

# **MEDIA INDEPENDENCE**

## **VARIABLES AFFECTING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: CROSS-COUNTRY REGRESSION ANALYSIS WITH IMPLICATIONS ON RUSSIAN MEDIA**

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis

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**MEDIA INDEPENDENCE**

**Variables Affecting Freedom of the Press: Cross-Country Regression Analysis with  
Implications on Russian Media**

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## ABSTRACT

Freedom of speech and of the press is one of the fundamental human rights protected by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, as well as by the constitutions and laws of many countries. However, the degree to which the states exercise the full freedom of the press varies across countries. The governments of many countries restrict full media independence by imposing censorship, financially supporting and providing policy guidance to media outlets, as well as limiting journalists' rights.

This paper analyzes different levels of the state and media relationship, such as manufactured consent, market for loyalties and the CNN effect on different examples, including the media and state relationships in Russia. The "media and society interrelation model" is developed to show different media and society relations on examples of democratic, religious and economic societies.

Variables that influence the level of media independence in a given country that are considered in this analysis are economic freedom, freedom of religion, the level of income distribution in the country, density of population and others. The quantitative analysis proves that there is a strong relationship between these variables and the freedom of the press.

The implication of the results of this analysis is that full media independence in a given country can be provided only if democratic institutions are enforced and protected, the full religious freedom is exercised and the economic policies toward higher economic freedom are implemented. Similarly, if a new-formed Russian society tends towards a greater societal openness through exercising the full freedom of the press, it should take into account the importance of providing and protecting political rights and civil liberties, as well as religious and economic freedoms. Achieving this goal would mean that the freedom of the press stated in the Constitution of Russian Federation is not a fabrication, but a reality to be exercised for the well-being and prosperity of the nation.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

“Freedom is a universal value, not reserved for the rich.”  
*Francis Fukuyama, Johns Hopkins University*

“There is no weapon stronger than the press.”  
*Peter Balakian<sup>1</sup>*

Freedom of speech and of the press is one of the fundamental human rights. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, provides in Article 19 that, “Everyone has the right to opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” However, the degree to which the states exercise the full freedom of media greatly fluctuates. In many countries freedom of speech and of the press is provided by constitutions and other laws but its exercise in practice is neglected. The governments of many countries restrict full media independence by imposing censorship, financially supporting and providing policy guidance to media outlets, as well as limiting journalists’ rights. For example, the Russian government both financially and politically controls the main national television channels – Channel One, RTR, and NTV, although the constitution of the Russian Federation provides freedom of speech and of the press.

The objective of this study is to reveal what variables affect the freedom of the press and how the policy makers in Russia, as well as other countries can provide the higher degrees of media independence.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris*, HarperCollinsPublishers, 2003, page 15.

One of the variables that scholarly researchers usually link to the freedom of the press is democracy. A sound democratic system is considered to be one of the important drivers of media independence. It is usually acknowledged that democracy almost never flourishes without an effective, independent media.<sup>2</sup> The other traditional determinants of the freedom of the press have been the level of economic development in the country and media ownership. In my analysis I consider other variables that influence the level of media independence in a given country such as economic freedom, freedom of religion, the level of income distribution in the country, density of population, and others.

Freedom of religion is considered to be an important determinant of the press freedom for a number of reasons. First of all, the data show strong evidence that there is not one country in the world where it would be possible to have the freedom of media in religiously not free society. Second, we can argue that the freedom of media is possible in a society with a high level of economic development and the presence of the sound democratic institutions, but we should not forget that the wealthiest and historically the most democratic country in the world – the United States of America – was established on the principle of religious freedom. It was established by people who escaped their countries in the quest for religious freedom and found and established it in the United States. America's founders believed religious freedom to be the “first liberty.”<sup>3</sup> It was the religious freedom that further brought other liberties and rights, as well as economic welfare.

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<sup>2</sup> Everette Dennis and Robert Snyder (eds), *Media and Democracy*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.), 1998, p. xv.

<sup>3</sup> <http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/>

In my analysis I also argue that economic freedom is one of the important economic determinants of the freedom of the press, which also affects the level of economic development and income distribution in the country.

Chapter II starts with the theoretical analysis of the different levels of the state and media relationship, such as manufactured consent, market for loyalties and the CNN effect. The “media and society interrelation model” is developed to show different media and society relations on examples of democratic, religious and economic societies.

Theoretical framework developed in Chapter II is statistically tested in Chapters III and IV. Chapter III examines variables that influence the level of freedom of the press in a given country as well provides the description of each variable in the quantitative analysis. The quantitative analysis in chapter IV shows the joint influence of variables on the level of freedom of the press. The data are examined using univariate statistical technique, as well as Ordinary Least Squares multivariate regression analysis. The data set is derived for 194 countries which account for 99.9 percent of total world population.

Chapter V examines the state and media relationship and factors affecting freedom of the press in the Soviet Union, during Gorbachev’s perestroika and in modern Russia using the theoretical framework developed in Chapter II as well as the results of the quantitative analysis presented in Chapters III and IV. The analysis suggests that the media at the different stages of Russian history was a true reflection of political system as well as economic and social conditions present in the country. In the Soviet Union, given the political and economic conditions of the totalitarian country the media was designed to serve the ideology of the system. In modern Russia if we take into account the economic conditions of a country in transition, as well as the multiethnic issues present in

the country (the war in Chechnya, the explosive situation in North Caucasus) one thing the government can do to control the situation is by suppressing media. After examining the different variables affecting freedom of the press in Russia I argue that the independent media is possible under the certain economic, political and social conditions which, however, cannot be fully implemented currently in Russia. The situation though can improve with the advancement of political and socio-economic reforms. Providing complete economic and religious freedoms, as well enforcing the proper functioning of democratic institutions will give more openness and independence to Russian media and place the Russian society among developed nations in the world. However, the ethnicity issues (there are about 160 ethnic groups living in the country), as well as the cultural factor that Russian society “has tended for many hundreds of years, and still tends, toward autocracy”<sup>4</sup> will hold back the complete media independence in the country for years to come.

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Gibbs, *Gorbachev's Glasnost: The Soviet Media in the First Phase of Perestroika*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 1999, page ix.



## II. MEDIA INDEPENDENCE: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are many different definitions of the freedom of the press. Generally it means the “freedom to disseminate information and ideas through the mass media without government restriction.”<sup>5</sup> The objective of the free press is to provide access to information allowing the public to be aware of all available opinions and options. Supplying the free flow of information and diversity of opinions enables the electorate to make the right choices and vote wisely. A free press operates as a check on politics and as a link between the citizens and their political representatives: it is an instrument for holding governments accountable, and for citizens to get informed, communicate their wishes and participate in the political decision-making.<sup>6</sup>

However, there is no absolute freedom of press. The governments of different countries in different times controlled the media. In China the government controls the inflow and outflow of information and censors the political news. In the Soviet Union the government had total control over the different types of media, which was an essential component of the Communist Party ideology. Even in democratic societies the governments for some period of time controlled the media. Repressive press controls existed in almost all of Europe as printers and journalist – convicted of written sedition, heresy, or treason – were subjects to the death penalty and actually executed in many

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<sup>5</sup> Paul A. V. Ansah, “Blueprint of Freedom”, paper presented to the UNESCO conference on the press in Africa held in Namibia in 1991, quoted in Clement E. Asante, *Press Freedom and Development: A Research Guide and Selected Bibliography*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut&London, 1997, page 12.

<sup>6</sup> Hedwig De Smaele, “In the Name of Democracy”: The Paradox of Democracy and Press Freedom in Post-communist Russia, in Katrin Voltmer (ed), *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*, Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, 2006, page 42.

countries, including Spain, France, Austria, Germany, England, and Switzerland.<sup>7</sup> Even if the governments do not control this important mean of disseminating information they shape the environment in which the media companies exist and operate. However, the governments are not the only players in shaping and regulating the infrastructure of media services. The business world, the firms and corporations also participate in the process of establishing mass media infrastructure. Media companies in their turn can affect the actions of governments. John Street in his “*Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*” states that the governments need media conglomerates for the delivery of infrastructural services (the provision and circulation of information) and for the income and employment they generate. The need for such things makes governments vulnerable, limiting their capacity to regulate these valued media actors.<sup>8</sup>

However, the forms of control of print press and broadcast media substantially differ. In all times the broadcast media was regulated more heavily than the press media. The electromagnetic spectrum is a scarce resource and the government regulates and allocates it on behalf of the public and for the public use. In the vast majority of countries, particularly in the developing world, the print media are substantially freer than the broadcast sector, which in many cases has remained under the control of the state.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Robert J. Goldstein, “Freedom of the Press in Europe, 1815-1914”, Journalism Monographs, 1983, quoted in Clement E. Asante, *Press Freedom and Development: A Research Guide and Selected Bibliography*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut&London, 1997, page 22.

<sup>8</sup> John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*, Palgrave, 2001, page 236.

<sup>9</sup> Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, page 8.

## II.1 The Spectrum of Media Independence

### Manufactured Consent

One of the types of government control of media is manufactured consent which is an indirect method of media control. In the manufactured consent model the media outlets confirm with the agendas and frames of government officials. The large media companies are interested in corroborating with the government policies because they “all require government licenses and franchises and are thus potentially subject to government control or harassment.”<sup>10</sup> Media companies as economic entities are interested in tax and interest rates and dependent on other economic and financial policies.<sup>11</sup> For example, GE and Westinghouse [both are huge, diversified multinational companies heavily involved in media and controversial areas of weapons production and nuclear power in the United States] depend on the government to subsidize their nuclear power and military research and development, and to create a favorable climate for their overseas sales.<sup>12</sup>

In the manufactured consent model governments have power to set news agendas and influence journalists. Journalists self censor and perceive events through lens of respective political and social elites. In this case news media is influenced by government policies and does not function to criticize or challenge executive policy lines. Robert

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<sup>10</sup> Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1988, page 13.

<sup>11</sup> The extent to which the media companies are economically dependent on the government policies and government influence will be statistically tested in the Chapters IV and V. The variable which will be used in the regression analysis is economic freedom which is defined as “absence of government coercion or constraint on the production, distribution, or consumption of goods and services beyond the extent necessary for citizens to protect and maintain liberty itself.” (Definition from Brian T. Johnson, Kim R. Holmes, and Melanie Kirkpatrick, *1999 Index of Economic Freedom*, The Heritage Foundation, The Wall Street Journal, 1999, page 52.)

<sup>12</sup> Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1988, page 13.

Entman analyzed the divergent US media framing of the Korean Airline and Iran Air shoot downs which occurred during the 1980s.<sup>13</sup> Both of these international incidents were similar, involving mistakes by the military leading to the destruction of civilian airliners and large loss of life. However, the US news media framed the Iran Air shoot down, for which the US was responsible, in terms of a technical failure, while the Korean Airline shoot down, for which the USSR was responsible, was framed as a moral outrage. According to Entman, overall media coverage was consistent with the policy interests of the respective US administrations.

Daniel Hallin's analysis highlights how news media coverage of the war in Vietnam, up until 1968, was largely supportive of the war and rarely published material that criticized or questioned official US policy.<sup>14</sup> This, according to Hallin, reflected the elite consensus regarding US policy towards Vietnam. During this period the media coverage can be characterized as manufactured consent for official policy.

The other examples of manufactured consent model are little questioning by US news reporters of the rationale for invading Iraq in 2003 and the compliance of the Russian media channels with the government policies, for example, in the context of the war against terrorism.

The implicit government influence is present not only on the Russian public channels where the state has the majority of shares, but also on the so called "privately" owned media companies, whose authorities have close ties with the government and are

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Piers Robinson, *Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy*, European Journal of Communication, 2001, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, www.sagepublications.com, Vol. 16(4): 523-544.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Ibid.

largely dependent on the government policies to stay in business. The media entities in Russia self-censor and confirm the government directions on reporting. The government of Russia has released the guidelines for reporting on a terrorist act including a glossary which specifies that Chechen fighters must be referred to as “terrorists.”<sup>15</sup> These measures are often justified by the authorities as being necessary in order to maintain calm and order in society.<sup>16</sup> Those who do not comply with the directions can “become the objects of loathing or hate for the authorities and/or those caught up in acts of violence and perhaps be labeled as “unpatriotic” or as “vultures” feeding off victims’ misery.”<sup>17</sup> For example, Andrei Babitsky who had provided reports of Chechen rebel resistance for U.S. funded Radio Liberty was arrested in Chechnya by Russian security services. Ramzan Mezhidov, a freelancer for Moscow's Centre TV, was reportedly shot at from a Russian aircraft while filming the bombing of a refugee.<sup>18</sup>

The owner of the Media Most and the independent TV channel NTV Gusinsky was threatened for several times for the critical coverage of the war and Putin’s policies. The idea was to use the prosecutor’s office to bring criminal charges against Gusinsky, intimidate him, and thus silence his media.<sup>19</sup> Eventually, Gusinsky was arrested and agreed to sign a secret deal to sell his controlling stake in Media Most to Gazprom (state-

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<sup>15</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/monitoring/528620.stm>.

<sup>16</sup> Greg Simons and Dmitry Strovsky, *Censorship in Contemporary Russian Journalism in the Age of the War Against Terrorism: A Historical Perspective*, European Journal of Communication, 2006, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, [www.sagepublications.com](http://www.sagepublications.com), Vol. 21(2): 189–211.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/monitoring/528620.stm>.

<sup>19</sup> Masha Lipman and Michael Mcfaul, “*Managed Democracy*” in *Russia: Putin and the Press*, Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Press/politics, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 116-127, June 2001.

owned oil and gas giant) in return for his freedom.<sup>20</sup> The result of eliminating the independent media channel NTV is that the other media channels began self-censor their media coverage of war. Now journalists realize that it is dangerous to criticize the President and its policies.

