

By the Numbers: Tracing the Statistical Correlation Between Press Freedom and Democracy

By Karin Deutsch Karlekar and Lee B. Becker
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Mark Nelson
Senior Director

Center for International Media Assistance
National Endowment for Democracy
1025 F Street, N.W., 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20004

Phone: (202) 378-9700
Fax: (202) 378-9407
Email: CIMA@ned.org
URL: <http://cima.ned.org>

About the Author

Karin Deutsch Karlekar

Karin Deutsch Karlekar is the project director of Freedom of the Press, an annual index that tracks trends in media freedom worldwide. She coordinates the research, ratings, and editorial processes for the index, and also writes a number of the country reports on Africa and South Asia. She regularly serves as a spokesperson for Freedom House on media issues, has been quoted extensively in U.S. and foreign media outlets, and has represented the organization at numerous conferences, workshops, and events on the topics of media indicators, Internet and digital media freedom, and press freedom. She has authored special reports on the discrepancies between print and broadcast media freedom and on the impact of media regulation on press freedom, and has conducted research, assessment, and advocacy missions to Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In addition, she led the development of the methodology for and coordinated the pilot edition of a new index of Internet and digital media freedom published in April 2009. Prior to joining Freedom House, Karlekar was an editor at the Economist Intelligence Unit and also served as a consultant to Human Rights Watch. She holds a Ph.D. in Indian History from Cambridge University, England. She is the author of a 2009 CIMA report, *Print and Broadcast Media Freedom: Disparities and Openings*.

Lee B. Becker

Lee B. Becker is director of the James M. Cox Jr. Center for International Mass Communication Training and Research and professor in the Department of Journalism, Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia. Becker holds a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin and a master's degree and a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky. He has written extensively on audience uses of the mass media and the effects of media messages on audiences and society. He currently directs a continuing research project examining characteristics and trends in the journalism and mass communication labor force. His research also focuses on the role of the media in democratization, how media organizations structure their coverage of news, and the impact of midcareer training programs for journalists.

Becker has been examining the methodology used to measure media freedom and related characteristics of nation states for more than 10 years. He has evaluated training and educational programs both in the U.S. and abroad and is a member of the American Evaluation Association. He also has conducted training workshops for journalists and other communication professionals around the world.

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Preface

Many scholars and practitioners in the fields of democracy and media freedom would support the proposition that the two are intimately connected, but the exact relationship between them and the degree of causality between changes in one with changes in the other has not been the subject of extensive research. This study attempts to address this gap, demonstrating through broad empirical analysis and a range of country case studies that press freedom is an integral part of freedom generally. Trends in one move most often in tandem with trends in the other, suggesting both that media freedom is unlikely to emerge and be sustained in the absence of improvements in broader political rights and civil liberties and that declines in press freedom almost always accompany or foreshadow a downturn in freedom more broadly. These findings have implications for academic or theoretical analysis, as well as for those who work in the fields of democracy promotion and media development.

Introduction

It is generally accepted that media freedom is beneficial to democratic and economic development, but the exact nature of this relationship and the direction of causality between press freedom and general freedoms is under-researched. Most of the literature available on the topic concentrates on the influence of press freedom on economic development in a given country and suggests that a free media contributes to better economic outcomes by, among other things, lowering the cost of information, promoting accountability, and exposing corruption.¹ In 2004, the World Bank declared press freedom “a key element in the global fight against poverty”² and stated that free media can play a “catalytic role”³ in economic development.

In addition to economic development, the relationship has been analyzed between press freedom and several other factors, such as national income, education, culture, or socio-political stability.⁴ Authors usually found a positive relationship, showing that a freer press is conducive to a richer, more stable country—or the other way around. More media freedom has been found to contribute to more political knowledge and greater political participation, and it has also been found to be “contagious,” i.e., influencing the state of the media in neighboring countries.⁵ Some of the analysis, however, warned that a watchdog media might trigger repressive responses from an autocratic government in the short term, an observation that calls for a more nuanced approach.⁶ In general, however, rigorous and in-depth examinations of the relationship between press freedom and general democracy using the available global datasets have been limited.

This study began largely as an effort to examine the relationship, testing the proposition noticed in a number of key countries over the past decade that press freedom seemed to be a “lead indicator” for freedom generally. As such, a decline in press freedom would be expected to lead to a broader decline in freedom, because muzzling the press would limit the space for media and civil society to engage in the political process and to hold governments to account, while the political opposition would face difficulty in presenting alternative views to the public, particularly in the period leading up to elections.

Since 1973, Freedom House has been assessing the state of freedom in the world, producing its annual *Freedom in the World* report and individual ratings of countries in terms of their level of political rights and civil liberties. In 1980, Freedom House began to assess media freedom around the world, producing a second report entitled *Freedom of the Press*, which was composed of separate ratings of countries in terms of their level of media freedom. Each country is given a numerical score as well as a “status designation” of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free based on their score. Country ratings are now also accompanied by narrative

reports that provide detail on the conditions in each country and any major events or trends of each calendar year.

The two reports often reach similar, but not identical, conclusions. In the 2013 *Freedom in the World* report, Freedom House classified 46 percent of the countries in the world as Free (rather than Partly Free or Not Free), while the *Freedom of the Press* report rated only 32 percent of the countries as having a Free media system. That year, the two reports rated 71.9 percent of the countries similarly, giving the remaining 28.1 percent somewhat different classifications. In no cases, however, did the two assessments produce more than a single category difference, i.e., a difference between a Free classification on one of the indexes and Not Free on the other.

The methodologies for these two reports have evolved over time, becoming more complex in the way information is gathered, assessed, and in how the final score is calculated. Yet some aspects of the data gathering and reporting have remained consistent across time, producing two unique data sets that contain separate assessments of media freedom and broad political freedoms in the more than 150 countries and territories evaluated over the past 30-40 year span. Until now, however, these rich data archives have not been organized to combine data records in a comparable way on the two indexes for countries over time, and the relationship between each country's scores on the two indexes have not been examined across time in a systematic way.

While much has been assumed about this relationship in the abstract, at least four possibilities present themselves. First, media freedom could be a leading indicator of more general political freedoms, either because media freedom brings about broader political freedoms or is a necessary condition for the development of broader political freedoms. Alternately, broader political freedoms could precede freedom of the media, again either because those broad political freedoms bring about media change or because they are conditions for change in the freedom of the media. A third option is that broad political freedoms and media freedom change in tandem because both are the result of some common antecedent. The final possibility is that the two indexes change independently of each other and the correlation for the 2013 data was an unusual, if not unique, finding.

This report clarifies the relationship between these two indexes based on two types of analyses. First, it uses statistical analyses of the *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press* indexes across time. Second, it adds to those quantitative findings a detailed analysis of the qualitative reports and supplementary data from a subset of countries identified from the quantitative analyses as those experiencing the greatest change across time



during the past decade. The creation of a complete set of standardized and joint data records has allowed for a broad level of statistical analysis as well as the ability to track trends over time for specific countries and to graphically depict these trends in a way that has hitherto not been easily possible.

The two types of data support the conclusion that broad political freedoms and freedom of the media are highly related and also that change across time most often occurs in tandem, probably because they have some common antecedent. In terms of the qualitative analysis, the level of simultaneous change in *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press* scores was present in almost 70 percent of cases, suggesting that media freedom is a key component of the general level of democracy. This high level of correlation between change in one and change in the other was present regardless of the direction of change (i.e., either positive or negative), as well as the speed of change (i.e., sudden change versus incremental change over a period of several years). A number of country case studies of various types of change have been included to demonstrate that this pattern is present across a wide swath of examples.

However the qualitative analysis also suggested that for a significant minority of countries, the level of press freedom could be seen as a “lead indicator” of the level of general political freedom, and that a negative trajectory in a country’s press freedom scores could predict a subsequent slippage in general freedoms within several years. Therefore, we have also included a number of examples to illustrate this phenomenon.

Conceptual Framework

What Do the Two Indexes Measure, and How?

The *Freedom in the World* index was launched in 1972 to provide an annual evaluation of the state of global freedom. The index measures freedom according to two broad categories, political rights and civil liberties, which have been a staple of the report since its inception. However, the subindexes under each category have evolved over time before reaching their present form in 2003. Political rights include the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and functioning of government. Civil liberties include freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights. The index does not rate governments or government performance per se, but rather the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals.

The *Freedom of the Press* index was established in 1980 to assess media freedom with a separate tool based on universal criteria, primarily Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The index aims to evaluate the environment in which the media operate in each country, as well as the degree of news and information diversity available to the public from either local or transnational sources. In its current form, *Freedom of the Press* examines the legal, political, and economic environments for press freedom across all types of media—including print, broadcast, and Internet-based news outlets.

Freedom in the World and *Freedom of the Press* currently evaluate 195 countries and an additional number of select territories using comprehensive methodologies and processes detailed in Appendix A.

Potential Limitations of the Analysis

One of the questions important to address at the outset concerns the potential limitation of the analysis resulting from a possible lack of independence of the measures of *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press*. The two indicators are produced in a common office in New York by staff that interact with each other regularly and attend both sets of ratings review meetings; in addition, some of the country analysts are shared and contribute to both reports. In terms of methodological overlap, a single item on the *Freedom in the World* index as currently constructed also measures the independence and freedom of the media in the country. In the methodology, one of the 25 indicators used to create the 100-point scale for the *Freedom in the World* index assesses whether the media in the country are free and independent. This item accounts for maximally four of the 100 points on the scale and produces the only potential overlap of the two methodologies.



