to be introducing a component of press freedom not highly linked to the other measures.

We also gained some evidence of the validity of the Freedom House measure. It picked up the dramatic changes in the media landscape following the fall of communism in 1989. This is a type of criterion validity. Our analysis of the subscale of IREX's Media Sustainability Index in our study of media competition also provides evidence of the validity of that measure. In this case, the evidence is indirect, through hypothesis testing, and is, of course, referred to as construct validation. Clearly, however, much more work on the validity—as well as the reliability—of the measures needs to be undertaken.

Construct validation—tied as it is to hypothesis testing—necessarily directs our attention back to our theoretical model of the role of the media in democratization. As Figure 1 indicates, the key relationship is between press freedom and democracy. This means we have to know what democracy is in its ideal or end stage.

Rozumilowicz (2002) has reviewed the many different definitions of democracy and identified two components that she feels are common to them, the notions of competition and of participation. For a democracy to exist, there must be competition among political actors so that the electorate has a choice and so that there is accountability for those elected. Those making the decision—those participating in the selection of leaders—must be representative of those to be governed.

Only media that are free and independent support the competition and participation that are the cornerstones of democracy, Rozumilowicz (2002) argues. I have already discussed this formulation, but it is worth repeating here. By free and independent, she means media that are part of a system in which a small number of social groups or other forces do not have control of the media and in which access to the media is equal and guaranteed.

Rozumilowicz (2002) believes that such a media system can only exist if there is a rule of law and

if social institutions ensure the freedom. Drawing on Curran (1996), she argues that the rule of law is necessary to guarantee that the media have at least two sectors, one controlled by the market and the other state-funded and guaranteeing public access. The key social institutions for free media provide education for journalists and for the citizens at large. In other words, civil society is necessary for the creation of media freedom.

As noted, Rozumilowicz (2002) identified four stages of media reform, that is, media change leading to the type of media she considers to be free and independent and essential for creating a democracy. She has identified the characteristics of each stage. Rozumilowicz does not provide an explicit checklist for classification of media according to their stage of reform, but it should be possible to develop one. In fact, this framework for classification guided the case studies reported in Price, Rozumilowicz and Verhulst (2002).

Rozumilowicz (2002) has chosen a stage approach to media reform precisely because it mirrors the dominant notion that democratization also follows stages (McConnell & Becker, 2002). Carothers (2002), it is worth noting, has argued that transition theory has been discredited. Central to all measures of both press freedom and democracy, however, is the notion of some type of continuum on which a given state can be classified. If we allow, for the sake of simplification, the possibility of stages, we could easily imagine cross-classifying states according to their level of media reform and level of democratic reform. The simple model is shown in Figure 2.

		Media Reform			
		Pretransition	Primary Transition	Secondary Stage	Mature Stage
Democratization	Pretransition	X			
	Transition		X		
	Consolidation			X	
	Mature Democracy				X

Figure 2. Classification of states in terms of media reform and democratization.

I have placed the cases in the diagonal, for that is what is predicted by Figure 1. This assumes civil society is not an essential contributor to democratization. Remember, of course, that Rozumilowicz (2002), consistent with the model, argues that civil society is a co-contributor with the media to democratization.

This is a very simple representation, of course, but it is surprising how little empirical work has been done looking at such a prominently discussed relationship. I mentioned earlier the work of Islam (2002), but I am not yet aware of others who have even attempted this type of test. It also is worth noting that the model represented by Figure 1 is not the only one possible. In fact, it is easy to imagine at least six different hypotheses regarding the role of the media in democratization.

1. The media-supremacist position, which holds that media freedom and independence produce democracy.

2. The democracy-supremacist position, which holds that democratic reform determines and produces media freedom and independence.

3. The media-freedoms-are-an-element-of-democracy position, which argues that media freedoms are simply an element of democracy and, as such, have no causal force leading to democracy.

4. The null-effect position, which holds that there is no relationship between media freedom and democracy.

5. A media-freedom-hinders-democracy argument.

6. A democratization-hinders-media-freedoms stance.

The question is how one might distinguish among these positions empirically. If media freedoms and democratization are, in fact, linked, one should be able to determine covariation between them at a given point in time. That is to say, the cases should fall on the diagonal in Figure 2. The fourth position, in sum, can be eliminated easily enough if, in fact, one can show that there is covariation between media reform and democratization. But a covariation cannot distinguish among positions 1 through 3. A positive correlation, however, would eliminate positions 5 and 6, which suggest a negative relationship.