### **Market for Loyalties**

The market for loyalties model is a form of shared implicit control of media in which state competes with other entities, such as businesses, opposing parties, media itself, for influence through the media and promotion of its version of national identity. According to Monroe Price, in the “market for loyalties” the large-scale competitors for power, in a shuffle for allegiances, often use the regulation of communications to organize a cartel of imagery and identity among themselves.<sup>21</sup> The participants of the market act as a cartel, competing, but cooperating to maintain the restriction on entry to prevent competition by new participants. Each participant tries to sell its version of national identity, and the citizens have choice to buy the preferred definition of national identity paying for it with their loyalty. Participants of the market for loyalties use myth and narratives, in other words – symbols – to promote their version of national identity – to persuade and influence public opinion. According to Monroe Price the government often depends on a specific range of outcomes for its very existence. Not only have governments sought to

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Monroe Price, *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and its Challenge to State Power*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002, pages 31-32.

exclude a range of destabilizing narratives, they have also sought to ensure that a sense of national identity is available and, if possible, prevails.<sup>22</sup>

The market for loyalties has existed everywhere and at all times. What differs about today's market is the range of participants, the scope of its boundaries, and the nature of the regulatory bodies capable of establishing and enforcing rules for participation and exclusion. ... Like the market for goods, the marketplace of ideas frequently reflects monopolistic and oligopolistic practices, including efforts by competitors to exclude new entrants.<sup>23</sup>

Monroe Price in his "*The Market for Loyalties*" describes the market for loyalties model on the examples of Italy and Germany. In Italy, he states, "the very architecture of public broadcasting was designed to accommodate the existing system of political parties, with the Christian Democrats controlling the first channel, the Socialists the second, and the former Communist the third." In Germany, by constitution and statute, public broadcasting corporations must adhere to a rule of "internal pluralism" supervised by a Rundfunkrat, or council, chosen in such a way that all of society's opinions, values, interests, and perspectives are adequately represented.<sup>24</sup>

Gadi Wolfsfeld in "*Media and the Path to Peace*" presents the market for loyalties model on the example of promoting peace process:

The authorities [...] hope to exploit the media as part of a more general struggle to mobilize elites and the public in support of their policies. In such cases one normally finds some type of opposition to that peace process that is attempting to promote its own views to the news media. It

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<sup>22</sup> Monroe Price, *The Market for Loyalties: Electronic Media and the Global Competition for Allegiances*, Yale Law Journal, 104.n3 (Dec 1994): pages 667-705.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

is an ongoing competition in which both sides attempt to use information and events to support their positions on the peace process.<sup>25</sup>

Another example of market for loyalties model is modern Russia trying to gain greater control over national identity by eliminating independent commercial television stations. The sellers in this market for loyalties are the government of Russia and the independent commercial stations, and the buyers – the Russian public. One of the popular commercial stations – NTV was promoting its version of “truth” about Putin and his policies. NTV was exposing the undesirable facts about the social and economic conditions present in the country and the ineffective campaign of the Russian military in Chechnya. NTV was trying to give a balanced view, explaining why the army was undertaking certain operations, but highlighting incompetence and ill-discipline when they saw it.<sup>26</sup> The other participant of the market for loyalties – the government of Russia – claimed that “NTV only reported Russian military atrocities without devoting any coverage to violations of human rights carried out by Chechen guerrillas.”<sup>27</sup> He [Putin] said media comment that was often sharply critical of his government was welcome, but what he described as illegal and extremist ideas would have no place in the Russian media.<sup>28</sup> The government of Russia understood that a critical coverage of the war by the independent channel may create a public opinion about the war which they could not let happen. They wanted to promote their own version of “truth” about the events. What the

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<sup>25</sup> Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and the Path to Peace*, West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2004, page 10.

<sup>26</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1260169.stm>.

<sup>27</sup> Masha Lipman and Michael Mcfaul, “*Managed Democracy*” in *Russia: Putin and the Press*, Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Press/politics, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 116-127, June 2001.

<sup>28</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1115601.stm>.



government did to win the war in the market for loyalties is that it adopted “The Doctrine of Information Security” which made it clear that state-owned media must dominate the information market, since only the state can provide the citizens of Russia with objective information about what is going on in the country.<sup>29</sup> After the adoption of this doctrine NTV was taken over by the state-controlled gas company – Gazprom. NTV’s old staff was replaced by the new management and the core journalistic staff of NTV moved to another independent channel - TV-6. TV-6 had a much more limited national reach and much smaller audience.<sup>30</sup> Shortly the Kremlin shut TV-6 down. When they [NTV and TV-6 staffs] tried again with a network called TVS, Putin's press minister yanked it off the air and replaced it with a sports channel.<sup>31</sup> Kremlin wanted to take the independent TV channels under control, so that “the Kremlin would have uncontested influence over people’s minds.”<sup>32</sup>

### **The CNN Effect**

The impact of the television news coverage on the political decisions came to be known as the CNN effect. It implies the circumstances in which the media influences government policy decisions. The influence of the broadcast media on government policy decision increased with the formation of different news channels, broadcasting 24 hour

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<sup>29</sup> Masha Lipman and Michael Mcfaul, “*Managed Democracy*” in *Russia: Putin and the Press*, Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Press/politics, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 116-127, June 2001.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A51587-2005Feb24.html>

<sup>32</sup> Masha Lipman and Michael Mcfaul, “*Managed Democracy*” in *Russia: Putin and the Press*, Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Press/politics, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 116-127, June 2001.

news all over the world. In a 1995 New York Times column, Max Frenkel wrote that the unsettled state of the world “should be good news for the media, because as long as the world remains a mysterious and dangerous place, there will be exciting stories to report.”<sup>33</sup> The media can use empathetic visual coverage of tragic events in other countries to influence the state’s foreign policy agenda. When CNN floods the airwaves with news of a foreign crisis, it evokes an emotional outcry from the public to “do something.”<sup>34</sup> Under these circumstances the governments and international community have no choice but to direct their attention to the international news coverage.

However, the effect of international news on policy decisions depends on a number of factors. First, it depends on whether the information covered in international news is objective. It is important what the source of the news is, in other words who makes important choices “what to cover and what ignore.”<sup>35</sup> Second, it depends on how emotional and graphic the news is. Studies show that emotive and graphic coverage of the events pressure politicians to act. This pressure would not have existed if news media reporters had been framed in a less emotive and more distancing manner.<sup>36</sup> Third, it depends on the extent of how the policy of particular government is clear and well defined. [When] policy is unclear or ill defined the media can indeed have some

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Philip Seib, *Headline Diplomacy: How News Coverage Affects Foreign Policy*, Praeger Series in Political Communication, Westport, Connecticut; London, 1997.

<sup>34</sup> Johanna Neuman, *The Media's Impact on International Affairs, Then and Now*, SAIS Review - Volume 16, Number 1, Winter-Spring 1996, pp. 109-123, The Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>35</sup> Philip Seib, *Headline Diplomacy: How News Coverage Affects Foreign Policy*, Praeger Series in Political Communication, Westport, Connecticut; London, 1997, page 142

<sup>36</sup> Piers Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Interventions*, London:Routledge, 2002, page 25.

influence on policy; on the other hand, the media effect on policy decreases as the clarity of strategic interest increases.<sup>37</sup>

The extent of the news media's influence over American foreign policy often depends on the caliber of political leadership. When a president clearly and forcefully defines a general world view, as well as specific goals and strategies, the impact of news coverage on policymaking is minimized. On the other hand, when administration's foreign policy is ill-defined or unrealistic, news coverage has greater impact. Moreover, in the latter situation the public is likely to rely more heavily on the news media's version of events as they occur.<sup>38</sup>

Piers Robinson tests this extreme state and media relationship in the policy-media interaction model on the following two examples: US intervention in Bosnia in 1995 in order to defend the Gorazde "safe area" and Operation Allied Force in Kosovo in 1999. In the first case, the model highlights the impact of critical, empathizing media coverage and policy uncertainty in effecting the US decision to defend the Gorazde "safe area." In the second case, the failure of critical newspaper coverage to change the Clinton Administration's air-war policy highlights the limits of media influence when there exists policy certainty.<sup>39</sup>

Another example of the CNN effect is the first Persian Gulf War in 1991. The Gulf War itself stands as the first example to date of communications having shifted diplomatic practice to the emerging paradigm of telediplomacy.<sup>40</sup> The Gulf spectacle was

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in *Ibid*, page 18.

<sup>38</sup> Philip Seib, *Headline Diplomacy: How News Coverage Affects Foreign Policy*, Praeger Series in Political Communication, Westport, Connecticut, 1997, page xix.

<sup>39</sup> Piers Robinson, *The Policy-Media Interaction Model: Measuring Media Power during Humanitarian Crisis*, *Journal of Peace Research*, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 2000, Vol. 37, No. 5, 613-633, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo.

<sup>40</sup> Royce J. Ammon, *Global Television and the Shaping of World Politics*, McFarland&Company, Inc., Publishers, 2001, page 7.

“postmodern” in that, first, it was a media event that was experienced as a live occurrence for the whole global village.<sup>41</sup>

The Persian Gulf War’s beginning and ending time both suggest the unique relationship that now exists between world politics and the media. The Gulf War began during America’s evening network newscasts. Bombers from an American-led coalition of countries conducted air raids on Baghdad a few moments before 7:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on January 16, 1991. Thus, the opening salvos of the war occurred at an “appropriate media-age time.” Media-age considerations also played a role in the war’s conclusion.<sup>42</sup>

Media coverage of the horrible events in Rwanda in 1993-94 is another bright example of the impact of media coverage on the governments’ decision making process when their policies are uncertain. A report published by the Danish Foreign Ministry on the crisis in Rwanda came to the following conclusion:

The international media played a mixed role in the Rwanda crisis. While the media were a major factor in generating worldwide humanitarian relief support for the refugees, distorted reporting on events leading to the genocide itself was a contributing factor to the failure of the international community to take more effective action to stem the genocide.<sup>43</sup>

This kind of response from the international community was a result of Rwanda being in the remote geographical region. The media coverage of the crisis in Rwanda was

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<sup>41</sup> Lee Artz and Yahya R. Kamalipour (eds), *Bring ‘Em On: Media and Politics in the Iraq War*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, page 197.

<sup>42</sup> Royce J. Ammon, *Global Television and the Shaping of World Politics*, McFarland&Company, Inc., Publishers, 2001, page 65.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Ingrid A. Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information: Caught in the Crossfire*, Frank Cass Publishers, London; Portland, 1999, page 96.

also flavored by so called “saturation reporting.”<sup>44</sup> This arose from the fact that Rwanda, on the one hand, was literally in competition with the simultaneous crises in other parts of Africa (e.g. Sudan, Angola, Liberia and the elections in South Africa) and, on the other, that the “shock content” of reporting on Rwanda with its powerful imagery of decomposing bodies and mass graves did not elicit the kind of response that might have led to appropriate international intervention.<sup>45</sup>

## II.2 The Media and Society Interrelation Model

The role of free media is to truly reflect what is going on in the society. It is also a tool and an instrument to improve the society. The media’s role is even more important in the developing societies. The mass media are expected to function as parts of the national efforts in the difficult task of national building and modernization.<sup>46</sup> If the media is powerful enough in advancing the national development efforts it can change the society.

Let us look at the media and society interrelation model (see Figure 1). In this model the society will be examined on the examples of three characteristics – economic freedom, religious freedom and democracy. In each of the examples the society is described as free if the particular characteristic and the media are free and not free if the particular characteristic and the media are not free. The society is unsustainable at point A where the society is unfree and the media is free. The society either tends to the point

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<sup>44</sup> Ingrid A. Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information: Caught in the Crossfire*, Frank Cass Publishers, London; Portland, 1999, page 96.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, page 96.

<sup>46</sup> Clement E. Asante, *Press Freedom and Development: A Research Guide and Selected Bibliography*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut&London, 1997, page 3.

B or to the point C. At point A the media is free and given an opportunity to change the society. It can either use its power and transfer its characteristics to the society tending to the point B or to adopt the characteristics of unfree society, restricting media freedom in particular, and tend to the point C. The point D, where the media is unfree in the society which is free is a transition society. In a transition society the society which is free transfers its characteristics to the media and moves to the point B or adopts the characteristics of a not free media and moves towards point C.

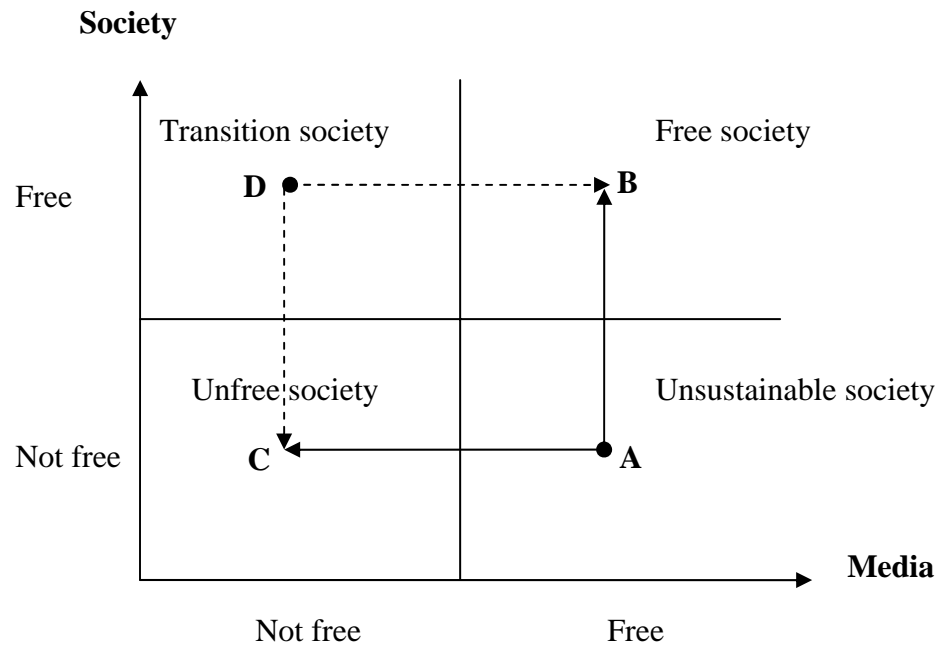


Figure 1. Media and society interrelation model

At what point a particular country is at the given point of time depends on a number of factors. On the next diagrams this model will be presented on the examples of economic, religious and democratic societies.

### Media and economic society

The countries in the category of free societies which have both free media and economic freedom are the highly developed industrialized countries, such as the United States and Canada, Western European countries, Australia, Hong Kong, and others (see Figure 2). The countries in the category of unfree societies which have *not free* media and are not economically free are developing countries, such as Zimbabwe, Iran, North Korea, Turkmenistan, Belarus, Venezuela, Cuba, and others. There are zero countries in the category of unsustainable countries in terms of media and economic freedom.

The only country represented in the category of transition societies in terms of media and economy is Singapore. Singapore's media is ranked as *not free* and the economic freedom is ranked as *free*. It is a phenomenal example of an economically thriving country with no freedom of the press. Singapore is the second freest economy in the world after Hong Kong but the media in this country is repressed. According to the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal, Singapore is a world leader in all 10 areas of economic freedom. Virtually all commercial operations are performed with transparency and speed, and private enterprise has boomed. Inflation is low, and foreign investment is welcomed and given equal treatment. There are no tariffs. Singapore's legal system is efficient and highly protective of private property, and corruption is almost nonexistent.<sup>47</sup> Yet, the media in Singapore is ranked as *not free* by the Freedom House in 2005. The constitution provides the right to freedom of the speech and expression but permits restrictions on these rights, such as strict censorship laws, which allow authorities to restrict the circulation of any foreign periodical for publishing news that interferes in domestic politics. The Internal Security Act gives officials the power to restrict

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<sup>47</sup> From "The Index of Economic Freedom," The Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal, available at <http://www.heritage.org/index/country.cfm?id=Singapore>.

publications that incite violence, arouse racial or religious tension, or threaten national interest, national security, or public order. The most media companies are either owned or controlled by the state or by the companies with close ties to the ruling party. The journalists practice self-censorship. In September of 2005, *The Economist* agreed to pay a fine of more than US\$200,000 to avoid a lawsuit over an article it had published that claimed a government-linked investment company lacked transparency.<sup>48</sup> It is surprising how the economy can thrive in the country with such a high level of media restrictions. Singapore is an example of a country in transition in terms of media and economy. The country is at the point D in the media and society interrelation model but it has to move either towards point B or point C. The analysis of historical data for the period of 1995-2006 shows that Singapore has been in the state of transition during all this period. However, for how long it will remain at the present point and towards what point this society will be moving – towards more free media or towards less free economy – depends on the other characteristics of the society in Singapore, such as religious freedom, democracy and others.