This second limitation is not an important one empirically. As noted, only 4 points of the 100 point scale for *Freedom in the World* come from the item measuring free and independent media. An analysis of the *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press* 100-point scale measures in 2013 shows that the relationship between them is unchanged by the elimination of that single item from the *Freedom in the World* measure. The correlation was +.95 with and without the overlapping item (both using Spearman's rho and Pearson's r).

The first limitation resulting from the overlap and interaction among analytical staff is more significant. This can be addressed via analyses of the relationships between the two Freedom House measures and measures of these same concepts by other organizations, in order to test the degree to which these measures are correlated with and track with the analyses produced by other indexes. To our knowledge, this type of analysis has been conducted more rigorously for the existing press freedom indexes (such as the Reporters Without Borders' *Press Freedom Index* and the IREX *Media Sustainability Index*),⁷ and to some extent for other democracy indicators such as the Polity 4 dataset.⁸ These studies have shown that the ratings produced by the different indexes are highly correlated, meaning they largely arrive at the same conclusions concerning most of the countries. However, to fully test the conclusions reached in this report, further research that would add other datasets and indicators not produced by Freedom House into the analysis would be a valuable avenue for further study.

The Quantitative Analysis

The methodologies for the two indexes have evolved over time, resulting in the release of different types of data across the years. Thus, the first step in the quantitative analysis involved integrating the two cumulative data files, retaining as much detail as possible while also seeking to create as much commonality as possible. In every year of the *Freedom in the World* and the *Freedom of the Press* ratings, Freedom House classified countries on a basic level as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. Therefore, these categories were converted into a three-point scale. The historical reverse rating system was retained, with a low score meaning a high level of freedom or press freedom.

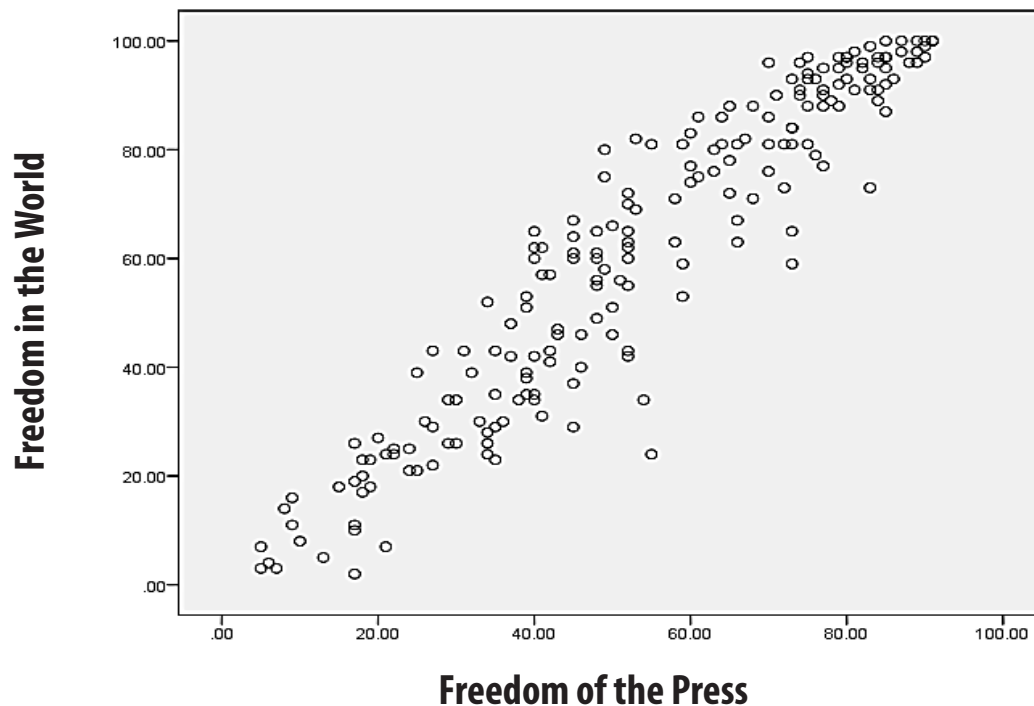
From 1980 through 1989, Freedom House did not create a single measure of press freedom in a country but rather classified the broadcast and print systems of countries separately, using the Free, Partly Free or Not Free designation for each. For this reason, and because of some missed years in both reports in the same time period, the initial analysis focused on the 1990 to 2013 editions of *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press*, when both annual data and single measurements for overall levels of press freedom were available. This enabled an examination of data covering the crucial 1988-90 period of great political change through calendar year 2012.

Freedom in the World Status: Release Date 1980 * Freedom of the Press Status: Release Date 1980

			FHPF80PRSTA FOTP 1980 (Release Date)			Total
			Press Freedom Status Print			
			1 Free	2 Partly Free	3 Not Free	
FHF80STA Freedom in the World Status: Release Date 1980	1 Free	Count	46	2	0	48
		% of Total	30.1%	1.3%	0.0%	31.4%
	2 Partly Free	Count	7	32	11	50
		% of Total	4.6%	20.9%	7.2%	32.7%
	3 Not Free	Count	0	2	53	55
		% of Total	0.0%	1.3%	34.6%	35.9%
Total	Count	53	36	64	153	
	% of Total	34.6%	23.5%	41.8%	100.0%	

The beginning point for the quantitative analyses was an examination of the static relationship between the *Freedom in the World* and the *Freedom of the Press* measures. This relationship is shown in its simplest form in Table I, for 1980, the first year in which the two studies were conducted (using data on printed press). It shows that of the 156 countries rated in both studies, 131 had a common score on each (shown in the diagonal). The remaining 25 countries fall off the axis, but only slightly. This relationship can be summarized in a commonly

used statistic, a correlation coefficient. If all of the 156 cases had fallen on the diagonal axis, the correlation coefficient would have been +1. This means simply as one score increases the other one also increases, meaning the two scores are fully redundant. If all of the cases had fallen on the alternate axis in the table, the correlation would have been -1. In this case, the scores would have been redundant as well, but a low score on one measure would have been associated with a high score on the other.



This graph shows this same relationship between Freedom in the World and Freedom of the Press for calendar year, 2012 (index edition 2013). Because the measures in this year are based on a 100-point scale, the data are shown in a scatterplot. Each dot represents a country or countries based on the score each receives on each of the two indexes. See Appendix B for country names. The Spearman's rho for this analysis is .95. (The Kendall's tau b is .81, reflecting the correction for ties in this measure; the Pearson's r is .95). So even with the increased variability of the 100-point scale, the relationship between freedom and press freedom is very strong.

Different correlation coefficients can be computed, based on assumptions about the type of measurement being used and the distribution of the scores on that measure. (Regardless of the type of coefficient used, if all of the data are redundant, the coefficient will be either +1 or -1.) The appropriate statistic to examine the relationship between *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press* in 1980 is a Spearman's rho. (This is the case because it is not possible to assume that the gap between a score of Free and Partly Free is not necessarily the same as a gap between Partly Free and Not Free.) The Spearman's rho for the data in table one is .90. (An alternate statistic, Kendall's tau b, making different assumptions about the data, produces a coefficient of .87, while a third correlation coefficient, a Pearson's r, is .90). So, in comparison with the perfectly redundant score of 1.0, the coefficient of .90 shows high, but not perfect, redundancy.

This analysis was then extended during the full period from 1980 to 2012, focusing particularly on the years after 1988, when the measures became consistent. The answer is quite consistent. The measures of *Freedom in the World* and of *Freedom of the Press* are quite highly related. Clearly the possibility of no relationship between the two measures can be rejected.

The next level of macro-level data analysis focused on the question on whether one of the indicators leads the other. Specifically, the aim was to ascertain if there was evidence that press freedom leads to general freedom. We started first by asking if press freedom in 1988 is more highly related to freedom in 1989 or 1990 or 1991 than to freedom in 1988. Such a situation would occur if changes in press freedom were causing changes to take place in general freedom in each country rated.

The analysis shows that the correlation between press freedom and general freedom is consistently slightly higher at time 1 (for example, in 1988) than across time (1988 with 1989, 1990 and 1991). For example, the correlation (Spearman's rho) between press freedom in 1988 and freedom in 1988 is .89, while press freedom in 1988 is correlated with freedom in 1989 at .86. The correlation between press freedom in 1988 and freedom in 1990 is .79. The following year, the correlation is .68, and it drops to .65 the following year.

It also is possible that freedom could be a better predictor of press freedom across time than it is at the same time period. This would be true if freedom led to press freedom. Again, the data are not supportive. The correlation between freedom at time 1 (1988) with press freedom in 1988 is .89. Freedom in 1988 is correlated with press freedom a year later at .88. The correlation between freedom in 1988 and press freedom in 1990 is .84. The following year, it is .79, and the year later it is .75.

In sum, there is a strong relationship between press freedom and freedom. It is strongest at the time both measures are taken. This relationship remains high over time, though it does decrease in magnitude. And the data show there is about as much evidence of press freedom leading to freedom as there is that freedom leads to press freedom. The strongest case is that they vary or change together, probably because they are changed by the same external forces.