If we treat the existing measures of press freedom and of democracy as suitable approximations of more perfect measures, it makes sense to simply look for the correlations between press freedom and democratization. What I am about to present is a very simple examination of that relationship. It is worth noting that very sophisticated empirical work looking at the predictors of democratization has been done by Vanhanen (1990, 1997, 2002). It also is worth noting that his analysis finds that democratization is predicted by economic factors, specifically the distribution of social and economic goods, rather than anything like press freedom.

Table 1 provides a string of bivariate correlations between the Freedom House measures of press freedom, which are available across the longest period of time, and Freedom House's measures of two political variables, Political Rights and Political Liberty (Freedom House, 2007). The former looks at the electoral process in a country, political pluralism and participation, and functioning of government. In other words, it contains the key elements of plurality and participation identified as common to measures of democracy. The Political Liberty measure looks at freedom of expression and belief, association and organizational rights, the rule of law, personal authority and individual rights. This, it seems, is a reasonable measure of civil society.

In Table 1, the correlations have been lagged by one year, that is, Press Freedom for a given year, such as 1981, has been correlated with the two political measures a year later. The lag is a guess, of course, but it is certain that some lag of effects is necessary. Across the period from 1981 to 2003, Press Freedom has been consistently related to the two political variables. That relationship was .79 in 1981, and it increased to .94 for 2002. Some of the change may be artificial. While the political variables were

measured on a seven-point scale through 2004, the Press Freedom measure used only a three-point scale from 1981 to 1993, when it was converted to a 100-point scale. As Table 1 shows, the correlations improved from 1993 to 1994 by a greater amount than for any other year-to-year comparison. Basically, across time, there is no consistent difference between the correlations for Press Freedom and the two political measures.

Also in Table 1 are the correlations between the two democracy variables and Press Freedom, one year later. If democracy comes before press freedom, a lag of at least one year makes sense. Again, the relationship is relatively consistent across time. There is no evidence of an effect for the change in measures of Press Freedom in 1994. And there is no evidence of a difference between the two political measure and Press Freedom.

The comparison of the two lags gives a very slight nod to the relationship between democracy and lagged Press Freedom over the relationship between Press Freedom and lagged democracy, but overall the differences are tiny and probably not important. It remains equally plausible that Press Freedom causes the two political variables as that the two democracy measures, including one of civil society, causes Press Freedom. But the lack of a relationship is ruled out, as well as the possibility of a negative relationship between these two variables.

The use of Freedom House measures for both the Press Freedom and measures of democracy is problematic, as the possibility of a “firm” effect exists. In other words, the two measures may co-vary because they are created by the same institution, using basically overlapping methodologies and sources of information. Many other measures of key political variables exist, of course, and they should be explored.

The Fund for Peace (Fund for Peace, 2007) , in collaboration with *Foreign Policy* magazine (FP Index, 2007), has recently released data on what the researchers term failed states, or states with an extreme breakdown of civil society. The index includes measures of uneven development, human flight, human rights violations, deterioration of public services, and other factors that make a state unstable. The index is correlated with an indicator of freedom of religion (negatively) and with a measure of environmental sustainability (negatively), according to analysis presented in the *Foreign Policy* article (FP

Index, 2007). Just for illustration, I have also looked at the relationship between the Freedom House Press Freedom score in 2004 and the Failed States Index for 2005. It seems reasonable to expect that a free press would contribute to state stability and sustainability. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is .08, meaning virtually no relationship exists. The sign actually is the opposite of what one would expect.

These are only illustrative of the kinds of analyses that can and should be done. It should be possible to try several different lags in the correlations as well as examine contingencies, such as those that might be caused by conditions in the civil society, as measured by a number of civil society indicators.

These analyses, however, are limited in one very important way. They focus on the structure of the media system and assume its consequences. To be more precise, the analysis assumes that a media system judged to be reformed, in the Rozumilowicz (2002) sense, or judged by Freedom House or Reporters sans frontieres to be free, or by IREX to be Sustainable, will produce news that is needed by a democracy to grow and prosper. Among the existing indices, the IREX MSI, through its professional journalism component, probably comes closest to actually measuring media content. It seems appropriate that more attention be given to this issue.

This approach is consistent with Hage's (1972) notion of a definitional premise. Such a premise stipulates a property of a concept. In this case, the concept is democracy. For example, one could argue that a democracy, by definition, is a state in which all citizens have access to information about how the state operates. A democratic state is one in which citizens have the ability to communicate to each other. A democratic state is one in which conflicts are managed without resort to violence. A democratic state is one in which representations of members of the state are presented in a way that fosters appreciation and understanding.