Although Figure 2 shows that in 2006 there were zero countries in the category of sustainable countries, however, for example in 2005 there were two countries in this category – Benin and Suriname. Benin stayed in this category for one year and moved in direction to point B (economic freedom in Benin in 2006 is ranked as *mostly unfree* versus *not free* in 2005). Suriname stayed at point B for much longer period of time than Benin, but in 2006 it also moved in direction towards point B. The transitional societies

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<sup>48</sup> All information about media in Singapore is from Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, page 181.



in comparison with the unsustainable societies stay in the state of transition for much longer period of time.

### Economic society

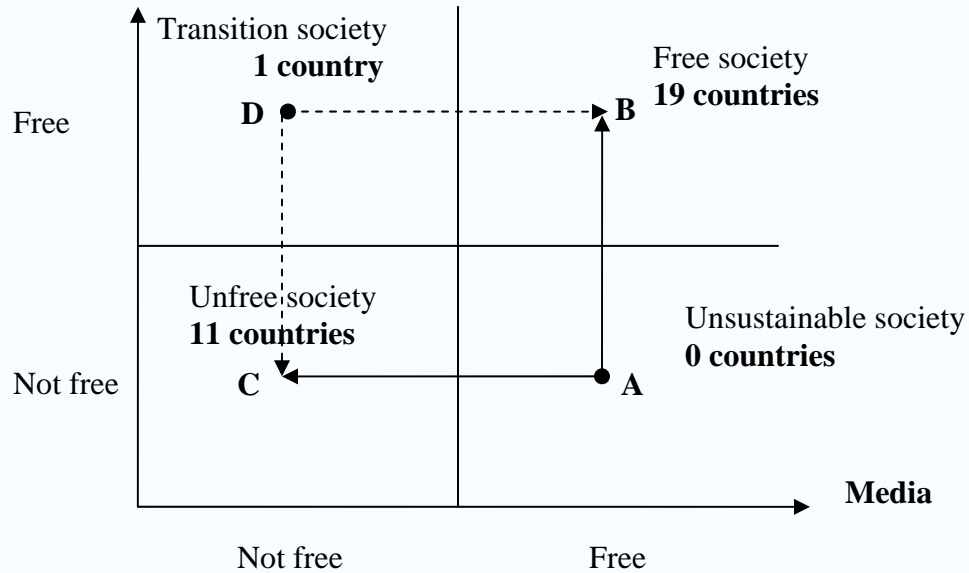


Figure 2. Media and economic society<sup>49</sup>

### Media and religious society

Let us examine the media and society interrelation model in practice on the example of Bangladesh. Let assume that our society is a religious society of Bangladesh. Islam is declared as a state religion in Bangladesh and the Constitution of the country formally grants religious freedom.<sup>50</sup> The population of Bangladesh is 86.6% Muslims, 12.1%

<sup>49</sup> The data are derived from the pool of 156 countries which account for 96.6% of world population. The countries ranked as *partly free* for the freedom of the press and *mostly free/unfree* for the economic freedom are not represented in this model. Source: Freedom of the Press rankings by Freedomhouse, 2006 and the Index of Economic Freedom by The Wall Street Journal and the Heritage Foundation, 2006.

<sup>50</sup> Paul Marshall (ed.), *Religious Freedom in the World: A Global Report on Freedom and Persecution*, Broadman&Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 2000, page 69.

Hindus and less than two percent Buddhists, Christians and others. The religious minorities in Bangladesh have suffered different types of harassment, such as destruction of property, kidnap, murder of leadership, rape of young girls, and discrimination in education, employment, and property rights.<sup>51</sup> The religious freedom in Bangladesh is ranked as *not free*, so is the media. Practically, Bangladesh is at the point C on the media and society interaction model (see Figure 3). Trying to reflect the horrible events that are taking place on the basis of religious beliefs a famous Bangladeshi writer Tasleema Nasreen depicted accounts of gang rapes of Hindu girls returning from school.<sup>52</sup> For a while the society moves from point C to the point A where the religion is not free and the media is free. However, the society cannot stay at the point A for a long time. It either tends back to the point C or up to the point B. What happened in Bangladesh is that the writer was accused of blasphemy by Muslim fundamentalist, forcing her into exile in Sweden.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the media returned to the initial point C where the media and the society are not free. Media was not powerful enough to move the society to the point B, where they both would be free and adopted the characteristics of the not free society.

There is virtually no single country in the world that would have the attributes of the point A – free media and not free religion. Still, there are 5 countries with the attributes of a transition society and there are 55 free and 32 unfree societies (see Figure 3).

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, page 69.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, page 71.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, page 71.

### Religious society

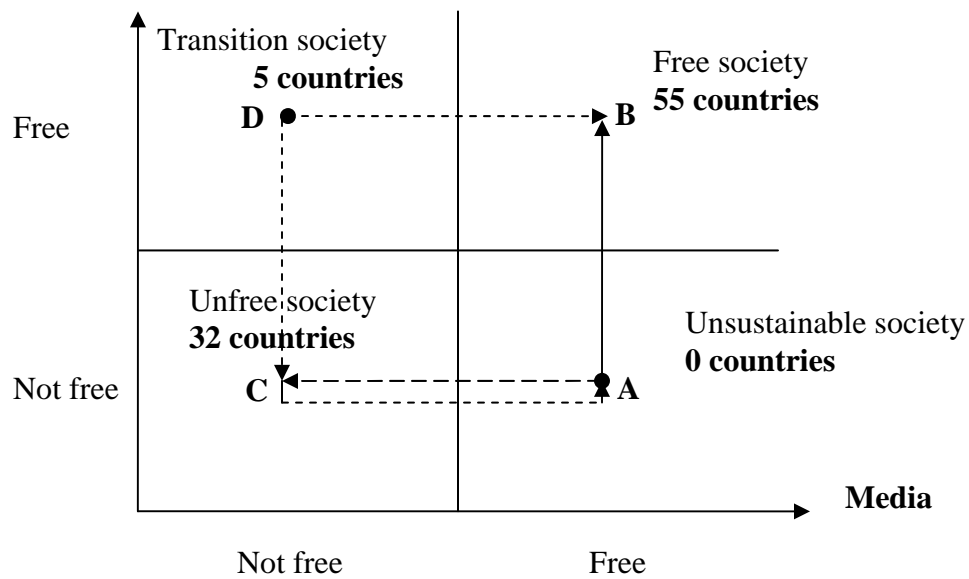


Figure 3. Media and religious society<sup>54</sup>

The countries in the category of free societies in terms of freedom of the press and religious freedom are the developed countries in the Western Europe, the United States and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, a few countries in Eastern Europe, such as Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia, the Baltic countries – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, two African countries – Namibia and South Africa, as well as Latin American and Caribbean countries. The media and religion in these countries are free. The countries in the category of unfree societies in terms of media and religion are developing, in most cases authoritarian, countries in Asia, such as North Korea, Iran,

<sup>54</sup> The data are derived from the pool of 175 countries which account for 99.8% of world population. The countries ranked as *partly free* for one or both categories are not represented in this model. Source: Freedom of the Press rankings by Freedomhouse, 2006 and *Religious Freedom in the World: A Global Report on Freedom and Persecution*, Paul Marshall (ed.), 2000.

China, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and others, as well as some African countries and Cuba.

Five countries in the category of transition countries which have *not free* media but have religious freedom are Haiti, Togo, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe. For example, in Zimbabwe religion is free and not politicized. About 59 percent of population is Christians and a large proportion of people combine indigenous religious traditions with Christian practices. Freedom of religion in Zimbabwe is constitutionally guaranteed, and the government generally respects this right.<sup>55</sup> However, there is almost complete state dominance of media and there are many restrictions on free expression. Range of restrictive legislation – including the Official Secrets Act, the Public Order and Security Act, and criminal defamation laws – have been broadly interpreted by authorities in order to prosecute journalists.<sup>56</sup> State-controlled radio, television, and newspapers are all seen as mouthpieces of the government and cover opposition activities only in a negative light. Independent media outlets and their staff are subjected to considerable verbal intimidation, physical attacks, arrest and detention, and financial pressure at the hands of the police, authorities, and supporters of the ruling party.<sup>57</sup>

Unfortunately, the data on religious freedom are available only for the year of 2000 and it is not possible to track for how long these countries have been in the state of transition.

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<sup>55</sup> Paul Marshall (ed.), *Religious Freedom in the World: A Global Report on Freedom and Persecution*, Broadman&Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 2000, page 329.

<sup>56</sup> Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2003: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003, page 158.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, page 158.

## Media and democratic society

The data on the media in democratic societies are pretty interesting. Here the things are straight forward. The free media is associated with the democratic societies and not free media with not democratic societies (see Figure 4). There are no transitional and unsustainable countries in terms of media and democracy. The countries in the category of free societies are the United States, Canada and Australia, the highly developed Western European countries, several Eastern European countries, all three Baltic States, as well as Japan, South Korea, Chile, and others. The examples of unfree societies are the countries in the developing world, in most cases authoritarian states.

### Democratic society

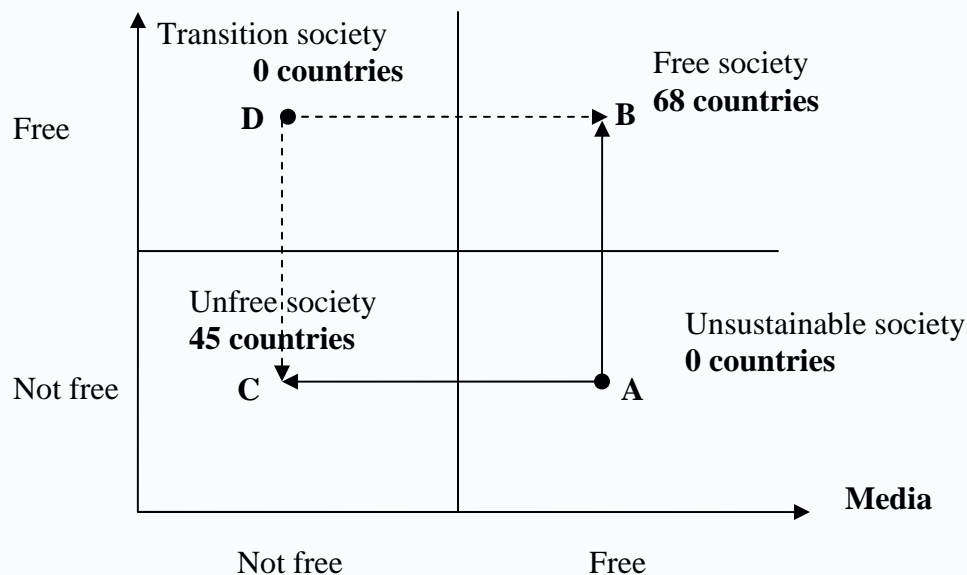


Figure 4. Media and democratic society<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> The data are derived from the pool of 192 countries which account for 99.9% of world population. The countries ranked as *partly free* for one or both categories are not represented in this model. Source: Freedom of the Press and Freedom of the World rankings by Freedomhouse, 2006, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>.

As we can see from the examples of media in different societies in most cases the free media is associated with free societies and not free media with not free societies. In all three examples of media and society interrelation model there are no countries in the category of unsustainable societies, in other words in all these examples the free media is impossible in not free societies. And there are a few examples of transition societies where not free media is possible in a free society.

Although it was shown separately the relationship between media and the factors that determine a free society, such as religious and economic freedoms, as well as democracy, however a more complex analysis is required to show the joint interaction of the media and these determinants of the free/unfree societies, which will be quantitatively tested in the Chapters III and IV of this paper.

### **III. VARIABLES DETERMINING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**

#### **Democracy**

Free media is assumed to be one of the important attributes of democratic societies. Access to information is important to democracy as it supplies citizens with information on all available choices in order to consciously participate in the political decision-making process and to vote responsibly. Generally, democratic media means media that supports the democratic system of free elections, majority rule, political freedom, political equality, minority rights, representative government and an independent

judiciary.<sup>59</sup> A free press plays a key role in sustaining and monitoring a healthy democracy, as well as in contributing to greater accountability, good government, and economic development.<sup>60</sup>

However the association of democracy with a free press and the association of non-democratic societies with not free media are overestimated and not completely true. Even totalitarian governments may tolerate some independent media, whereas some democratic governments may serve as obstacles for the complete freedom of media. As Noam Chomsky and Douglas Kellner have found, the “West suffers from its own, distinctive forms of “mind-control”: postmodernist journalism has abandoned the notion of seeking truth in reporting; the U.S. government seeks to control coverage of wars such as the Gulf War.”<sup>61</sup> In non-democratic Tunisia, for example, books forbidden in Arabic (which might stimulate dangerous thoughts among the masses) may be published in French (where they will be read only by the elite).<sup>62</sup>

The purpose of this analysis is to reveal if there is a strong relationship between media and democracy. The causality of relationship is not quite explicit whether the more democratic society leads to more open media or more open media increases the level of democracy in a society. However, I assume that the appearance and existence of free media is possible only in a democratic society.

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<sup>59</sup> Everette Dennis and Robert Snyder (eds), *Media and Democracy*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.), 1998, p. xix.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16>

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Joseph Gibbs, *Gorbachev's Glasnost: The Soviet Media in the First Phase of Perestroika*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 1999, page x.

<sup>62</sup> Leo Bogart, Media and Democracy, in Everette Dennis and Robert Snyder (eds), *Media and Democracy*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.), 1998, p. 5.

*Description of the variable in the quantitative analysis*

As a score for democracy I use the Freedom House's rankings of the Freedom in the World. This rating is comprised of assessment of two subcategories: political rights and civil liberties. Political rights include the subcategories of Electoral Process, Political Pluralism and Participation, and Functioning of Government. Freedom House defines political freedom as the ability of people "to choose their authoritative leaders freely from among competing groups and individuals who were not chosen by the government." Political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, including the right to vote freely for distinct alternatives in legitimate elections, compete for public office, join political parties and organizations, and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the electorate.<sup>63</sup> Civil liberties include the subcategories of the freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state. Freedom House defines civil liberties as the "chance to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of government and other centers of potential domination." The ranking is available for 192 countries. The countries are ranked as being *free*, *partly free*, and *not free*. The rating for political rights is done on the scale from 0 to 40, and for civil liberties on the scale from 0 to 60. However, I modified this rating of democracy to fit the data to my analysis. I excluded the subcategory of the freedom of expression and belief from the civil liberties.<sup>64</sup> The freedom of expression is included in the model in the form of a dependent variable and the freedom of belief is presented as a separate independent variable in the form of a dummy. The new modified

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=35&year=2006>.

<sup>64</sup> There are no separate scores for the freedom of expression and freedom of belief.



“democracy” is democracy without freedom of expression and belief. The higher the overall score of democracy the greater degree of democracy is assigned to a country. I hypothesize the positive relationship between democracy and the freedom of the press, the higher the level of democracy the higher the level of the freedom of the press. The sign of the coefficient of this independent variable in the regression equation is expected to be negative, as the higher level of democracy score is associated with the higher degree of democracy, and the higher level of the freedom of the press score is associated with the less degree of the freedom of the press.