An additional technique was then used to look at the relationship between press freedom and general freedom. Here the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed, which does make more stringent assumptions about the measures used. Specifically, it requires that the difference between Free and Partly Free is the same as the difference between Partly Free and Not Free. The strength of the technique is that it allows a focus on how well one can predict the *Freedom in the World* score at time 2 from the *Freedom of the Press* measure once the ability to predict the *Freedom in the World* measure at time 2 by the *Freedom in the World* measure at time 1 has been eliminated. In other words, the analysis focuses on change in the criterion variable (*Freedom in the World*) at time 2 compared with time 1. The technique is called partial correlation analysis.

We started these analyses in 1988, which was the beginning of a period of dramatic change in Eastern and Central Europe. Press freedom in 1988 is not a good predictor of freedom the following year (controlling for *Freedom in the World* in 1988). And it continues to be a poor predictor of freedom two and three years later. Press freedom in 1989 does not become a good predictor of freedom until 1993, or four years later. Press freedom in 1990 does not become a good predictor of freedom until 1993, or three years later. And even then the relationship is weak.

In contrast, freedom in 1988 is a good predictor of press freedom in 1989, and that relationship continues for the next several years. It also is true that freedom for each year 1989, 1990, and 1991 is a predictor the following and subsequent years of press freedom. In other words, a country's status on the *Freedom in the World* index predicts where that country will be rated on *Freedom of the Press* in subsequent years, even beyond what would be known about press freedom based on its score the previous year.

In sum, the evidence from this analysis is that freedom begins immediately to predict press freedom in that those countries that are Free are likely to change in the direction of having a Free media environment in subsequent years. Press freedom, in contrast, is not a predictor of freedom until several years later, when

freedom predicts change in press freedom and press freedom predicts change in freedom. Even in that case, however, freedom is a better predictor of change in press freedom than press freedom is of freedom.

These analyses were then replicated for 1998 through 2001, when press freedom became more consolidated and less dramatic change was seen on a year to year basis. Once again, the general pattern is that freedom immediately became a good predictor of press freedom in subsequent years. Press freedom, however, also predicted to change in freedom the next year and in subsequent years. At three years out, both predict change in the other measure about equally.

These same analyses were conducted for the period from 2008 through 2012. Here there are shorter lags, but freedom predicts change in press freedom immediately. But press freedom also is a predictor of freedom immediately. And that relationship is stronger than the relationship between freedom and change in press freedom. At three years out, however, neither is a good predictor of change in the other.

Finally, in this initial stage, the relationship between the *Freedom of the Press* scores and the two numerical indexes that are used to create the three-point classification of countries on the *Freedom in the World* measure were examined. These two subindexes are of political rights and civil liberties, and each is measured on a seven-point scale. The aim was to ascertain whether there was evidence that press freedom was more highly correlated with one of these subindexes and whether that relationship changed over time. These analyses show that the two subindexes, political rights and civil liberties, are highly correlated and both are highly and equally correlated with press freedom. The relationship does not increase across time for either of the subindexes.

As a final step, these same analyses were repeated for the period from 2003 to 2012, when both *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press* employed much more nuanced 0-100 point numerical scales of measurement in addition to the broader Free/Partly Free/Not Free breakdowns. First, the simple lags of the correlations were examined to see if there was any evidence that press freedom predicted to a lagged score on freedom better than freedom predicted to a lagged score on press freedom. There is no such evidence. The partial correlation technique was then used to see if press freedom predicted better to change in freedom than freedom predicted to change in press freedom. Some slight evidence was found of the superiority of press freedom as a predictor of freedom than the reverse, but the finding was weak and not wholly consistent.

The Qualitative Analysis

Method and Overall Findings

Following the broad analysis of the global datasets over various time periods, the next step involved concentrating for a more detailed level of both quantitative and qualitative analysis on a smaller subset of countries to delve into the possible relationship between general freedom and media freedom in further depth. For this analysis, 35 countries were chosen based on the standard deviation of their *Freedom of the Press* scores: those countries that experienced the biggest changes in media freedom in the period between 2003 and 2013. For comparative purposes, the *Freedom in the World* scores of the countries were translated to the press freedom 0-100 scale (where lower scores indicate better results) and both of them were graphed for each and every country. The graphs showed a close relationship between the data, with the scores moving together most of the time.

After this first step, a method for identifying trends was set up to be able to compare and group together positive and negative movements in the countries. As a rule of thumb, a trend meant point shifts in one direction for at least three consecutive years, with no movement in the opposite direction for two or more consecutive years (in case an opposite movement occurred, the sum of the two adjacent values had to be bigger or smaller, depending on the direction of the trend). Changes below four points were identified as sudden shifts, while changes equal to or above four points were identified as incremental, if they were part of a trend. In addition, sudden changes were always analyzed, even if they were not part of a trend.

With this method 62 trends were identified in the 35 countries: half of these were sudden changes, 27 percent of them were incremental and 23 percent were mixed (when one of the scores changed sharply while the other changed incrementally). This result was not surprising since the countries chosen experienced the biggest changes over the ten-year period. Concerning their direction, more than half of them were negative, 40 percent positive, and in 4 cases (6 percent) the scores changed in opposite directions.

Even more importantly, out of the 62 trends, as observed above, the scores changed hand in hand in the vast majority of 42 cases (68 percent), whereas the *Freedom of the Press* score changed earlier in time in a significant minority of 13 cases (21 percent). In the remaining cases they either changed in the opposite direction, a change in freedom preceded a change in press freedom, or one of the scores changed and the other remained unaffected.

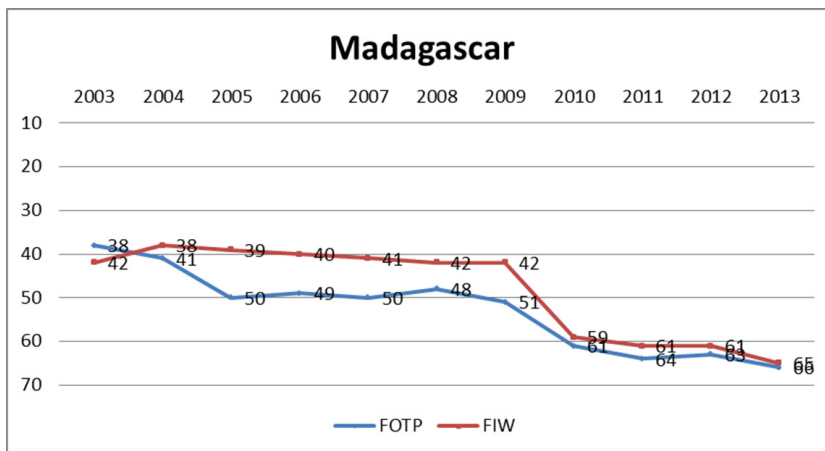
After identifying the trends, an analysis was undertaken of each one by examining the corresponding *Freedom of the Press* and *Freedom in the World* narrative reports and closely studying the potential reasons for and relationship between the changes in numerical score. This careful analysis reinforced the initial observation that in the significant majority of the cases the scores changed in tandem due to a common antecedent or set of circumstances: 64 percent of the negative changes and an even bigger majority, 84 percent, of the positive changes went hand in hand. The results were very similar regarding the slope of the score change: in 65 percent of all incremental and 81 percent of all sudden trends, the scores changed together, in the same year. This generally shows that when positive changes happen in a country's level of democracy, the press is very likely to benefit right away from it, as it is also quite likely to suffer immediate consequences in case of a negative development.

In addition, in 8 cases (13 percent of all trends) out of the initially identified 13, changes in the *Freedom of the Press* score could be regarded as a potential indicator ("lead indicator") that pointed to worsening conditions in the country. It is important to note that all of these trends (Argentina, Ecuador, Hungary, Mexico, Niger, Senegal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand) were negative; no cases were identified where an opening in the media would have signaled a future opening in broader freedoms.⁹

Additionally, an examination was undertaken of the countries that experienced the biggest level of numerical change on the *Freedom in the World* scale and were not included in the group above. It was expected that freedom would be identified as a "lead indicator" in a few cases; however, after a careful reading of the reports, this turned out not to be the case. In a significant majority of them, the scores tracked each other hand in hand.

Different Types of Tandem Change

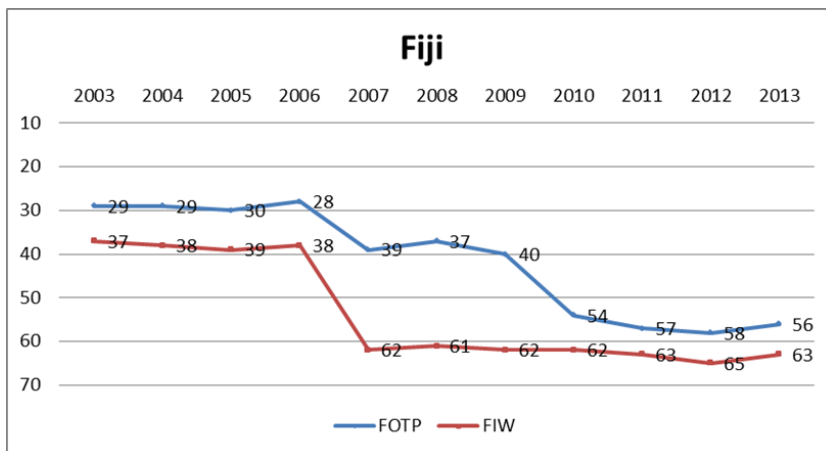
As noted above, in the vast majority of cases, changes in the general level of democracy in a country tracked evenly with its level of media freedom, with change in one score occurring in tandem with the other. These changes showed a somewhat stronger correlation for positive change than for negative change, and likewise a higher level of correlation was unsurprisingly noted for sudden changes than for incremental ones. Below we highlight specific country cases involving tandem change that fall into five categories: sudden negative shifts, incremental negative shifts, sudden positive shifts, incremental positive shifts, and multiple shifts. These case studies are meant to illustrate the wide range of possible scenarios in which general levels of freedom and media freedom have changed at the same time.