Hage (1972) would next suggest a mechanistic premise, in which we posit that one way of providing these needs of society is through the media system. We would measure the media in terms of whether they were, in fact, providing what a democratic state requires. For example, we could classify the media in terms of whether they provided content that fostered harmony, rather than conflict. The conflict sensitive journalism approach (Ross, 2003) is a step in that direction. This approach is very much focused

on media performance, rather than on media characteristics. It need not be a substitute for measures that focus on system characteristics. It can be a complement to those measures.

Of course, we don't know precisely what a democracy needs to function. We can theorize, or, as Hage says, offer premises. Measurement is, of course, is, at heart, a theoretical exercise.

Final Comments

Media monitoring, as noted at several points in this paper, is not a neutral activity. Those who engage in it have different perspectives, and, consequently, make different demands of the monitoring process.

The theoretical model represented by Figure 1 is one way of focusing attention on what we know about media assistance and what still needs to be known. Each of the lines in the model can be put as a question.

Does media assistance lead to trained, skilled, motivated journalists? The answer is yes, probably, but evaluation is spotty, more often focusing on process than on impact. Much of the evidence comes from self-reports of impact. Control groups are used infrequently. The evaluation often has been carried out by the funder or the media assistance provider, raising questions about the independence of the fundings.

Does media assistance lead to the creation of media organizations that facilitate and distribute the work of journalists? The answer is, maybe. Most of the evidence that exists is indirect, based on observations of participants. Designs are often limited. Many examples of failed investments exist, and few general rules have been learned. The problem of sustainability is paramount.

Does media assistance lead to creation of independent media systems? There is almost no systematic evidence at present that it does at present. No comparative studies of investment at the country level have yet been done. Such an analysis is badly needed. Considerable controversy also exists about what is meant by independent media.

Do independent media produced information needed for the functioning of democracy (or an open economy)? Almost no evidence exists that independent media are more likely to produce the information needed for democracy than media that are not independent. In fact, in China today, where all the media

are still in one way or another state controlled, considerable critical reporting is being done and citizens are being given information they need to challenge their leaders. The U.S. media—often considered independent of government—did a very poor job of challenging the assumptions behind the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, as even the media themselves have acknowledged (Massing, 2004).

Do independent media lead to the creation of the institutions of a civil society? No one knows the answer to this question. In fact, no one has seriously examined the question empirically. The evidence that civil society assistance has been effective in creating a civil society also is mixed (Carothers & Ottaway, 2000).

Do the institutions of civil society make use of the information provided by independent media to produce a functioning democracy (and an open economy)? Surprisingly little effort has been made to answer this question, though it is at the heart of the assumptions we made about media and civil society assistance. We certainly know relatively little about the conditions that may be required to make this relationship work.

It also is worth asking: *What do we know about media freedom and other measures of the characteristics of the media system?* We have strong evidence of the reliability of the measures across time. We also have convincing evidence of the reliability across different measurements by different “firms.” We also have some evidence of criterion validity, that is the ability of the measures to reflect known changes in the media environment. We have gained some evidence from our analysis of the IREX MSI of its construct validity, that is its ability to produce a predicted relationship in a test of a hypothesis. The simple analysis shown in Table 1 here also produces evidence of construct validity.

The measures, for the most part, focus on media freedom and independence from government control, but they do not take into consideration the pressures of commercial dependence. They also largely ignore the needs of the audience. Additional measures, focusing on the “needs” of democracy still are to be developed.

The model, in sum, tells us how much still needs to be done.

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Table 1. Correlations between Press Freedom and Political Measures

Year of Press Freedom	Political Rights +1	Political Liberty +1	Political Rights -1	Political Liberty -1
1981	0.79	0.82	0.79	0.81
1982	0.80	0.84	0.82	0.85
1983	0.79	0.82	0.81	0.85
1984	0.80	0.84	0.82	0.87
1985	0.82	0.83	0.82	0.87
1986	0.79	0.83	0.82	0.87
1987	0.77	0.81	0.81	0.86
1988	0.84	0.80	0.83	0.86
1989	0.82	0.77	0.93	0.89
1990	0.83	0.77	0.94	0.88
1991	0.81	0.77	0.93	0.91
1992	0.82	0.84	0.90	0.88
1993	0.81	0.81	0.89	0.85
1994	0.86	0.88	0.88	0.90
1995	0.88	0.91	0.88	0.91
1996	0.88	0.90	0.90	0.91
1997	0.88	0.90	0.90	0.92
1998	0.89	0.91	0.91	0.92
1999	0.89	0.91	0.90	0.93
2000	0.89	0.90	0.91	0.93
2001	0.91	0.92	0.90	0.93
2002	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.94
2003	0.93	0.94	0.94	0.95
2004			0.93	0.94