### **Economic Variables**

The level of economic development in the country is assumed to influence the degree of freedom of the press. According to the Global Survey of Media Independence in 2006, conducted by Freedom House, 92% of countries in the Western Europe were ranked as having *free* media, except Italy and Turkey which were ranked as having *partly free* media. Indeed, when comparing the freedom of the press scores with the level of income in the country we get supportive results. As the graph below shows the low-income countries have the higher average score of the freedom of the press and therefore the less degree of the freedom of the press. The high income countries have the less score of the freedom of the press and consequently more free media.

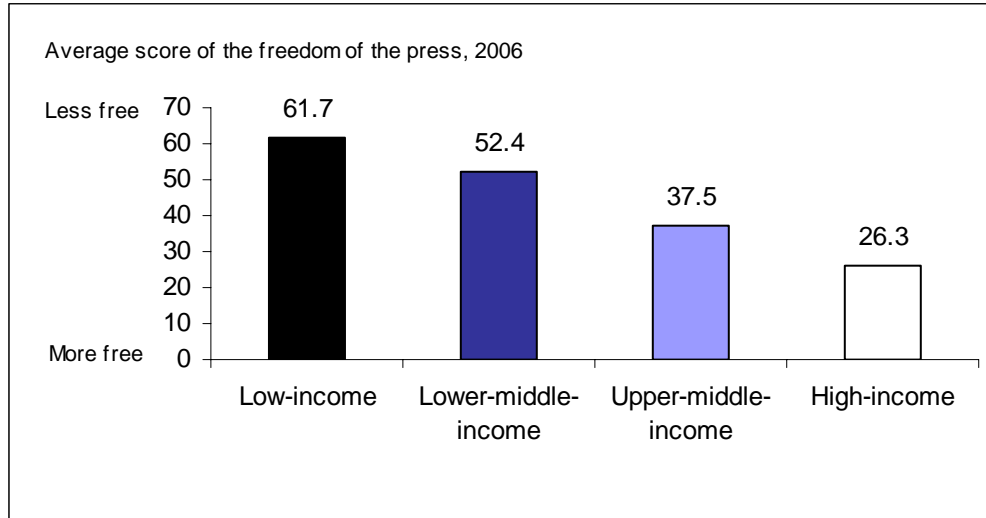


Figure 5. Freedom of the press and income

However, the level of income in the country is not the only variable that might affect the degree of freedom of the press. The level of income distribution can affect the freedom of the press in the country as well. The univariate regression analysis (see Table 1) shows that there is a significant relationship between freedom of the press and income inequality measured by Gini coefficient.<sup>65</sup> The coefficient of income inequality is significant at 96% confidence level. The sign of the coefficient of the Gini coefficient is positive which means that the higher the level of inequality in the country the higher the freedom of the press score and as a result the less the level of the freedom of the press.

**Table 1. Freedom of the press and income distribution**

Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs	123
					F( 1, 121)	4.15
Model	2099.491	1	2099.491		Prob > F	0.0438
Residual	61227.84	121	506.0152		R-squared	0.0332

<sup>65</sup> The Gini coefficient is a measure of inequality of income distribution in the country. It is measured on the scale from 0 to 100. The higher the coefficient the more unequally the income is distributed. A score of 0 means that a country has completely equal distribution of income, while a score of 100 means completely unequal income distribution.

					Adj R-squared	0.0252
Total	63327.33	122	519.0765		Root MSE	22.495
Freedom of the press	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Gini coefficient	0.396929	0.194867	2.04	0.044	0.011139	0.782719
_cons	29.71269	8.090741	3.67	0.000	13.69494	45.73045

The lower the level of economic development and the higher the income inequalities in the country the more suppressed the media and more restricted the news flow in the country. The ruling elite in poor countries control and censor the media as it helps them to maintain the economic and political stability. Low income countries have less free media because “given scarce resources, [...] a poorly educated people, tribal and ethnic rivalries, and a subservient position in the world economic and information systems – a free press can too easily restrain government from functioning and lead to internal chaos.”<sup>66</sup>

Another economic variable that I consider in my analysis is the index of economic freedom. The Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal define the economic freedom as the “absence of government coercion or constraint on the production, distribution, or consumption of goods and services beyond the extent necessary for citizens to protect and maintain liberty itself.”<sup>67</sup> The important point in measuring the index of economic freedom is that the economic wealth and economic welfare of the countries are not being considered in the ranking. The economic freedom can be an

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<sup>66</sup> N.K. Aggarwala, *A Third World View*, in J. Richstad and M.H. Andeson (eds.), *Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects* (pp. xv-xxi), New York: Columbia University Press, quoted in Clement E. Asante, *Press Freedom and Development: A Research Guide and Selected Bibliography*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut&London, 1997, page 3.

<sup>67</sup> Brian T. Johnson, Kim R. Holmes, and Melanie Kirkpatrick, *1999 Index of Economic Freedom*, The Heritage Foundation, The Wall Street Journal, 1999, page 52.

important variable affecting the freedom of the press as “the economic interests and incentives of the new media conglomerates are crucial to explaining elements of their behavior.”<sup>68</sup> Media companies are highly dependent on the government policies which shape the economic environment in which media companies operate. The less the government interference in the economy the less dependent the media companies are on government policies. In an economically more free environment the media companies operate more efficiently and as a result are more economically and politically independent.

In addition, The Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal conducted a statistical examination that revealed that economic freedom is positively related to economic prosperity and negatively to income inequality. Countries having more economic freedom enjoy higher levels of individual well-being and stronger, long-term economic growth than do countries having less economic freedom.<sup>69</sup> And the countries with higher levels of economic freedom tend to have more equal distributions of income.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, in the univariate regression analysis the index of economic freedom is a significant determinant of the level of per capita GDP. The sign of the coefficient of the index of economic freedom is negative which means that the higher the government interference in the economy the less the GDP per capita<sup>71</sup> (see Table 2).

**Table 2. GDP per capita and economic freedom**

Source	SS	Df	MS		Number of obs	156
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<sup>68</sup> John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*, Palgrave, 2001, page 130.

<sup>69</sup> Brian T. Johnson, Kim R. Holmes, and Melanie Kirkpatrick, *1999 Index of Economic Freedom*, The Heritage Foundation, The Wall Street Journal, 1999, page 12.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, page 12.

<sup>71</sup> The higher the score the less the economic freedom.

					F( 1, 154)	149.69
Model	1.18E+10	1	1.18E+10		Prob > F	0.0000
Residual	1.21E+10	154	78710149		R-squared	0.4929
					Adj R-squared	0.4896
Total	2.39E+10	155	1.54E+08		Root MSE	8871.9
GDP per capita	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
economic freedom	-12332.12	1007.943	-12.23	0.000	-14323.3	-10340.9
_cons	48466.14	3085.512	15.71	0.000	42370.75	54561.54

Furthermore, the economic freedom determines the level of income distribution at 99% confidence level. The sign of the coefficient of the index of economic freedom is positive which means that the higher the government interference in the economy the higher the income inequality (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Income distribution and economic freedom**

Source	SS	Df	MS		Number of obs	122
					F( 1, 120)	6.9
Model	718.3995	1	718.3995		Prob > F	0.0097
Residual	12491.67	120	104.0972		R-squared	0.0544
					Adj R-squared	0.0465
Total	13210.07	121	109.1741		Root MSE	10.203
Gini coefficient	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
economic freedom	3.603755	1.371803	2.63	0.010	0.8876802	6.319829
_cons	29.5237	4.132708	7.14	0.000	21.34122	37.70617

The univariate regression analysis shows (see Figures 6, 7, 8) that the economic freedom is the strongest determinant of the freedom of the press in comparison with per capita GDP and Gini coefficient – the R-squared is the highest for the economic freedom.

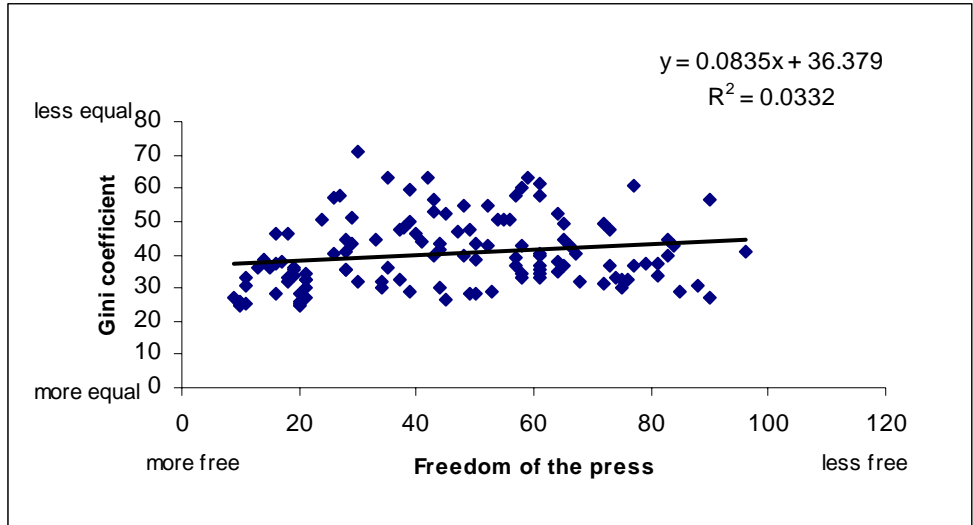


Figure 6. Freedom of the press and Gini coefficient

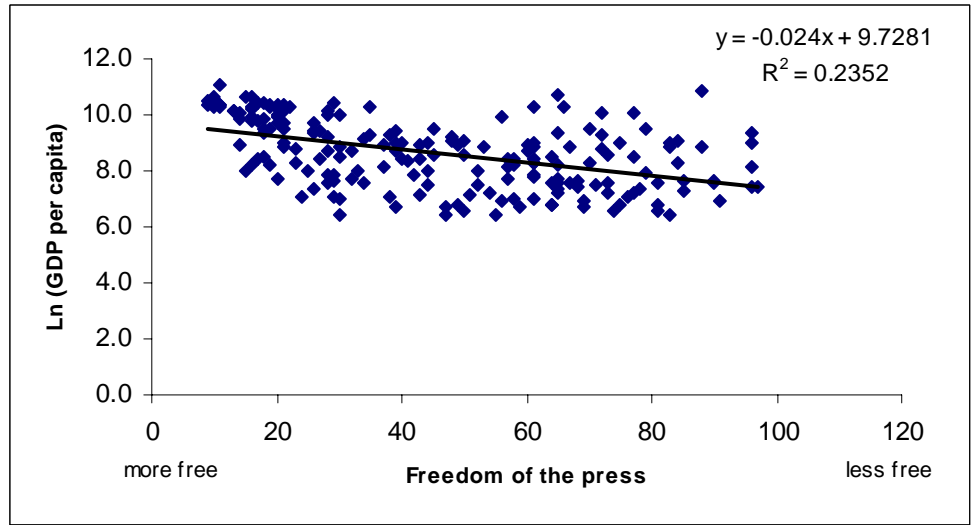


Figure 7. Freedom of the press and per capita GDP<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup>The logarithm of per capita GDP is used to make the scale of variables comparable on the chart.

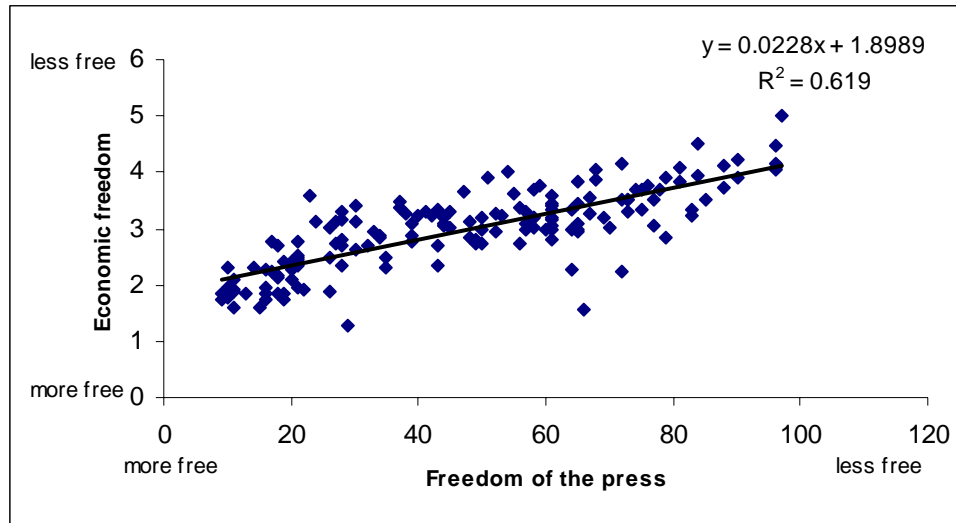


Figure 8. Freedom of the press and economic freedom

As it was said before the index of economic freedom is assessed on the basis of 10 economic categories. If we look separately at each category of the index of economic freedom to understand which contributes greatly to strong correlation between economic freedom and the freedom of the press, we see that the highest R-squared has the category of “property rights” ( $R^2=52\%$ ) (see Figure 9). This factor examines the extent to which the government protects private property and how safe private property is from expropriation. The higher the legal protection of private property rights the less its score in the index of economic freedom and therefore the higher the economic freedom. This means that for economic entities such as media companies, the existence of sound property rights enforcing laws and institution is essential. For media companies to efficiently function the government has to protect – and enforce the laws that protect – private property. The category of “property rights” also examines the independence of the judiciary, the existence of corruption within the judiciary, and the ability of individuals

and businesses to enforce contracts. If the judiciary is not independent from the government influence it could not fairly adjudicate trials involving media companies or create delays in receiving judicial decisions.

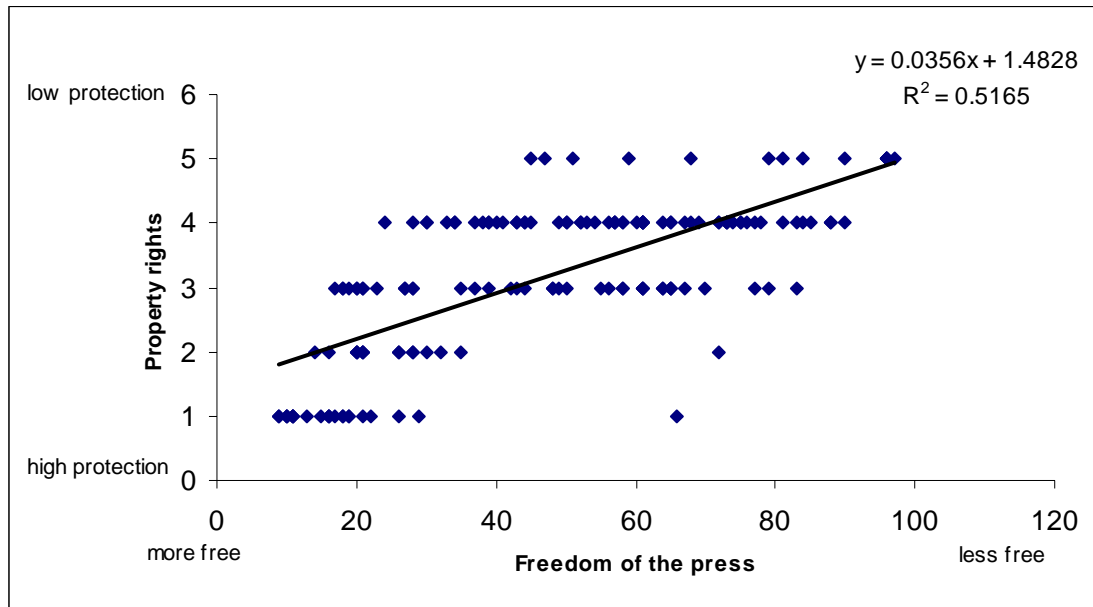


Figure 9. Freedom of the press and property rights

The other categories of the economic freedom through which the economic freedom might affect the freedom of the press can be the level of restrictions a country imposes on foreign ownership of media companies, the higher the level of restrictions the less the freedom of the press. Also, the existence of an informal market in the country can hinder the freedom of the press; the higher the size of the black market in the country and consequently the higher the piracy of intellectual property the less efficient the media companies are functioning and as a result the less the freedom of the press. The level of governmental regulation of economy can also affect the freedom of the press, such as the



higher the government regulation of the media industry and the higher the corruption within the bureaucracy the less the freedom of the press.