The negative changes often included coups or unconstitutional power transfers, which resulted in steep and sudden declines in both scores. This was the case in **Madagascar** between 2009 and 2011, where the *Freedom in the World* score dropped by 19 points after a group of military mutineers installed the mayor of Antananarivo, Andry Rajoelina, to replace President Marc Ravalomanana who

resigned under significant pressure in March 2009. The crisis began when Ravalomanana ordered the closure of a media outlet owned by Rajoelina, leading to street protests. Upon declaring himself president, Rajoelina routinely ignored laws protecting press freedom and suspended certain civil rights, including freedoms of assembly. Rajoelina consolidated his power as the unelected executive by dismissing the elected parliament and replacing it with an appointed transitional parliament, which subsequently approved constitutional changes sought by Rajoelina. Ravalomanana fled into exile and was given a life sentence in absentia for the killing of protestors by security forces in January 2009. An internationally mediated power-sharing agreement was reached between the leaders, but then abandoned by Rajoelina who instead chose to unilaterally impose an electoral process. The breakdown of democratic governance in 2009 led to a disregard for press freedom by both the Ravalomanana and Rajoelina governments. The media environment became increasingly polarized as each administration closed down media outlets allied with their rival. The highly politicized nature of the media led to increased violence, including the first murder of a journalist while in the course of work since 1992. Consequently, Madagascar's press freedom score slid from the Partly Free to the Not Free category. The *Freedom of the Press* score dropped during this period by 16 points, reflecting increased censorship, harassment, and violence toward journalists as well as the politically motivated closure of media outlets.

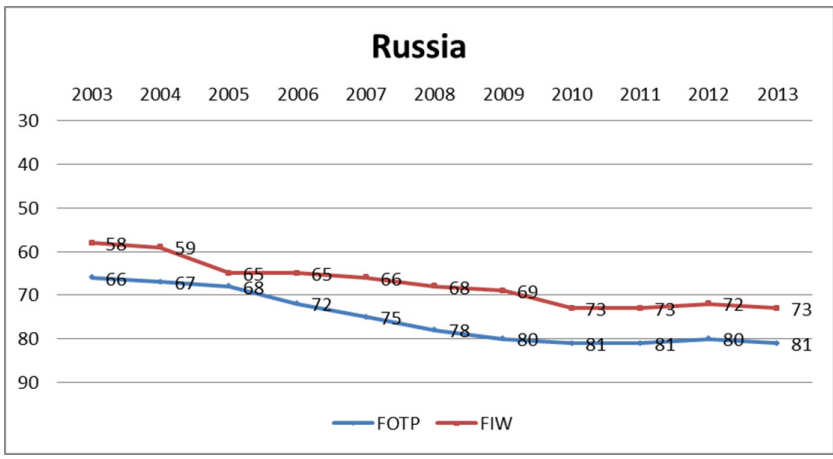
The same thing happened in **Fiji** between 2006 and 2010, where the *Freedom in the World* score dropped by 24 points after the head of the military ousted Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase in a bloodless military coup in December 2006 and established an interim government. Commodore Frank Bainimarama suspended certain



civil rights following the coup, including freedoms of assembly and the bill of rights protecting press freedom. He also showed zero tolerance for criticism, using a declared state of emergency to strictly censor the media. Fiji's press freedom score immediately declined and the country slid from the Free to the Partly Free category. In January 2007, Bainimarama handed executive authority to

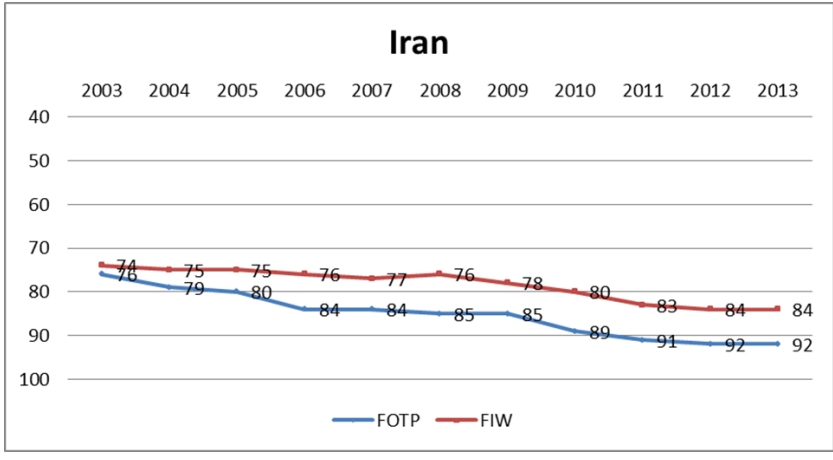
President Ratu Josefa Iloilo, who in turn appointed Bainimarama as the interim prime minister. In the next two years, the post-coup regime restored some legal rights, however, the government continued to be denounced for intimidating its critics through arrests and travel bans. A court ruled in April 2009 that the dismissal of Qarase and the dissolution of Parliament in 2006, as well as Bainimarama's 2007 appointment as interim prime minister, were illegal; however, President Iloilo disregarded the decision. He subsequently suspended the constitution and reinstated Bainimarama as caretaker prime minister. The 2009 Public Emergency Regulations allowed for daily pre-publication censorship of print and broadcast media. Media outlets were prosecuted and fined for critical articles and journalists faced increased threats, harassment, and intimidation. The *Freedom of the Press* score dropped in two separate instances during this period, by 11 points following the coup in 2006 and by 14 points after the crisis of 2009.

Negative trends materialized not only in coups; authoritarian regimes often exhibited extended periods of slow decline. **Russia**, for example, has seen both its *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press* scores worsen by 15 points between 2002 and 2012. Both declines were incremental, with the scores falling an average of 1.5 points per year. Even though political rights and civil liberties, as well as media freedom, had been deteriorating in the country before the period under analysis, the decline became more pronounced after Vladimir Putin was elected president in 2000 and moved to consolidate his power. Among other things, Putin replaced the ruling elite with his personal confidantes from the security and military services; reduced the influence of the legislature; cracked down on democracy-promotion groups and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and amended the



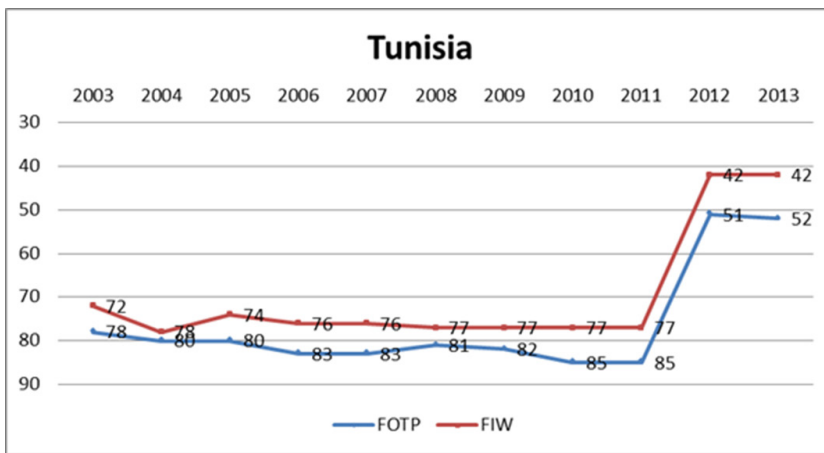
constitution, extending future presidential terms from four to six years. Vague anti-extremism laws were employed to stifle dissent, imprison journalists, and shutter media outlets. The government also used legal harassment and selective subsidy allocation to disadvantage critical news outlets and their owners. Companies aligned with the Kremlin purchased the independent broadcast outlets

with national reach, giving the government control, either directly or indirectly, of all of the national television networks, with only a handful of radio stations and publications with limited reach remaining to offer a wide range of viewpoints. In addition, since Putin came to power at least 19 journalists have been killed, and in no cases have the organizers of the murders been prosecuted. The events of the past 10 years clearly demonstrate a case where an authoritarian regime successfully consolidates itself, restricting both press freedom and broader freedoms in general.



Iran's case is very similar: between 2002 and 2012 the country declined by 10 and 16 points in *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press*, respectively. Hard-liners triumphed in the 2003 city council and 2004 parliamentary elections and these electoral victories paved the way for the triumph of Tehran mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the 2005 presidential contest. Although Ahmadinejad had

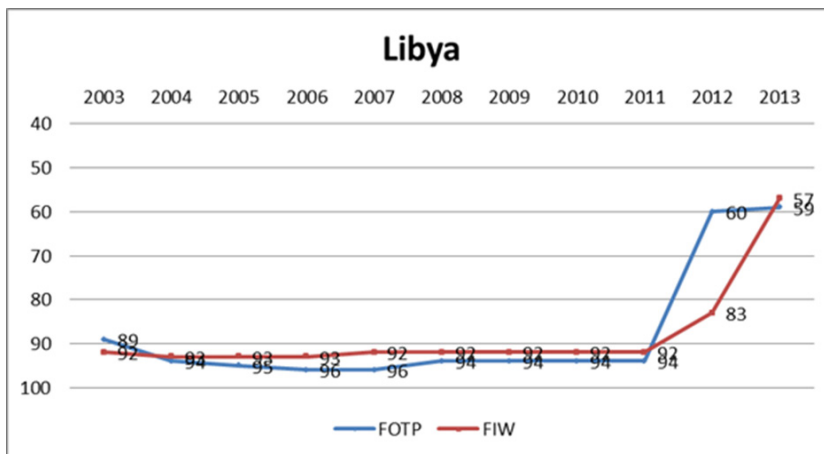
campaigned on promises to fight elite corruption and redistribute Iran’s oil wealth to the poor and middle class, his ultraconservative administration oversaw a crackdown on civil liberties and harsher enforcement of the regime’s strict morality laws. After his victory, several major reformist newspapers were closed, while dozens of journalists and civil society activists were arrested. The government also launched a crackdown on “social corruption,” sending thousands of morality police and vigilantes into the streets to enforce Islamic dress codes. Since he came to power, freedoms of the press, association, religion, and expression continue to be severely restricted. Pro-reformist publications were forcibly closed and critical websites blocked. Internet journalists and bloggers were targeted by the judiciary, with many receiving long prison terms. The aftermath of the 2009 presidential elections brought a further deterioration in the limited space for dissenting views, with the mass arrest of journalists and the closure of dozens of newspapers. In addition, restrictive media laws were extended to monitor the internet and prosecute critical reporters.



Sudden positive changes have also often been characterized by a change of regime. In recent years, the most dramatic examples of this occurred in the Arab Spring countries, such as **Tunisia** and Libya. In 2011, over the course of one year, Tunisia improved 35 and 34 points in *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press*, respectively. Even though President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali easily won a fifth term in the

tightly controlled October 2009 general elections, nationwide antigovernment demonstrations broke out in late December 2010. The protests escalated in January 2011, leading to the ouster of Ben Ali on January 14 and the formation of a transitional government. The elections of October 2011 were observed by international monitoring groups, and they were widely touted as the first orderly, free, and fair elections in the country’s history. The developments resulted in significant openings in political rights, civil liberties, and freedom of the press. Proposals for the draft constitution contain provisions protecting press freedom; restrictive laws were

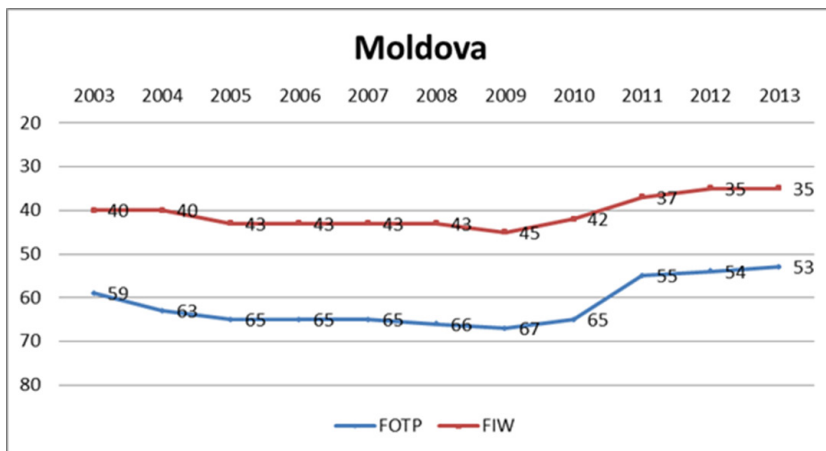
no longer used to imprison journalists; and formerly tight controls over the internet were relaxed considerably. A number of private media outlets began operating, leading to a greater diversity of viewpoints and less self-censorship and state control over content. Both professional and citizen journalists were able to cover the news more freely and with less fear of reprisals.



An improvement of similar magnitude could be observed in **Libya** as well, which, over a two-year-period, gained 35 and 34 points in the two indexes. Influenced by uprisings in neighboring Tunisia and Egypt and spurred by the arrest of a human rights activist in Benghazi, citizens in several Libyan cities took to the streets in February 2011 to protest the 42-year rule of Moammar

Qaddafi. The protests soon turned into a civil war and the rebels captured Tripoli in August. Al-Qaddafi, having fled the capital, was eventually killed near his hometown of Sirte in October. Following this, the country saw a great opening of civil liberties and political rights, with largely free and fair elections held in July 2012. The uprising created more space for free political association and participation, and resulted in an expansion of freedom of expression and the press, with a boom of media outlets and less threat of violence and intimidation. New media outlets had flourished in the east under rebel control and quickly spread throughout the country with the fall of Qadhafi. The 2011 transitional draft constitution guaranteed freedom of the press and the Supreme Court upheld these rights when faced with government pressure. However, whereas in Tunisia there was a similar one-year jump in the scores for both indexes, in Libya, the media environment showed a massive one-year opening for 2011, whereas political rights took an additional year to show the same level of improvement.

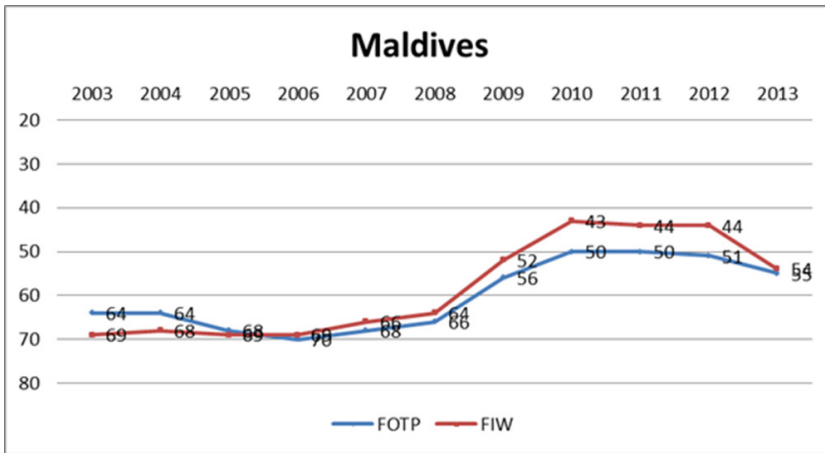
Apart from sudden openings, positive changes were either the result of a return to civilian rule after a coup or a longer period of sustained improvement following a democratic opening. **Moldova** between 2009 and 2013 exemplifies a case where both press freedom and broader freedoms exhibited a sustained improvement after



the election of a reform-minded government. Vladimir Voronin and his Communist Party were ousted from power after the third round of parliamentary elections in 2010, which resulted in the victory of the opposition Alliance for European Integration (AIE). The new government broadened religious freedoms by registering a Muslim religious organization for the first time, improved relations with civil

society groups, and enacted a range of policies after 2010 that helped create a friendlier environment for the media. New laws prohibited censorship and provided increased protection for press freedom and journalists' rights, leading to less political control over content and greater media diversity. These regulatory reforms as well as a more professionalized state broadcaster resulted in more objective news, including increasingly balanced election coverage. In addition, there was a significant decline in harassment, violence, and state-sponsored intimidation towards journalists. The improvements to the regulatory environment also led to the launch of new private broadcast outlets, furthering media diversity. These changes resulted in a 10-point bump for *Freedom in the World* and a 14-point increase in *Freedom of the Press*.

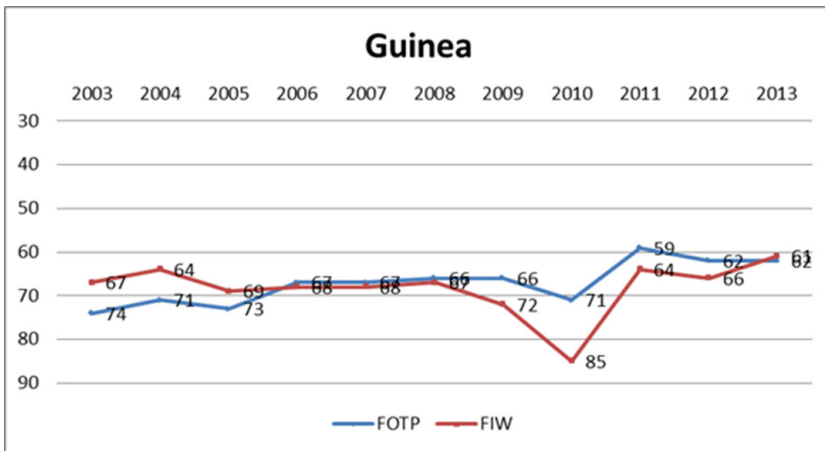
The same hand-in-hand improvement could be observed in the **Maldives** between 2006 and 2010, where the *Freedom in the World* and *Freedom of the Press* scores improved by 26 and 20 points, respectively. The improvements happened during two separate governments, under President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and President Mohamed Nasheed. Political freedoms began to improve in 2006 due to slight political openings by the government of President Gayoom. While only minimal improvements were made over the first few years, the increased political space allowed for the election of opposition leader Nasheed in 2008. Nasheed oversaw an overhaul of Maldivian politics with the adoption of a new constitution and the improvement of the media environment, including the adoption of a new constitution protecting freedom of expression. Censorship, harassment, and prosecution of journalists decreased. The government loosened control of state-run media, and a number of new broadcast outlets opened, extending media diversity. However, corruption, religious restrictions, and abysmal prison



conditions still continued to pose a problem after the opening. The most recent coverage year of 2013 saw the beginnings of decline following the ouster of Nasheed in early 2012; future editions may indeed demonstrate a negative trend for the country that moves in tandem as well.