*Description of the variables in the quantitative analysis*

GDP per capita

The data for GDP per capita are available for 193 countries. The source of these data is the CIA World Factbook.<sup>73</sup> The data are in the US dollars and are derived from purchasing power parity (PPP) which equalizes the purchasing power of different currencies for a given basket of goods. It takes into account differences in the relative prices of goods and services and therefore provides a better overall measure of the real value of output produced by an economy compared to other economies.<sup>74</sup> I hypothesize the positive relationship between per capita GDP and freedom of the press. The sign of the coefficient of this variable in the multivariate regression analysis is expected to be negative as the higher scores of the freedom of the press are associated with the less freedom of the press.

Gini coefficient

The Gini coefficient is a measure of inequality in income distribution in the country. It is measured on the scale from 0 to 100. The higher the coefficient the more unequally the income is distributed. A score of 0 means that a country has completely equal distribution of income, while a score of 100 means completely unequal income distribution. The data available for 123 countries. The source of these data is the World Bank's World

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<sup>73</sup> The CIA World Factbook is an annual publication of the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States with almanac-style information about the countries of the world, available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook>.

<sup>74</sup> <http://worldbank.org/>

Development Indicators 2005.<sup>75</sup> I hypothesize the negative relationship between Gini coefficient and freedom of the press; the higher inequality the less the freedom of the press. The sign of the coefficient of this variable in the multivariate regression analysis is expected to be positive as the higher values of the freedom of the press scores and Gini coefficient are associated with the less freedom of the press and less equal income distribution, respectively.

### The Index of Economic Freedom

The Index of Economic Freedom published by The Wall Street Journal and the Heritage Foundation is available for 156 countries. It is assessed on the basis of 50 independent criteria grouped into 10 economic factors: trade policy, taxation, government intervention in the economy, monetary policy, capital flows and foreign investment, banking, wage and price controls, property rights, regulation, and black market. The higher the country's score on a factor the less the economic freedom. The index is assessed on the scale from 1 to 5. A score of 1 is assigned to the most free economies and a score of 5 to the least free economies. The countries are assessed as *free* – scored from 1.00 to 1.99, *mostly free* – scored from 2.00 to 2.99, *mostly unfree* – scored from 3.00 to 3.99, and *unfree/repressed* – scored from 4.00 to 5.00. The higher the score the greater the level of government interference in the economy and as a result the less the economic freedom. I hypothesize a positive relationship between economic freedom and freedom of the press. The higher the level of economic freedom the higher the level of the freedom of the press. The sign of the coefficient of this independent variable in the regression equation is

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<sup>75</sup> Available at <http://devdata.worldbank.org/wdi2005/>

expected to be positive, as the higher scores of freedom of the press and economic freedom are associated with the less levels of freedom.

## **Religion**

Religion is a form of communication. Mark Silk in his *Unsecular Media* points out that the “religions are themselves systems of communications – designed, in the first instance, to facilitate the exchange of information between the mundane world and the realm of the sacred.”<sup>76</sup>

The free exercise of religion and beliefs is stated in the constitutions of almost all countries. The principles of religious freedom are also tied in international declarations. The Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.”

Thomas Jefferson believed that the freedom of religion was the most important of all the rights and “without the individual’s freedom of conscience on matters religious, there could be no freedom in the political and social realms”.<sup>77</sup> Since religion refers to our ultimate beliefs, it is only to be expected that it is deeply connected to every other area of human life, a fact emphasized by nearly every religion in the world.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Mark Silk, *Unsecular Media: Making News of Religion in America*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1995, page 3.

<sup>77</sup> Randall P. Bezanson, *How Free Can Religion Be?*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 2006, page 1.

<sup>78</sup> <http://freedomhouse.org/religion/publications/rfiw/persecution.htm>.

The religious freedom is an important attribute of democratic societies. Religious freedom is the “first freedom in the growth of human rights”<sup>79</sup>; it brings individual freedom, which is essential for spreading and preserving democratic values. “Religion is absolutely necessary for democratic politics to endure, and yet it must be overtly estranged from politics in order to offer the assistance that politics requires.”<sup>80</sup>

Media’s role in media-religion relationship is to convey news of religion to the public. Institutions, such as the church have tended to look at the media instrumentally; that is, how they can use the media best to convey “our reality.”<sup>81</sup> The interaction between media and religion is especially difficult in the not free societies. For example, the Constitution of Bahrain provides the rights for press freedom *excluding* opinions that undermine the fundamental beliefs of Islam or the “unity of the people” and those that promote “discord or sectarianism.”<sup>82</sup> In Algeria, according to the International Press Institute, state-controlled mosques often denounce independent media in sermons, in some cases urging violent action against specific journalists.<sup>83</sup>

The association of free media with free religion is also supportive in the light of recent developments in Danish press. Satirizing religion in the cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohamed would be possible only in a country with complete religious and press freedoms such as Denmark. It is very difficult to imagine this kind of criticism of

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<sup>79</sup> <http://freedomhouse.org/religion/publications/rfiw/importance.htm>.

<sup>80</sup> Joshua Mitchell, *The Fragility of Freedom: Tocqueville on Religion, Democracy, and the American Future*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1995, page 166.

<sup>81</sup> Stewart M. Hoover, Knut Lundby, *Rethinking Media, Religion, and Culture*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi, 1997, page 177.

<sup>82</sup> Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, page 34.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, page 24.

religion, either of their own or any other, in a Muslim country, where in the vast majority of cases the freedom of religion and the freedom of the press are not free.

Another association of the freedom of the press with the free religion might be that in the religiously more free societies the religious groups have more rights to establish and practice printing houses, publishing houses, and distribution networks, as well as to found and own newspapers, news agencies, radio and television stations and to have access to means of public communication (television, radio, Internet, newspapers, magazines),<sup>84</sup> that is more freely exercise freedom of expression.

Also, free religion might be associated with the free media in a given country because all those variables and conditions that affect the freedom of speech also affect the freedom of religion, for example, the legal, political and economic infrastructure present in the country, as well as financial dependence from the government. Moreover, if a government represses churches, mosques, and temples in the same way it represses political parties, newspapers, and other groups, simply because the government wants no other centers of loyalty or authority in the society.<sup>85</sup>

#### *Description of the variable in the quantitative analysis*

The data of religious freedom come from Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom rankings of the countries. The ranking is available for 175 countries.<sup>86</sup> These

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<sup>84</sup> The categories are from the Checklist of Elements of Religious Freedom, Paul Marshall (ed.), *Religious Freedom in the World: A Global Report on Freedom and Persecution*, Broadman&Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 2000, appendix 2.

<sup>85</sup> <http://freedomhouse.org/religion/publications/rfiw/persecution.htm>.

<sup>86</sup> The ranking of the counties on the basis of *free*, *partly free* and *not free* is available for 175 countries. Some of the country rankings which are not available in the Freedom House's *Religious Freedom in the World: A Global Report on Freedom and Persecution*, Paul Marshall (ed.), are derived from the map of religious freedom, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/religion/>, 11/19/2006

175 countries comprise 99.8 percent of the world population. The data are available for the year of 2000 only, and by using these data in the analysis we assume that there was no change in the religious freedom in the world since. The countries are ranked as having *free*, *partially free*, and *not free* religion. The religious freedom in the multivariate regression analysis is in the form of a dummy variable. I hypothesize the positive relationship between freedom of religion and freedom of the press, the higher the religious freedom the higher the freedom of the press. The sign of the coefficient of the dummy variable of religion being free in the multivariate regression model is expected to be negative and the coefficient of the dummy variable of religion being not free is expected to be positive.<sup>87</sup>

## **Media Ownership**

Two variables that are considered under this category are the number of TV channels and the state media ownership versus private media ownership.

Providing diverse views is essential in supplying voters with all available information to make the right choices. When only few control the media – especially the most popular means of public expression in society – representative democracy becomes an illusion.<sup>88</sup> However, the availability of diverse and many media voices is not a good

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<sup>87</sup> The “left out category” is religion being partly free. For the dummy variable of religion being free an increase of variable from 0 (from partly free and not free) to one (free) means increase in the religious freedom, and the coefficient is expected to be negative as increase in the freedom of the press score is associated with the decrease in the freedom of the press. For the dummy variable of religion being not free the increase of variable from 0 (free, partly free) to 1 (not free) means decrease in the freedom of religion. The sign is expected to be positive, as the higher scores of freedom of the press are associated with less freedom of the press.

<sup>88</sup> Dennis Mazzocco, *Networks of Power: Corporate TV's Threat to Democracy*, South End Press, Boston, MA, 1994, page 141.

indicator of media's level of freedom. The univariate regression analysis in Table 4 shows that there is no significant relationship between the freedom of the press scores and the the number of TV stations.<sup>89</sup> The sign of the coefficient of the number of TV stations is positive which means that with the higher number of TV stations available in the country the freedom of the press becomes less free. As Freedom House points out “paradoxically, the existence of vibrant media may actually reduce a country’s overall level of press freedom. If more media outlets are reporting on sensitive issues such as official corruption, ethnic or religious tension, or human rights, their staff are often more liable to be subject to either legal or physical harassment at the hands of government agents or other actors.”<sup>90</sup> Another example is that Lebanon had some 40 television channels serving a population of 3.5 million. This could create an illusion of diversity, but until recently all alike the channels were restrained by knowing what is acceptable to the Syrian occupation forces.<sup>91</sup> The Freedom House’s analysis shows that “the presence of diverse media outlets does not actually place a country in the category of the *free* press. In many countries inadequate legal protections, coupled with moderate or high levels of intimidations by either the government or other actors, can combine to place a country in the *not free* category despite the presence of a vibrant independent print media sector.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The data come from CIA World Factbook, available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook>.

<sup>90</sup> Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, page 8.

<sup>91</sup> Leo Bogart, Media and Democracy, in Everette Dennis and Robert Snyder (eds), *Media and Democracy*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.), 1998, p. 7.

<sup>92</sup> Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, page 9.

The number of TV stations will not be included in the multivariate regression analysis.

**Table 4. Freedom of the press and the number of TV stations**

Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs	185
					F( 1, 183)	0.49
Model	303.7624	1	303.7624		Prob > F	0.4831
Residual	112564.3	183	615.1054		R-squared	0.0027
					Adj R-squared	-0.0028
Total	112868.1	184	613.4133		Root MSE	24.801
freedom of the press	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
number of TV stations	0.0021	0.0030	0.7	0.483	-0.0038007	0.0080
_cons	46.0069	1.8542	24.81	0.000	42.34853	49.6652

The state versus private media ownership is an important variable affecting the freedom of the press. When the government owns the major media channels the media coverage tends to support the government policies. In contrast, if the media is privately owned the media companies provide more diverse views and can freely criticize the government policies.

If the media is state-owned the governments employ different economic tools, in some cases extreme, to control the media. For example, the government in Algeria owns the main printing presses and controls the supply of paper and ink.<sup>93</sup> Figure 10 shows that the average share of state ownership was less for countries with *free* media and higher for countries with *not free* media.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, page 25.



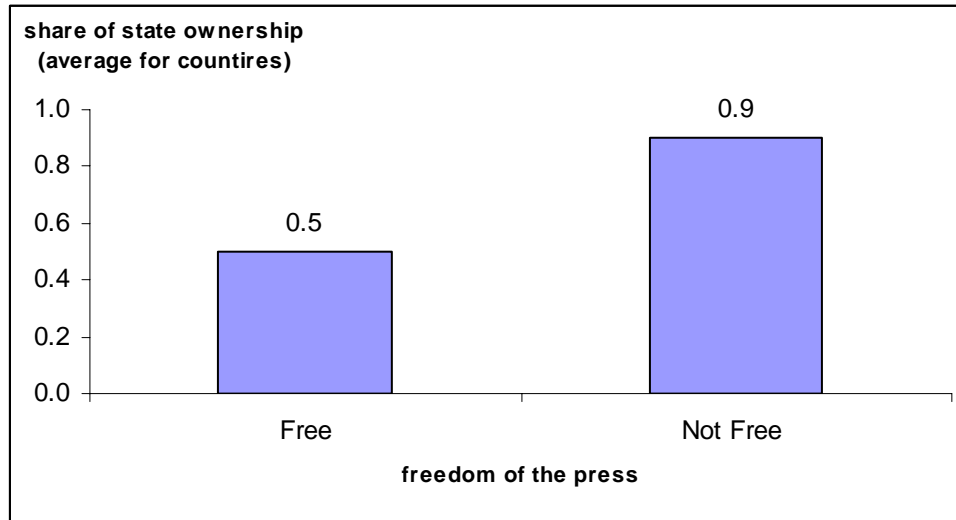


Figure 10. Freedom of the press and state ownership<sup>94</sup>

However, state media ownership is not always associated with the less level of freedom of the press. The example of the BBC can always be trotted out to demonstrate that, with the right safeguards, professional journalism can maintain its autonomy with the confines of what remains essentially a government institution.<sup>95</sup>

*Description of the variable in the quantitative analysis*

I use the state ownership data for the five top television stations in the country.<sup>96</sup> The data are available for 98 countries. The figures weight the ownership by the market share of each media outlet. However, this variable does not show the overall level of media concentration in the country. It shows the relative share of state ownership versus private

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<sup>94</sup> The score of 1 means 100% market share in the hands of the state and score of 0 means 100% private market share.

<sup>95</sup> Leo Bogart, Media and Democracy, in Everette Dennis and Robert Snyder (eds), *Media and Democracy*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.), 1998, p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> Source: dataset for the paper Djankov, Simeon, Caralee McLiesh, Tatiana Nenova, Andrei Shleifer. "Who Owns The Media?" *Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol XLVI (2), October 2003, available at <http://www.andrei-shleifer.com/data.html>

ownership.<sup>97</sup> The data are compiled on the scale from 0 to 1. Higher numbers are associated with the higher concentration of state media ownership versus private ownership. The score of 1 means 100% market share in the hands of the state and score of 0 means 100% private market share. The state and private ownership data are negatively correlated. The higher the state concentration of ownership the less the private concentration of the ownership. The chart below shows that the state ownership is negatively correlated with the freedom of the press (higher scores of the freedom of the press are associated with the less freedom of the press).

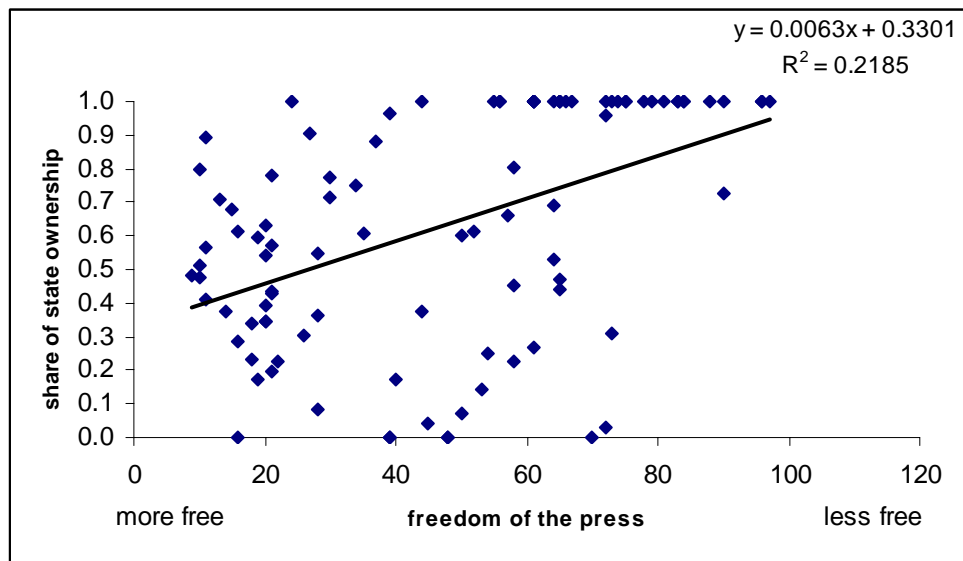


Figure 11. State media ownership and freedom of the press

The more concentrated the media is in the hands of the state the less the level of the freedom of the press. I will test this hypothesis in the multivariate regression analysis. The coefficient of the variable of the state ownership is expected to be positive. The

<sup>97</sup> The private ownership comprises family-ownership, widely-held firms, and employee-owned media outlets. There is also “other” category, which includes the ownership of trade unions, political parties, the Church, not-for-profit foundations, and business associations.

higher the level of state concentration of media the higher the score of the freedom of the press and as a result the less the freedom of the press.

## **Education**

The level of education is essential to the free press as it supplies the society with competent audience which would be able to consume what free media delivers. As Christopher Kedzie argues, an educated public is likely to be both more aware of political events and more capable of intervening to influence them.<sup>98</sup> The level of education can also affect the freedom of the press in an indirect way – through economic development. In a more economically developed society the media tends to be more free as it was shown earlier.

### *Description of the variable in the quantitative analysis*

I use two variables for education – literacy rates and average years of schooling. The literacy rates come from the CIA World Factbook and are available for 193 countries. The data for literacy rates show the percentage of population over age 15 that can read and write. The average years of schooling are years of schooling of the total population aged over 25 and are available for 131 countries.<sup>99</sup> The literacy rates might not be accurate determinants of the freedom of the press since the fact of reading and writing might not be sufficient to enable a responsible participation in the political decision-

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<sup>98</sup> Christopher Kedzie, *Communication and Democracy: Coincident Revolutions and the Emergent Dictator's Dilemma*, RAND Corporation Doctoral Dissertation. Available at [http://www.rand.org/pubs/rgs\\_dissertations/RGSD127](http://www.rand.org/pubs/rgs_dissertations/RGSD127)

<sup>99</sup> Source: Barro, Robert J. and Jong-Wha Lee, *International Data on Educational Attainment: Updates and Implications*. Source: Barro and Lee (2000). Available at <http://www.cid.harvard.edu/ciddata/ciddata.html>

making which free press provides. The average years of schooling is a more precise determinant as it includes the years of post-secondary education, which means more than just ability to read and write. Actually, this hypothesis is supported in the univariate regression analysis. The literacy rate is insignificant determinant of the freedom of the press (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Freedom of the press and literacy rates**

Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs	113
					F( 1, 111)	0.78
Model	339.0842	1	339.0842		Prob > F	0.379
Residual	48176.67	111	434.024		R-squared	0.007
					Adj R-squared	-0.002
Total	48515.75	112	433.1764		Root MSE	20.833
freedom of the press	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
literacy rate	-0.08452	0.095624	-0.88	0.3790	-0.2740055	0.104964
_cons	61.26549	7.828445	7.83	0.0000	45.75291	76.77808

On contrary, the coefficient of average years of schooling is highly significant and the sign of the coefficient is negative (see Table 6) which means that the higher the average years of schooling the less the score of the freedom of the press and consequently higher the level of the freedom of the press. Only average years of schooling will be included in the multivariate regression model. I hypothesize the sign of the coefficient of this variable to be negative (the less score of the freedom of the press corresponds to the higher level of the freedom of the press).

**Table 6. Freedom of the press and average years of schooling**

Source	SS	Df	MS		Number of obs	131
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					F( 1, 129)	66.88
Model	26100.43	1	26100.43		Prob > F	0.0000
Residual	50340.2	129	390.2341		R-squared	0.3414
					Adj R-squared	0.3363
Total	76440.63	130	588.0048		Root MSE	19.754
freedom of the press	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
average years of schooling	-4.8784	0.5965	-8.18	0.0000	-6.0587	-3.6982
_cons	73.8492	4.0314	18.32	0.0000	65.8729	81.8255

### Density of Population

As it was shown before that the 38% of the countries in the freedom of the press ranking had absolutely free media and accounted for only 17% of the world population. This fact suggests that the density of population is one of the important determinants of the freedom of the press. The channel through which the density of population affects the freedom of the press might be that given scarce resources and the high density of population the governments have to suppress media to provide political and social-economic stability in order to prevent internal turmoil.

#### *Description of the variable in the quantitative analysis*

The density of population is a ratio of the country population over the country land area. The data come from the CIA World Factbook. The variable is described as the number of people per square km. I hypothesize negative relationship between the density of population and freedom of the press. The higher the density of population the less the freedom of the press. The sign of the coefficient of this variable in the regression equation is expected to be positive. The higher the density of population the higher the

freedom of the press scores (the higher score of the freedom of the press corresponds to the less level of the freedom of the press).

## **Freedom of the Press**

### *Description of the dependent variable in the quantitative analysis*

Freedom of the press is the dependent variable in my analysis. Freedom House's ratings of the freedom of the press involve three subcategories: legal environment – laws and regulations that influence media content; political environment – political pressures and controls on media content and economic environment – economic influences over media content.

The legal environment category encompasses an examination of both the laws and regulations that could influence media content and the government's inclination to use these laws and legal institutions to restrict the media's ability to operate.<sup>100</sup> The category of political environment looks at the degree of political control over the content of news media. Issues examined include the editorial independence of both state-owned and privately owned media; access to information and sources; official censorship and self-censorship; the vibrancy of the media; the ability of both foreign and local reporters to cover the news freely and without harassment; and the intimidation of journalists by the state or other actors; including arbitrary detention and imprisonment, violent assaults, and other threats.<sup>101</sup> The economic environment for the media examines the structure of media ownership; transparency and concentration of ownership; the costs of establishing

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<sup>100</sup> Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, page xix.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, page xix.

media as well as of production and distribution; the selective withholding of advertising or subsidies by the state or other actors; the impact of corruption and bribery on content; and the extent to which the economic situation in a country impacts the development of the media.<sup>102</sup>

The data are divided into three categories – *free*, *partly free* and *not free*. Countries scoring 0 to 30 are regarded as having *free* media, 31 to 60 as having *partly free* media, and 61 to 100 as having *not free* media.<sup>103</sup> The higher the score the less the level of the freedom of the press in the country.

The cross-country comparisons show that in 2006 in terms of the number of countries there was approximately as much *free* press in the world as *not free*. 73(38%) countries out of 194 had *free* press whereas 67(34%) had *not free* press. However, the data essentially differ if we look at the breakdown of the freedom of the press by the percentage of population. Those 73 countries which had *free* press account for only 17% of the world population and 67 countries with *not free* press – for 43%. The remaining proportion is represented by the countries with the partially free media. The fact that the 38% of all countries that have free media comprise only 17% of world population suggests that the density of population is one of the important determinants of the freedom of the press.

Table 7 provides summary of variables which will be used in the regression analysis, as well as the hypotheses about the expected signs of the coefficients.

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<sup>102</sup> Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005, page xix.

<sup>103</sup> <http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=56&year=2006>.

**Table 7. Description of variables**

Variable	Description	Number of observations	Expected sign
freedom of the press	the higher the score the less the level of the freedom of the press	194	dependent variable
democracy	the higher the score the higher the level of democracy	192	-
economic freedom	the higher the score the less the economic freedom	156	+
religious freedom – free	dummies: free, not free, partially free	175	-
religious freedom – not free	dummies: free, not free, partially free	175	+
GDP per capita	GDP per capita in millions of US dollars	193	-
Gini coefficient	the higher the coefficient the higher the level of inequality	123	+
average years of schooling	the average years of schooling for population aged 25 and over	131	-
Density of population	the number of people per sq km	193	+
state media ownership	the share of state ownership versus private ownership	98	+

#### IV. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The data used for this analysis includes 194 countries. However, not all data are available for all countries; therefore the number of countries can be less in the actual regression model. Not all variables are available for one particular year, for example, the ratings of the freedom of the press and the index of economic freedom are available for different years and I used the 2006 ratings, but the freedom of religion ratings are available for 2000 only.

The two types of analysis are used in this section: descriptive statistics and multivariate regression analysis using Linear Ordinary Least Squares method. Causality



of the dependent and independent variables is difficult to prove unequivocally which, however, does not prevent to see a statistically significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables and does not diminish the strengths of the model.

Table 8 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the variables that will be used in the regression analysis. The variables of GDP per capita and density of population have highly skewed distributions and the logarithms of these variables will be included in the regression model.

**Table 8. Descriptive statistics**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
freedom of the press	194	46.3	44	24.6	9	97
democracy	192	50.8	53	24.7	0	84
economic freedom	156	3.0	3.04	0.7	1.28	5
religion <i>free</i> (dummy)	175	0.5	0	0.5	0	1
religion <i>not free</i> (dummy)	175	0.2	0	0.4	0	1
GDP per capita	193	10695.5	5400	11970.3	600	65900
Gini coefficient	123	40.2	37.9	10.5	24.7	70.7
average years of schooling	131	6.1	5.8	2.9	0.8	12.3
density of population	193	290.7	74.2	1371.2	1.8	16688.7
state ownership	98	0.6	0.65	0.3	0	1

Table 9 shows the first order correlates of the variables. Democracy is the strongest determinant of the freedom of the press and almost all variables are correlated with this variable. There is also high correlation between some of the independent variables, such as the average years of schooling is positively correlated with per capita GDP, that is the higher the average years of schooling of population over age 25 the higher the per capita GDP in the country. Also, per capita GDP is negatively correlated with the variable of economic freedom. As it was explained before the countries with

higher levels of economic freedom have higher levels of economic development (the higher levels of economic freedom have lower scores of the index of economic freedom).

**Table 9. Matrix of first order correlates**

	freedom of the press	democracy	economic freedom	religion <i>free</i> (dummy)	religion <i>not free</i> (dummy)	GDP per capita	Gini coefficient	average years of schooling	density of population	state ownership
freedom of the press	1									
democracy	-0.9443	1								
economic freedom	0.8211	-0.7818	1							
religion <i>free</i> (dummy)	-0.6655	0.6525	-0.5284	1						
religion <i>not free</i> (dummy)	0.426	-0.5135	0.3267	-0.3397	1					
GDP per capita	-0.7339	0.7091	-0.829	0.5625	-0.1957	1				
Gini coefficient	0.4395	-0.3729	0.4069	-0.1302	0.0295	0.4711	1			
average years of schooling	-0.6378	0.6429	-0.7255	0.4961	-0.2633	0.7745	-0.4236	1		
density of population	0.118	-0.089	-0.2173	-0.1349	-0.0402	0.1483	0.0019	0.0508	1	
state ownership	0.3943	-0.4807	0.2775	-0.2846	0.3398	0.2685	-0.0697	-0.4011	0.1592	1

### Regression Analysis

The univariate analysis provided some understanding about the factors that can affect the freedom of the press in a country. Democracy, economic and religious freedoms, GDP per capita and Gini coefficient, state ownership, as well as average years of schooling and density of population highly influence the level of the freedom of the press in the univariate regression models. The multivariate regression analysis shows their influence on the freedom of the press, while controlling for other variables. All data are available for 70 countries. The least observed variable is state media ownership (98 countries).

The variables of democracy and economic freedom are highly significant (100% confidence level). The Gini coefficient is significant at 99% confidence level. The

dummy variable of religion being *free* is significant at 96% confidence level. The dummy variable of religion being *not free* is not significant and the hypothesis about the sign of the coefficient of this variable is not supported. The coefficient of the density of population is significant at 92% confidence level (see Table 10).

**Table 10. Regression model I: Variables affecting freedom of the press**

Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs	70
					F( 9, 60)	85.22
Model	33735.48	9	3748.39		Prob > F	0.0000
Residual	2639.10	60	43.99		R-squared	0.9274
					Adj R-squared	0.9166
Total	36374.59	69	527.17		Root MSE	6.6321
freedom of the press	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
democracy	-0.7898	0.0843	-9.37	0.000	-0.9585	-0.6211
economic freedom	7.7123	2.3220	3.32	0.002	3.0677	12.3569
religion <i>free</i> (dummy)	-4.7969	2.2365	-2.14	0.036	-9.2705	-0.3232
religion <i>not free</i> (dummy)	-3.4035	4.1764	-0.81	0.418	-11.7576	4.9506
Ln(GDP per capita)	0.0524	1.5836	0.03	0.974	-3.1153	3.2200
Gini coefficient	0.2851	0.1092	2.61	0.011	0.0667	0.5035
average years of schooling	0.7312	0.5582	1.31	0.195	-0.3853	1.8477
Ln(density of population)	1.1970	0.6791	1.76	0.083	-0.1614	2.5554
state ownership	-0.0878	3.1114	-0.03	0.978	-6.3115	6.1359
_cons	47.4133	19.8543	2.39	0.020	7.6988	87.1278

The adjusted R-squared of the model is 92% and only 8% variability of the dependent variable of the freedom of the press is explained by the other variables not examined in this model. The hypotheses about the signs of the coefficients of three variables – per capita GDP, average years of schooling and state ownership – are rejected.

The hypotheses about the signs of the coefficients of the variables which are significant are accepted (see Table 11).

**Table 11. Hypothesis testing**

Variable	Description	Expected sign	Accepted/Rejected	Significance level
Democracy	the higher the score the higher the level of democracy	-	accepted	100%
economic freedom	the higher the score the less the economic freedom	+	accepted	100%
Religious freedom – free	Dummies: free, not free, partially free	-	accepted	96%
Religious freedom – not free	Dummies: free, not free, partially free	+	rejected	not significant
GDP per capita	GDP per capita in millions of US dollars	-	rejected	not significant
Gini coefficient	the higher the coefficient the higher the level of inequality	+	accepted	99%
average years of schooling	the average years of schooling for population aged 25 and over	-	rejected	not significant
density of population	the number of people per sq km	+	accepted	92%
state media ownership	the share of state ownership versus private ownership	+	rejected	not significant

### Joint Hypotheses Testing

As there is a high correlation between some of the independent variables (see Table 9) the F-test on joint significance will be implemented on the following pairs of independent variables: economic freedom and  $\ln(\text{GDP per capita})$ , dummy variables on religion *free* and *not free*, average years of schooling and economic freedom, and state ownership and democracy.