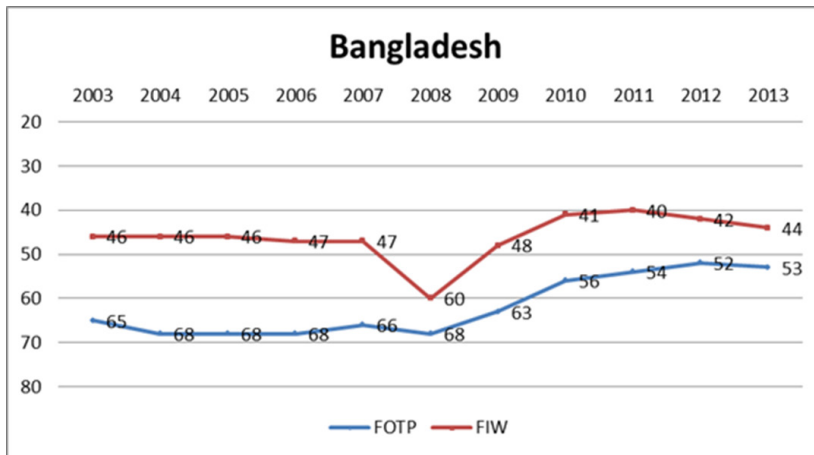
In a number of countries which experienced multiple (both positive and negative) trends

during the period under review, the two indicators often moved hand in hand as well. For example, **Guinea** was characterized with a fast return to civilian rule following a military coup in the period between 2008 and 2010. Political rights declined significantly in the country in 2008, when President Lansana Conté unilaterally dismissed his prime minister and cancelled the long-delayed legislative elections. This led to a military coup in December that abolished all civilian government institutions and the constitution. Laws protecting press freedom were abolished or ignored and state-sponsored harassment and violence towards journalists increased. Private media outlets were blacklisted from attending government meetings and several print and radio stations were given temporary suspensions. Political activity came to a halt, although political parties remained in consultation with the ruling junta known as the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD). Following a failed attempt to assassinate junta leader Captain Moussa



outlets were blacklisted from attending government meetings and several print and radio stations were given temporary suspensions. Political activity came to a halt, although political parties remained in consultation with the ruling junta known as the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD). Following a failed attempt to assassinate junta leader Captain Moussa

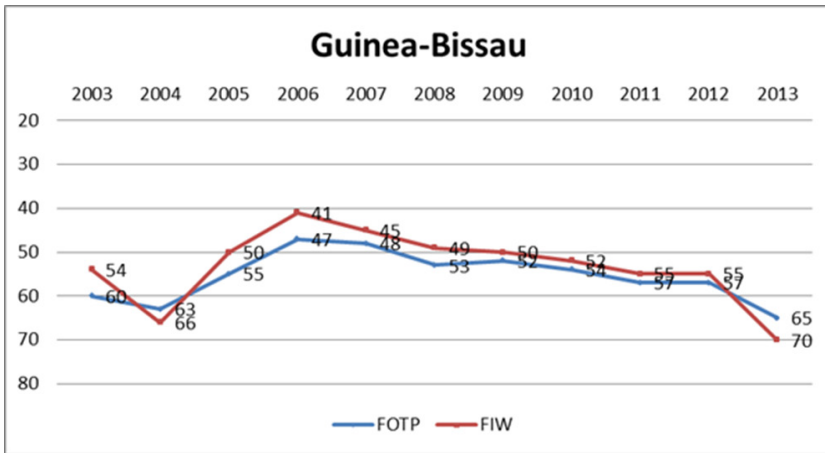
Dadis Camara, the CNDD took progressive steps towards reestablishing democratic institutions in 2010. New media laws eased restrictions on journalists by removing prison sentences for press offenses and creating a new media regulatory body. Two rounds of presidential elections culminated in the return to civilian rule with the inauguration of long-time opposition leader Alpha Condé in December. The election was considered Guinea's first free and fair election since gaining independence.



The same happened in **Bangladesh** between 2007 and 2010 where the *Freedom in the World* score dropped substantially in 2008 due to a state of emergency that came into effect in January 2007. The Emergency Power Rules imposed a ban on all political activity, suspended freedom of assembly, restricted media coverage of sensitive issues, allowed censorship of print and broadcast outlets, and

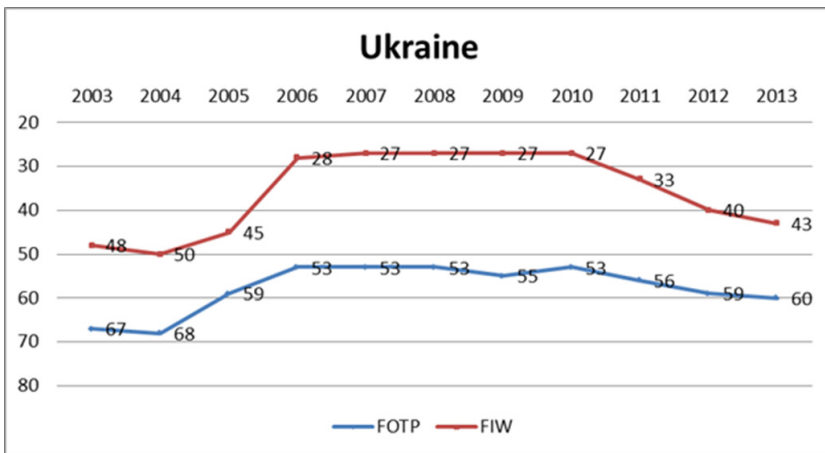
criminalized government criticism. Political rights deteriorated further with the postponement of national elections by the military. The return to civilian government followed elections held in December 2008 and the emergency regulations were abolished the next year. The accompanying media restrictions were rescinded, official censorship decreased, and there were fewer cases of prosecution, harassment, and violence towards journalists. These changes led *Freedom of the World* to bounce back and *Freedom of the Press* to improve considerably.

A sudden negative change could be observed not only once, but two times in **Guinea-Bissau's** recent history. In 2003, the military overthrew the increasingly autocratic President Kumba Yala and set up a Transitional National Council, which set the country on a positive path for the next few years. The legal restrictions on press freedom were relaxed, overt censorship decreased, and the safety of journalists improved. However, by late 2005, press freedom and political freedoms began to decline after the return to power of formerly ousted military leader João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira. Press freedom slowly deteriorated under Vieira's administration with increased intimidation and harassment of journalists subsequently followed by



heightened self-censorship. Vieira was assassinated in early 2009 and a new president was elected, but chronic instability, fueled by military interference in politics and the influence of international drug cartels, continued to pose a problem for the country. Media outlets were shut down and journalists assaulted by security forces. The new president, Malam Bacai Sanha, died in office in

2012 and before presidential elections were concluded, a military coup ousted the interim government. In the aftermath of the coup, journalists faced an escalation of violence and the military further restricted news coverage, particularly the coverage of political protests. *Freedom of the Press* changed in tandem with the declining *Freedom in the World* score in both cases, illustrating that the curbing of general freedoms in times of turmoil affects the media as well.



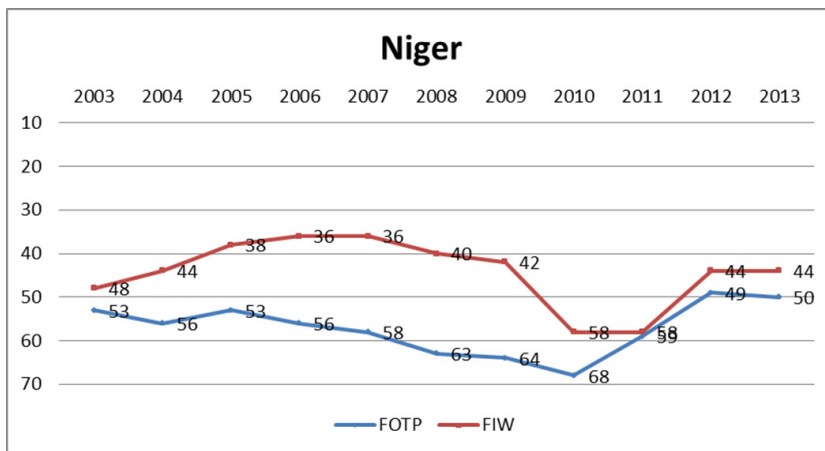
Press freedom and broader freedoms tracked closely in the case of **Ukraine**, where both improved significantly after the Orange Revolution in 2004-05, moving hand in hand, with a bigger change in the latter. After 2010, however, there were significant declines in broader freedoms, in conjunction with an incremental deterioration in press freedom, following the return of the Party of Regions to power. The

victory of the so-called Orange Revolution—following a series of massive, nonviolent public protests—resulted in reforms in several areas and improvements in transparency, corruption, associational rights, the media, and academic life. The media environment improved due to decreased political interference with the press and a reduction of harassment and violence towards journalists. Shuttered media outlets such as Radio Free Europe were able to resume broadcasting. After the 2010 presidential election, however, former prime minister Viktor Yanukovich came back to power and quickly reversed many of the changes adopted in the wake of the Orange Revolution. Yanukovich continued to consolidate the power of the Party of Regions in the next few years. Among other things, he changed the electoral law to the detriment of the opposition; restricted associational rights; and replaced a number of critical Constitutional Court justices. In addition, violent attacks, increased political pressure, and legal changes steadily eroded some of the independence journalists had gained following the Orange Revolution. Highly partisan implementation of media regulations by politicized courts and the media council led to the closure of a number of independent broadcasters ahead of the 2012 parliamentary elections. In addition, journalists faced increased violence and impunity.