### ***Economic freedom and ln(GDP per capita)***

Economic freedom is highly correlated with the variable of economic freedom (correlation coefficient is equal to -0.829).

The null hypothesis is that economic freedom and ln(GDP per capita) have no effect on freedom of the press, while controlling for other variables.

$$H_0: \text{economic freedom} = \ln(\text{GDP per capita}) = 0$$

The alternative hypothesis ( $H_A$ ) is that at least one of the coefficients is not equal to zero (any or both could be different from zero).

```
test econfreedom lngdp
(1) econfreedom = 0
(2) lngdp = 0
F(2, 60) = 6.22
Prob > F = 0.0035
```

According to the STATA printout the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. Economic freedom and ln(GDP per capita) are jointly statistically significant at 99.65% significance level.

### ***Religion dummies***

The dummy variable of religion being *free* is significant and the dummy variable of religion being *not free* is not significant in the regression model. The correlation coefficient between these two variables is equal to -0.34.

The null hypothesis is that dummy variables of religion being *free* and religion being *not free* have no effect on freedom of the press, while controlling for other variables.

$$H_0: \text{religion free} = \text{religion not free} = 0$$

The alternative hypothesis ( $H_A$ ) is that at least one of the coefficients is not equal to zero (any or both could be different from zero).

```
test religfree relignotfree
(1)  religfree = 0
(2)  relignotfree = 0
F(2, 60) = 2.59
Prob > F = 0.0835
```

According to the STATA printout the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. Dummy variables of religion being *free* and religion being *not free* are jointly statistically significant at 91.7% significance level.

### ***Average years of schooling and economic freedom***

Average years of schooling are highly correlated with the variable of economic freedom.

The null hypothesis is that the average years of schooling and economic freedom have no effect on freedom of the press, while controlling for other variables.

$H_0$ : *average years of schooling = economic freedom = 0*

The alternative hypothesis ( $H_A$ ) is that at least one of the coefficients is not equal to zero (any or both could be different from zero).

```
test schooling econfreedom
(1)  schooling = 0
(2)  econfreedom = 0
F(2, 60) = 5.81
Prob > F = 0.0050
```

According to the STATA printout the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. Average years of schooling and economic freedom are jointly statistically significant at 99.5% significance level.

### *State ownership and democracy*

The variable on state media ownership is highly correlated with the variable on democracy. The correlation coefficient is equal to -0.48.

The null hypothesis is that the state ownership and democracy have no effect on freedom of the press, while controlling for other variables.

$H_0: \text{state ownership} = \text{democracy} = 0$

The alternative hypothesis ( $H_A$ ) is that at least one of the coefficients is not equal to zero.

```
test stateownership democracy
(1) stateownership = 0
(2) democracy = 0
F(2, 60) = 50.42
Prob > F = 0.0000
```

According to the STATA printout the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. State ownership and democracy are jointly statistically significant at 100% significance level.

In order to test the hypothesis about the signs of the variables which were insignificant in the regression model but were shown to be jointly significant in the F-tests several regression will be run by dropping one of the highly correlated variables in each pair.

By dropping the variable of economic freedom from the regression the the sign on  $\ln(\text{GDP per capita})$  turns from positive to negative and the hypothesis about the expected sign on the coefficient of these variable is now accepted. However, this variable is still insignificant in the regression model. The variable on average years of schooling does not

change sign when economic freedom is dropped from the regression model and remains insignificant (see Table 12).

**Table 12. Regression model II: Dropping economic freedom from regression**

Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs	70
					F( 8, 61)	81.15
Model	33250.23	8	4156.28		Prob > F	0.0000
Residual	3124.35	61	51.22		R-squared	0.9141
					Adj R-squared	0.9028
Total	36374.59	69	527.17		Root MSE	7.1567
freedom of the press	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
democracy	-0.9223	0.0802	-11.5	0.000	-1.0826	-0.7619
religion <i>free</i> (dummy)	-4.3738	2.4095	-1.82	0.074	-9.1919	0.4442
religion <i>not free</i> (dummy)	-2.1907	4.4895	-0.49	0.627	-11.1681	6.7866
ln(GDP per capita)	-1.7654	1.6036	-1.1	0.275	-4.9719	1.4411
Gini coefficient	0.2571	0.1175	2.19	0.032	0.0222	0.4920
average years of schooling	0.4192	0.5937	0.71	0.483	-0.7681	1.6064
ln(density of population)	0.9787	0.7294	1.34	0.185	-0.4798	2.4371
state ownership	-3.2864	3.1926	-1.03	0.307	-9.6705	3.0977
_cons	99.0088	13.3429	7.42	0.000	72.3280	125.6896

When democracy, which was highly correlated with the state media ownership, is dropped from the regression the sign of the coefficient on state ownership turns from negative to positive and the hypothesis about the sign of this variable is now accepted. The coefficient on the state media ownership becomes significant at 97.7% significance level. After dropping the variable of democracy from regression there is also improvement in the dummy variable of religion being *not free*. It turns the sign from negative to positive as it was hypothesized and becomes significant at 94.6% significance level (see Table 13).

**Table 13. Regression model III: Dropping democracy from regression**



Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs	70
					F( 8, 61)	35.07
Model	29877.6456	8	3734.71		Prob > F	0.0000
Residual	6496.94009	61	106.507		R-squared	0.8214
					Adj R-squared	0.7980
Total	36374.5857	69	527.168		Root MSE	10.3200
freedom of the press	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
economic freedom	17.9962	3.1836	5.65	0.000	11.6301	24.3622
religion <i>free</i> (dummy)	-13.4663	3.1681	-4.25	0.000	-19.8012	-7.1313
religion <i>not free</i> (dummy)	11.7582	5.9908	1.96	0.054	-0.2211	23.7375
ln(GDP per capita)	-2.2277	2.4349	-0.91	0.364	-7.0967	2.6412
Gini coefficient	0.6166	0.1607	3.84	0.000	0.2952	0.9380
average years of schooling	1.6392	0.8554	1.92	0.060	-0.0711	3.3496
ln(density of population)	1.8985	1.0503	1.81	0.076	-0.2017	3.9987
state ownership	10.5073	4.5102	2.33	0.023	1.4885	19.5260
_cons	-32.0344	27.9331	-1.15	0.256	-87.8900	23.8212

The GDP per capita was significant in the univariate regression analysis. However, it is not a strong determinant of the freedom of the press as the other two economic variables – economic freedom and income inequality. Though the coefficient on this variable changes the sign from positive to negative in regression where democracy and economic freedom – its strongest correlates — are dropped from the model, however it remains insignificant in all three models. The explanation of these results can be that media as an economic entity would be better performing in a more free and equal economy than in a more wealthy economy. If the media companies perform in economically less free environment they are dependent on government policies and may be engaged in outright bribery to promote their business interest. All business firms are interested in business taxes, interest rates, labor policies, and enforcement and

nonenforcement of the antitrust laws.<sup>104</sup> This dependency makes the media coverage more pro-government and leaves little space for the diversity of viewpoints and unbiased reporting. Economic freedom provides the media to be economically free and therefore more politically independent.

Interestingly enough are the results for the variable of average years of schooling. hypothesis about the sign of the coefficient is rejected in all three regression models. One of the explanations of this might be that there are many countries, such as Russia, China, Vietnam and other former Soviet block countries that have higher levels of education (the primary and secondary education was given a particular importance during Soviet times) but still have authoritarian governments and *not free* press.

## V. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

### CASE OF RUSSIA

#### The Soviet Union

As it was shown in the previous chapters the economic, social and political conditions in the country affect the level of media independence. In the Soviet Union “there was little space for political, economic, or social life independent of the state.”<sup>105</sup> The Soviet system aimed to manage the economy, monopolize political activity, control the media, and destroy all independent associational life.<sup>106</sup> The economy of the Soviet Union was

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<sup>104</sup> Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1988, page 13.

<sup>105</sup> Masha Lipman and Michael Mcfaul, “*Managed Democracy*” in *Russia: Putin and the Press*, Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Press/politics, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 116-127, June 2001.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

described as centrally planned and centrally distributed and so was the media. The media was dependent on receiving funds from the Communist government. It was strictly controlled and strictly censored by authorities. There was no space for journalistic liberty and no live broadcasting was allowed. Although the income distribution in the Soviet Union was pretty equal, however, there was no economic freedom from the government which was controlling both the production and distribution of the output.

The democracy in the Soviet Union was the so called “soviet democracy”. The Western style democracy actually was introduced during perestroika. The notion of parliamentary-style democracy, with checks and balances on the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, was a totally foreign and unfamiliar concept.<sup>107</sup>

The religion in the Soviet Union was not free; officially it was an atheistic state and the society was religiously unfree.

By the end of the 1930s virtually all religious institutions had been closed and the vast majority of religious activists had been swallowed up by the purge machine, whether through physical elimination in the execution cellars or through internment in the gulag. After the World War II the official commitment to the eventual elimination of religion remained, but the party accepted that this was likely to be a long-term process requiring a variety of means. If religious institutions, however limited their numbers, were to be allowed to exist the state would have to perfect the means of control, with state and security agencies monitoring very carefully the daily life of religious communities and watching out for any undue excesses of religious enthusiasm on the part of clergy or laity. Finally educational and propaganda measures were taken to undermine religious values and promote an alternative world-view and vision of humanity.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Yevgeny Bendersky, *Democracy in the Former Soviet Union: 1991-2004*, 1/03/05, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp010305.shtml>.

<sup>108</sup> John Anderson, *Religious Liberty in Transitional Societies: The Politics of Religion*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, page 119.

All these features of the totalitarian government left little space for the media to be independent.

### **Gorbachev's perestroika**

Glasnost – a Russian word for “freedom of speech” – was one of the Mikhail Gorbachev's policies introduced in 1985 in the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev intention was to restructure the Soviet planned and controlled economy by providing an open debate and criticism of the system. Under perestroika, the mass media became an independent power for the first time in Soviet or Russian history, a genuine “third estate.”<sup>109</sup> The media was given “a greater editorial license”<sup>110</sup> which resulted in the detailed criticism of the government policies by highlighting several social and economic problems present in the country, as well as exposing the truth about the Soviet past. During glasnost, when Soviet archives became available, people received significant amount of information about the crimes committed during Joseph Stalin's dictatorship. Relaxation of censorship resulted in the Communist Party losing its grip on the media.<sup>111</sup> Most of the decisions taken during glasnost and perestroika were encouraged by the

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<sup>109</sup> William Miller (ed), *Alternatives to Freedom: Arguments and Opinions*, Longman, London and New York, 1995, page 77.

<sup>110</sup> Masha Lipman and Michael Mcfaul, “*Managed Democracy*” in *Russia: Putin and the Press*, Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Press/politics, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 116-127, June 2001.

<sup>111</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glasnost>.

media.<sup>112</sup> For a brief period of time, in a number of countries, journalists and other media workers enjoyed very great freedom to report and discuss their society and its future.<sup>113</sup>

While still enjoying the economic benefits of state subsidization, new independent newspapers such as *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Kuranty*, and *Kommersant* appeared for the first time. In other words, a paper such as *Moscow News* could not have survived without state assistance. But because the state's leader, Gorbachev, tolerated a critical press, *Moscow News* and others could publish articles critical of him and his government.<sup>114</sup>

Vladimir Posner, the former Soviet journalist, used to claim the press was freer in the Soviet Union than it was in the United States.<sup>115</sup> Posner explained that the government was dysfunctional, so journalists did not have to worry about the official censors, and the media had not been privatized, so journalists were not accountable to commercial sponsors and advertisers. The result was a kind of anarchic freedom. The press was free, but only for a brief window in time.<sup>116</sup>

Though Gorbachev's intention was to restructure the economy, however it had adverse effects and at the beginning of 1990s after the growing decline in the industrial and agricultural output the Soviet economy collapsed.

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<sup>112</sup> William Miller (ed), *Alternatives to Freedom: Arguments and Opinions*, Longman, London and New York, 1995, page 77.

<sup>113</sup> Colin Sparks, Media Theory after the Fall of European Communism: Why the Old Models from East and West Won't Do Any More, in James Curran and Myung-Jin Park (eds), *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, page 47.

<sup>114</sup> Masha Lipman and Michael Mcfaul, "Managed Democracy" in *Russia: Putin and the Press*, Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Press/politics, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 116-127, June 2001.

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/11/26/INGAKMHOCV1.DTL>.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

During glasnost religious communities gained numerous de facto rights to open churches, engage in educational and charitable activities and participate in public life, and these rights were given legal backing in a new USSR law on religion approved in October 1990 and followed one month later by a Russian Federation law which effectively created a religious free market.<sup>117</sup> Millions of people began to participate in “new religious movements,” which was viewed by the Orthodox leadership as the religious free market was getting out of control.<sup>118</sup>

## **Russia**

Freedom of the press in Russia was ranked as partially free from 1993 up until 2002. However, beginning from 2003 freedom of the press ratings have deteriorated. The index of freedom of the press in Russia increased (the freedom of the press declined) from 66 in 2003 to 72 in 2006. Although the constitution of Russian Federation provides for freedom of speech and of the press beginning from 2003 up until now Russia’s media freedom has been ranked as *not free*.

In Russia the media is considered as an important political instrument. The government owns the country’s biggest stations ORT (Public Russian Television) and RTR (Russian Television and Radio), as well as is a shareholder in TV-6 and NTV. These channels have the largest audience reach in the country.

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<sup>117</sup> John Anderson, *Religious Liberty in Transitional Societies: The Politics of Religion*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, page 120.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, page 127.

The influential oil and gas tycoons who are in the close ties with the government are trying to acquire the majority of shares in the national media. They also use the media as an important tool in parliamentary and presidential elections campaigns. Those media companies which were relatively independent from the state from the very beginning of their establishment could not remain independent for very long time. The examples are Gusinsky's Media Most, which included the NTV channel, Ekho Moskvyy radio and other media. Although NTV's financial woes made the station vulnerable, the state's campaign against the channel is simply another example of what happens to a news organization when it gets in the way of the Kremlin.<sup>119</sup>

However, Freedomhouse's *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence* points out that some diversity of viewpoints exists in the Russian media, as oligarchs own various electronic and print media outlets and use them to advance personal interests. Most print media in Russia are privately owned. The government allows the existence of a few independent, critical media outlets, but these have very limited coverage.<sup>120</sup>

It was shown in Chapters III and IV that the democracy was the strongest determinant of the freedom of the press. Although the modern Russia is officially considered as a democracy there is little notion of that in practice. From 1991 to 2003 Russia was ranked as *partially free* by the Freedom House's Freedom in the World. However, beginning from 2004 up until now the ranking fell down to *not free*. According

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<sup>119</sup> Masha Lipman and Michael Mcfaul, "Managed Democracy" in *Russia: Putin and the Press*, Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Press/politics, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 116-127, June 2001.

<sup>120</sup> Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., page 168.

to this ranking Russia's democracy is like that in Pakistan, Algeria, Egypt, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

During the March 2004 presidential elections campaign, Russian media coverage was unbalanced and biased, with media outlets giving the majority of airtime and newspaper space to President Putin. National television channels prevented equal access of the candidates to the media through censorship and the refusal to broadcast political advertising clips from Putin's opponents, while opponents' attempts to file complaints with the Central Election Commission and Supreme Court failed. Believing that the elections were predetermined and the media was nothing but an instrument, many journalists practice self-censorship and keep away from electoral issues.<sup>121</sup>

According to the Wall Street Journal and the Heritage Foundation the economic freedom in the country is ranked as mostly unfree. According to the same source some of the Russia's significant weaknesses lie in investment freedom, financial freedom, property rights, and freedom from corruption. Foreign investment in virtually all sectors faces both official and unofficial hurdles, including bureaucratic inconsistency, corruption, and outright restrictions in lucrative sectors like energy. Corruption engenders a weak rule of law, which in turn reinforces the transience of property rights and arbitrary law enforcement.<sup>122</sup> As there is no freedom in the judiciary system the authorities use it for arbitrary arrests and lawsuits against journalists and independent media channels. The majority of private media remain dependent on the government for access to printing and distribution services and are disadvantaged by subsidies that the state gives to government-controlled media.<sup>123</sup> Having allegedly provided Russian society with its

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, page 168.

<sup>122</sup> From <http://www.heritage.org/research/features/index/country.cfm?id=Russia>.

<sup>123</sup> Karin Deutsch Karlekar (ed), *Freedom of the Press 2005: A Global Survey of Media Independence*, Freedom House, New York, Washington, D.C., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., page 168.



political freedom, the press has been put under a new pressure by its economic dependence on its proprietors, and has not demonstrated the ability to provide more objective information.<sup>124</sup>

According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators the Gini coefficient for Russia in 2005 was 31.<sup>125</sup> The income distribution in the country is not largely unequal as the coefficient higher than 50 is considered to be an indicator of high inequality. According to this ranking the Russia's income distribution was close to that in Bangladesh (31.8), India (32.5), Romania (30.3), as well as South Korea (31.6), Austria (30.0) and Netherlands (30.9). Moreover, the income in Russia is more equally distributed than, for example, in the United States (40.8) and the United Kingdom (36.0). Thus, this variable cannot be considered as a strong contributor to the less freedom of the press in Russia.

According to the Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom rankings the religious freedom in Russia is ranked as *partly free*. The constitution of Russian Federation provides for freedom of religion, and the Government usually respects this right in practice. However, according to the U.S. Department of State's *Report on International Religious Freedom*<sup>126</sup> in some cases the authorities do not always respect this constitutional provision. According to the same report the 1997 Law on Freedom of

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<sup>124</sup> Greg Simons and Dmitry Strovsky, *Censorship in Contemporary Russian Journalism in the Age of the War Against Terrorism: A Historical Perspective*, European Journal of Communication, 2006, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, www.sagepublications.com, Vol. 21(2): 189–211.

<sup>125</sup> The Gini coefficient is a measure of inequality of income distribution in the country. It is measured on the scale from 0 to 100. The higher the coefficient the more unequally the income is distributed. A score of 0 means that a country has completely equal distribution of income, while a score of 100 means completely unequal income distribution.

<sup>126</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Reports on International Religious Freedom, 2001-2006*, available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/>.

Conscience and Associations provides legal grounds for actions restricting religious freedom. In particular, the provisions of the Law require religious organizations to reregister, establishing procedures for their dissolution, and allowing the Government to ban religious organizations. The Law also requires that religious “groups” exist for fifteen years before they can qualify for “organization” status.

### **Cultural characteristics**

Although in the quantitative analysis in the Chapters III and IV there were no variables describing the cultural characteristics of the countries, however, it is important to have them discussed in regard to Russian media. Greg Simons and Dmitry Strovsky in their “*Censorship in Contemporary Russian Journalism in the Age of the War Against Terrorism*”<sup>127</sup> explain that compared to other European countries, one peculiarity of Russia is its deep rooted authoritarian tradition, which evolved, partly at least, as a consequence of the extremely harsh living conditions people had to endure, which meant that rather than survive independently, they had to rely upon a strong leader. Further they argue that Russia’s immense territory, historically forced to defend itself from incessant attacks from its numerous enemies, inevitably led to a hierarchical political structure and the superior being at the apex of this structure took control and responsibility for everything and, accordingly, tried to maintain a strong and inflexible subordination of the Russian people.

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<sup>127</sup> Greg Simons and Dmitry Strovsky, *Censorship in Contemporary Russian Journalism in the Age of the War Against Terrorism: A Historical Perspective*, European Journal of Communication, 2006, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, www.sagepublications.com, Vol. 21(2): 189–211.

There are similarities between the media in the Soviet Union and in the modern Russia. The censorship and self-censorship existed in the Soviet media and they exist in the contemporary Russian media. They are embedded in the Russian media and can be traced in the history of the country. Both censorship and self-censorship are the reflections of the morality of a country elaborated historically over a long period of time.<sup>128</sup>

Unlike in the West, where the press was initiated by economic competition and functioned within a growing system of private interests, Russian media operated in a completely different context. They evolved as a political instrument originally established by Tsar Peter the Great in 1702 and perpetuated by his descendants. When he decreed the creation of the newspaper *Vedomosti*, Peter's conception of it was essentially as a tool to promote his own will and the priorities of the state. Public interests, i.e. the interests of the majority of the Russian people, were never taken into account. So, from the very beginning, the press fulfilled a politically oriented role rather than expressing ideas of plurality. Sanctioning plurality from 'above', as was probated under Russian rule, resulted in strict control over the content of the press and its journalists. The Soviet period was marked by an even more rigid censorship of the press. After 1917, the country was still subject to authoritarian rule, but this time even stricter and reinforced by the ideology embracing Soviet society.<sup>129</sup>

### **Media and Society Interrelation Model**

The transition from the Soviet society to the modern Russian society can be tracked on the media and society interrelation model (see Figure 12).

In terms of democracy the society during perestroika moved from the “soviet style democracy” and *not free* media – point C to point A – towards more free media and more

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

free democracy – point B. However, the society returned back to point C – towards “managed democracy” and again *not free* media (according to the Freedom House Russia is ranked as *not free* both in the freedom of the world and freedom of the press ratings) (see Figure 12).<sup>130</sup> Return to the point C is shown as a diagonal move because it is unclear whether the return was through less free media (B-D-C) or less democracy (B-A-C). In terms of economy the society moved from the point C – from *not free* economy and *not free* media to virtually nowhere on the model – the economy during the transition from the Soviet system just collapsed, though the direction of the media was towards more free. Modern Russia in terms of economic freedom and freedom of the press is at the point D – the economic freedom is ranked as *mostly unfree* and freedom of the press – as *not free*. In terms of religion the society moved from atheistic unfree society towards more free media and more free religion during perestroika and eventually towards more free religion and *not free* media in modern Russia – the religion in Russia is ranked as *partly free* (C-A-B-D).

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<sup>130</sup> On this diagram the level of freedom for the variables is shown as *less free* and *more free* as this model does not employ the *partly free* rankings.

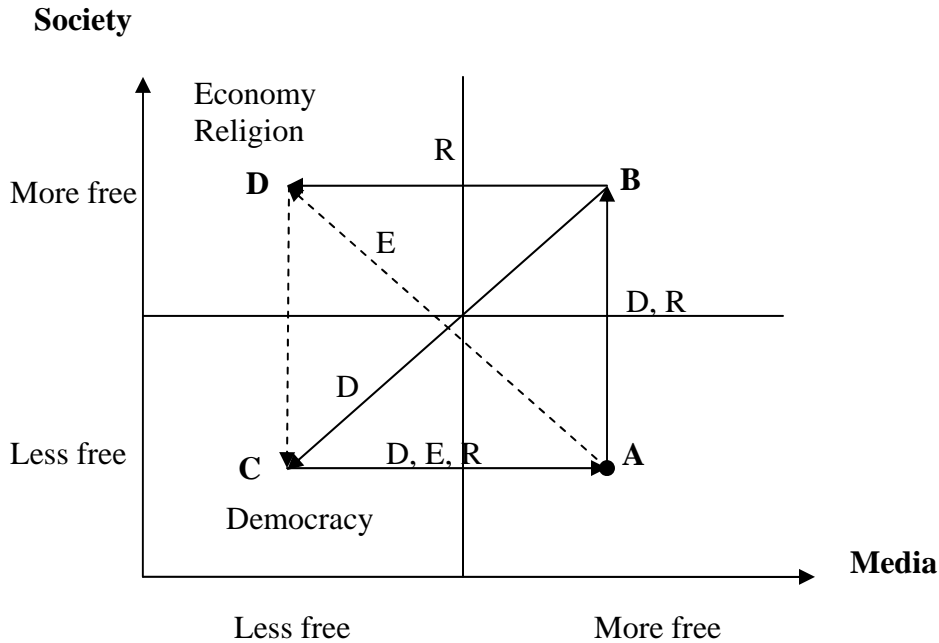


Figure 12. The media and society interrelation model: Case of Russia (D-democracy, E-economic freedom, R-religious freedom)

In comparison with the Soviet system of media, economy, religion and democracy being all at the point C – unfree society, in modern Russia there are some improvements in the religious freedom towards *partly free* and there is very slightly improvement in economic freedom from *not free* towards *mostly unfree*.

**Table 14. Characteristics of the society in the Soviet Union, during perestroika and in modern Russia**

	Soviet Union	Gorbachev's perestroika	Modern Russia
Freedom of the press	Not free	More free	Not free
Democracy	Not free	More free	Not free
Religion	Atheistic state/Not free	More free	Partly free
Economic freedom	Not free	Collapsed economy	Mostly unfree

## Media and State Relationship

Overall if we put together all three stages of Russian media history – Soviet Union, perestroika and modern Russia we will get the following picture (see Figure 13). In the Soviet Union there was explicit control of the media by the state. The media was centrally planned and centrally distributed. What happened during Gorbachev's glasnost is that the media and society moved from one extreme relationship to another – to almost no control at all. At the time, the Russia media was free to the point of anarchy.<sup>131</sup> However, it cannot be said that the media was completely free from government influence. Although the media was given a higher editorial independence, however, it was still economically dependent on the government subsidies. Even right after the collapse of the Soviet Union and establishment of the independent Russian state when there still was a threat of the Communists comeback the media and the state in this transitional period acted in the form of a cartel to prevent the possible return of the country to the communist past. On Figure 13, the move of media during the perestroika towards no control just shows that it was much more free during perestroika than in the Soviet Union and modern Russia. However, it is extremely difficult to assess the exact media and state relationship during perestroika and even in today's Russia. This diagram is just an attempt to put together all stages of media and state relationships in the Soviet Union, perestroika and modern Russia.

What is going on in Russia today, is that the both forms of media and state relationship – manufactured consent and market for loyalties – are present. The manufactured consent is present as the difficult economic conditions in the country affect

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<sup>131</sup> *NTV's battle with the Kremlin*, By Russian Affairs Analyst Stephen Dalziel, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1260169.stm>

the media companies to operate efficiently. Media companies are favoring closer ties with the state to get economic, financial, as well as political benefits. Also, they are self-censoring and confirming government policies in the light of such a sensitive topic as “Chechen war.” Government wants only one “truth” about the war to be available to public, the one that it does promote itself. The journalists avoid critical coverage of the war and self-censor. The market for loyalties is also present in Russia today, as the government is persistent on its goal of promoting its version of national identity.

### State and Media Relationship in the Soviet Union and Russia

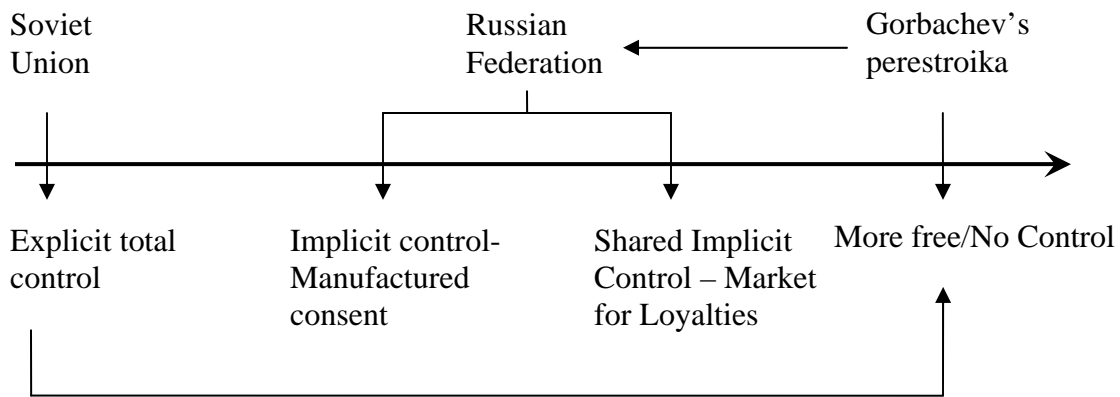


Figure 13. State and Media Relationship in the Soviet Union and Russia

### Conclusions

The freedom of the press is a necessity for an efficient operation of the society. It is a function of a number of important variables. The complete media independence in Russia or any other country is possible only if democratic institutions are enforced and protected, the full religious freedom is exercised and the economic policies toward higher economic

freedom are implemented. All these characteristics of free media and free society in their turn will create a virtual circle and place Russia among advanced nations in the world.

The Soviet media was a crucial instrument in promoting the Communist Party ideology and sustaining the multinational country such as the Soviet Union. The media and state relations in Soviet Union were driven by economic, political and social variables present at the time. Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost policies transformed the media and society towards relatively more free and open. However, media transformation in Russia from one form of total government control in the Soviet Union to another form of the state control in Russia did not give more freedom to the Russian media. The most of Russian media is still state owned and state controlled. Even if some part of media in Russia is privately owned, [the networks] do not necessarily want to distance themselves from the government, as government contacts and favors can assist networks."<sup>132</sup> But for media to be free it should be economically independent and institutionally separated from the state.

As it was shown in the Chapters III and IV the economic freedom was one of the strongest determinants of the freedom of the press. If the countries are able to promote greater levels of economic freedom they can provide the higher degrees of the freedom of the press. If there is economic freedom in judiciary system, the levels of corruption are low, the black market operations are not large and the property rights are protected the media will enjoy higher level of independence.

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<sup>132</sup> <http://www2.internews.ru/report/tv/tv12.html>, *A Survey of Russian Television*, Prepared for USAID, April 1997.



Religious freedom provided in Constitutions of many countries, including Russia should be exercised in practice. Religious freedom is the most important of all freedoms. It is the religious freedom that brings other liberties and rights, including freedom of speech and expression.

Currently the important step towards democratization and development of media industry in Russia has to be the liberation of media from the political influence. The creation of economic incentives and commercialization of the media market will stimulate the formation of diversified media entities and development of media industry. Independent media market will bring more plurality, more openness and higher quality to Russian media.

However, the cultural factor which implies that Russia throughout its history has always been an authoritarian state will be one of the important determinants hindering the complete media independence in the country for years to come.

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