As these varied examples show, in a wide range of scenarios, changes in the general level of political rights and civil liberties and changes in media freedom tend to occur in tandem, with the latter being closely tied to the former in the case of both positive and negative movements, and in shifts that occur either suddenly or more slowly. Crackdowns on the media form an essential part of broader attempts by authoritarian regimes to consolidate power and curtail the space for alternative views—either on the part of political parties or civil society—to flourish. Likewise, media reforms tend to be a key component of broader political openings, and are one of the first to show immediate improvements in the case of a change of government.

A Significant Minority of Cases: Press Freedom as a Lead Indicator of Slow Decline

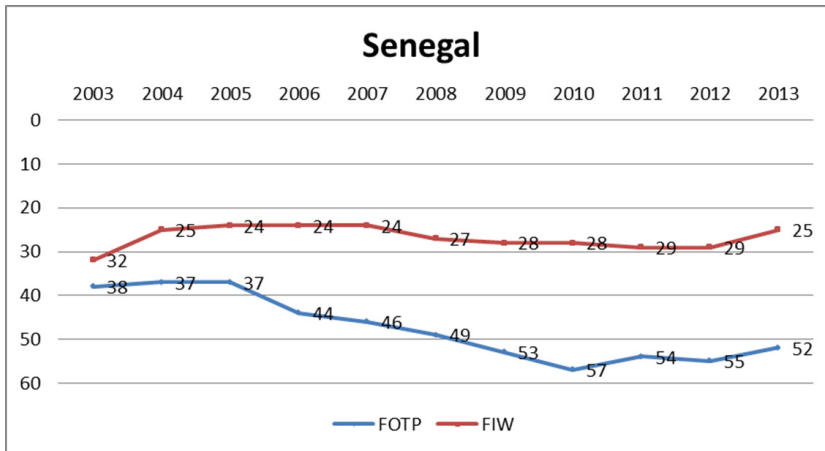
Despite the predominant trend noted above, in a significant minority of countries studied, the *Freedom of the Press* score moved prior to changes in the general level of a country's freedom, suggesting that in certain cases, media freedom can be seen as a "lead indicator." Notably, in all of these cases, the change occurred in a negative direction, and in most cases, the countries under study were rated in the period of review largely in the Partly Free category in both indexes, indicating that this trend may be most pronounced in relatively open countries that are moving in an authoritarian direction or where a ruling government is interested in consolidating power.



For example, the *Freedom of the Press* score served as an early warning signal about worsening conditions in **Niger**, where the *Freedom in the World* score declined by 16 points following the 2009 ouster of President Mamadou Tandja from power. The *Freedom of the Press* score dropped only by 4 points in the same year, however, Nigerien press freedom had been incrementally declining since

2005, when the Tandja government took a repressive stance against journalists and media outlets. Defamation laws were enforced with vigor and journalists faced fines and imprisonment for reporting on sensitive topics such as corruption, famine, or military actions. In 2007, renewed fighting broke out between the government and ethnic Tuareg rebels and a state of emergency was declared in the north. The authorities aggressively limited the media’s access to the conflict and suspended stations for their coverage. By 2009, the renewed fighting, food shortages, and allegations of government corruption created tensions and Tandja moved on to dissolve the National Assembly and the Constitutional Court after they had blocked his plans to eliminate term limits. Legislative elections were held in October 2009; however, key opposition parties boycotted the vote. The elections were denounced by the international community and in January 2010, a military junta led by Major Salou Djibo placed Tandja under house arrest, suspended the constitution, and dissolved all government institutions. Journalists continued to face state-sponsored intimidation and prosecution and the government used emergency powers to unilaterally shutter media outlets on the grounds of national security.

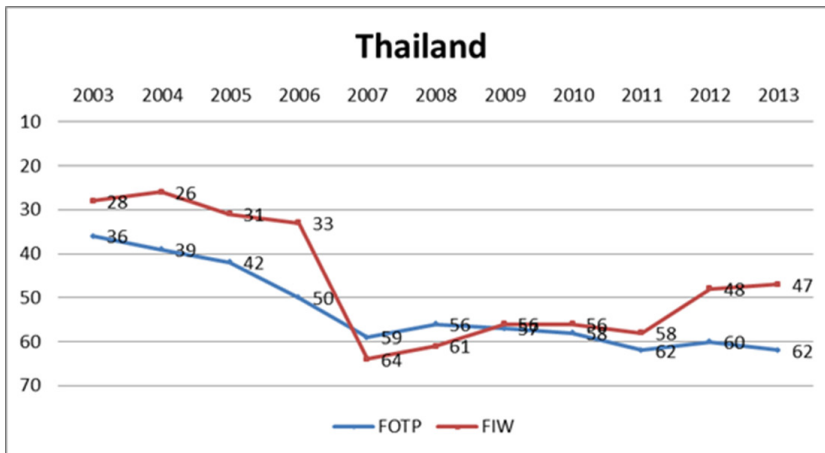
The same pattern could be seen in **Senegal** between 2005 and 2010. Despite the promises of President Abdoulaye Wade to protect press freedom, a number of worrying trends began to appear in 2005. Several media outlets were shut down, in some instances staff was temporarily detained, and self-censorship increased as a number of journalists were imprisoned for criminal defamation and cases deemed to “threaten state security.” In 2007, Wade “recommended” that journalists obtain feedback from officials prior to publication of government-related articles in order for the government to maintain a positive image.



Harassment and attacks against journalists and media houses increased, as did the vitriolic rhetoric by Wade. Between 2005 and 2010, Senegal’s press freedom score declined 20 points. Broader political rights began to suffer in 2007. The *Freedom in the World* scores started to decline in the following years, when Wade moved to consolidate his power by extending the presidential term

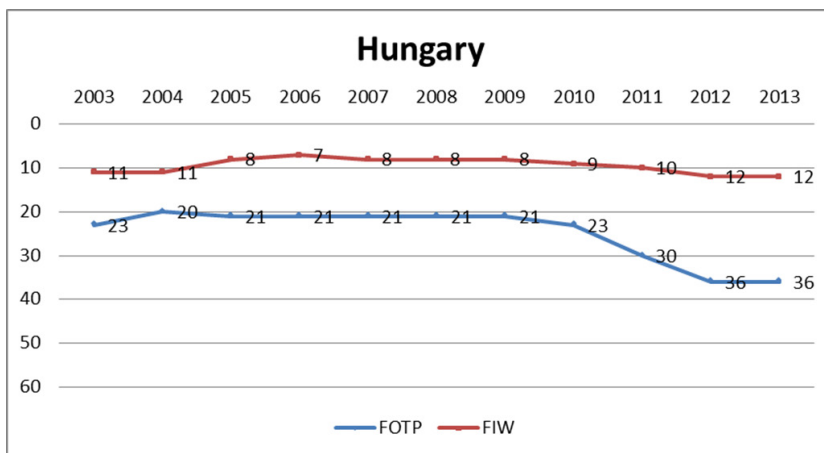
from five to seven years, reducing the term of the National Assembly president to eliminate an opponent, banning protests and using the police to break up demonstrations, and finally running for a constitutionally questionable third term, which he lost in 2012.

Press freedom also began to decline earlier in **Thailand**, where a military coup ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra from power in 2006. Thaksin and his Thai Loves Thai (TRT) party won the elections in 2001 and launched populist programs aimed at helping poorer Thais and small businessmen. Backed by high approval ratings and a comfortable



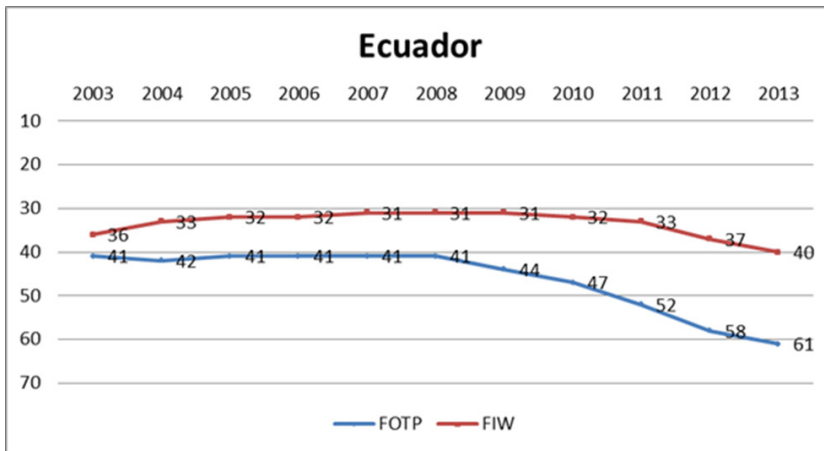
parliamentary majority, he continued to carry out populist spending programs in the next three years, which helped spark a demand-driven economic recovery. At the same time, however, observers voiced concern that Thaksin’s new government was applying both political and economic pressure on the media in order to silence critical voices. The

first restrictions included the banning of foreign publications and libel suits against journalists. Problems deepened with the government's excessive use of force toward the insurgency in southern Thailand in 2004 and the presence of security forces in mosques. Pressure increased against outlets critical of the prime minister, and even though Thaksin's TRT party secured the majority of the vote at the 2006 parliamentary elections, they were perceived to be illegitimate because all three opposition parties boycotted it due to Thaksin's strengthening grip on power. A political impasse developed and on September 19 a military coup ousted Thaksin from office and installed a junta led by General Sonthi Boonyaratglin. The constitution was abrogated, the parliament was dissolved, and the Constitutional Court was replaced with an appointed military tribunal. A number of restrictions on freedom of association and assembly were also imposed; the junta largely treated the press as a potential threat to the new regime, restricting it even more.



Hungary between 2010 and 2012 also demonstrates a case where press freedom changed earlier—however, only slightly—and broader freedoms followed suit due to the government's tightening grip on power. A center-right government led by Fidesz won the elections with a supermajority in 2010 and enacted several controversial measures in the following years. The first one was

a restrictive set of new media laws passed in December 2010 that were highly criticized by numerous international institutions, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the European Union. The laws—which were modified to some extent in the next two years—contained broad provisions affecting all print, broadcast, and online media; placed restrictions on content; set up a centralized media regulatory body with extensive powers and headed by people loyal to the government; and introduced high fines in case of a breach. In 2011 and 2012, Fidesz continued to consolidate its power with the passing of a new constitution with limited input from civil society or the opposition; placing several issues such as family life or the economy under the category of “cardinal laws” that require a two-thirds majority to amend; overhauling the system of judiciary with the establishment of a new body to oversee it, headed by a Fidesz loyalist; and sending more than 270 judges to early retirement.

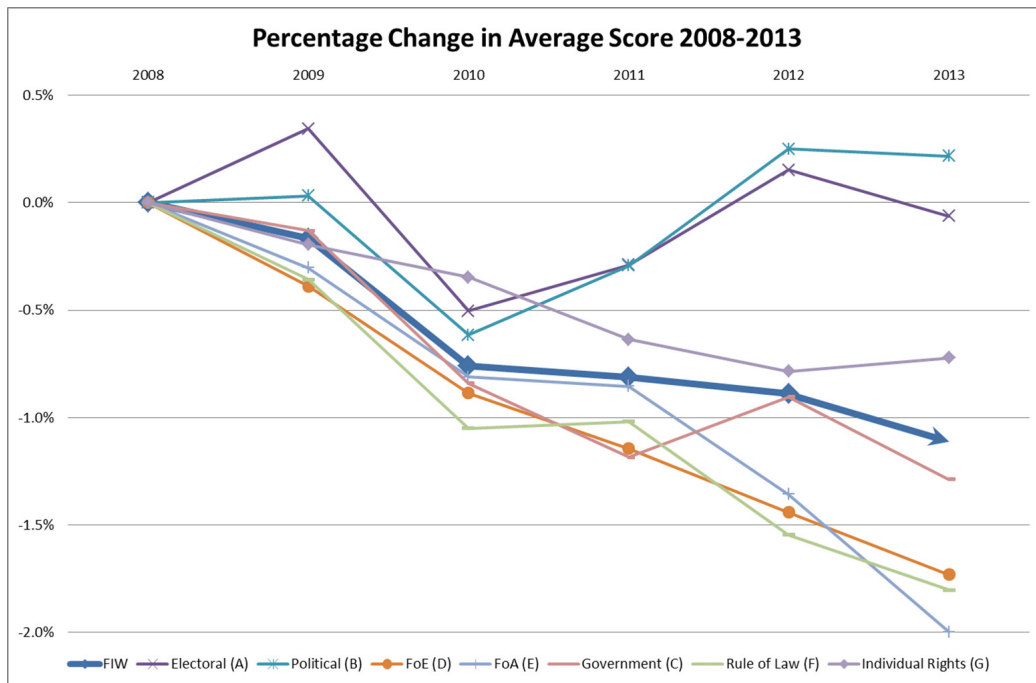


A similar trend could be observed in **Ecuador**, where the decline in press freedom beginning in 2008 preceded the subsequent decline in broad political freedoms. The relationship between President Rafael Correa and the media was troubled from the start; Correa frequently belittled journalists and media executives, accused them of corruption, and went so far as to launch advertising campaigns

to refute news reports. Through 2008 and 2009, political and legal pressure on the media increased. Broadcast media were forced to show compulsory programming, the media regulatory body ordered “corrections” of articles critical of the government, and Correa pushed for punishment of journalists for “irresponsible content.” While broader political rights mostly remained stable during these years, a prominent environmental NGO faced temporary closure after publicly opposing a new mining law. Government pressure on NGOs increased in the following years, resulting in further *Freedom in the World* declines. Initial slides in associational and organizational rights eventually spread into issues related to political pluralism and participation as the government intensified its targeting of opposition parties. In 2010, Correa urged citizens to take the news media, who he called his “greatest political enemy,” to court for “human rights abuses.” Over fifty defamation cases were brought by public officials against the media in that year alone. Harassment, intimidation, and attacks on journalists increased markedly in recent years. By 2011, broader political freedoms also began to decline sharply. The government championed changes to the electoral law securing their dominance and became increasingly aggressive towards political rivals and civil society.

Conclusion

As seen from the individual case studies above, press freedom is a key component of the general level of democracy in a country. Most often, changes in the state of media freedom have happened in tandem with changes in broader freedoms, therefore making it a sensitive indicator of the overall health of a democracy. In some cases, its deterioration might even warn us about bigger forces at work and point to an emerging or consolidating regime that is moving in the direction of restricting both political rights and civil liberties.



Overall data on the global trends in the past five years—as shown in the global average overall and subcategory scores in the Freedom in the World report—reinforces this assertion. While most of the Freedom in the World indicators have shown some degree of deterioration in the past seven years, it is interesting to note that the trend has not affected all democratic institutions equally. Elections (Subcategory A) and the core components of political pluralism, including party competition and participation by minority groups (Subcategory B), have suffered the least. At the same time, there have been notable declines for freedom of the press and expression

(Subcategory D), freedom of assembly (Subcategory E), and independence of the judiciary and rule of law (Subcategory F). The declines in the latter appear to track more closely with, and in some cases could even be a driver for, the decline noted in the overall level of freedom as measured by the Freedom in the World average score. These correlations also back up the assertion that media freedom is a core element of democracy, and is one of the more important indicators that can be used to ascertain the health and trajectory of a country's democratic institutions.

The findings of the past few years indicate a stepped-up drive by authoritarian governments to weaken precisely the elements of democratic governance that pose the most serious threats to repressive and corrupt rule: independent civil society groups, a free press, and the rule of law. The deterioration in freedom of the press and expression is even more disturbing, however, as the declines have not only occurred in authoritarian regimes—noticeable drops were exhibited in some of the long-established democracies as well. Even though the reasons for recent declines in Western Europe are different from those in our case studies and point mostly to economic problems, they significantly hinder the capability of the world's democracies to show leadership in these important issues.

All of the types of analysis conducted for this report—the global level and time-series data, as well as the examination of trends in individual countries and the recent sub-category trends for Freedom in the World—have pointed to the strong correlation between changes in general levels of democracy and of media freedom, implying a symbiotic relationship between the two. In most cases, change occurs due to a change in government, and the more dramatic the change in type of political system, the more pronounced the effect on the media environment. For example, both in the collapse of the Soviet Union from 1988-90, or the Arab Spring openings in 2011-12, there was a major change in political systems as well as an end to systems of pervasive press censorship. This suggests that the role of the political system, and the attitude of the ruling government towards the media is key in determining both the trajectory of both press freedom and democracy more generally. Official support for free and vibrant media is likely to be accompanied by an acceptance of critiques from civil society groups and for political pluralism and debate, while governments looking to stifle the political or civic opposition often begin their authoritarian drift with a tightening of the media space, or clamp down on all three in tandem. Overall, the findings of this study underscore the integral place media freedom and freedom of expression occupy in either expanding or constricting general freedoms, indicating that attempts to improve one cannot be undertaken without concurrent efforts to improve the other.

Appendix A: Methodologies

The Freedom in the World report was launched in 1972 to provide an annual evaluation of the state of global freedom. The index measures freedom—the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centers of potential domination—according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties. 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. Civil liberties allow for the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state.

The report does not rate governments or government performance per se, but rather the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals. Thus, while Freedom House considers the presence of legal rights, it places a greater emphasis on whether these rights are implemented in practice. Furthermore, freedoms can be affected by government officials, as well as by nonstate actors, including insurgents and other armed groups.

Freedom House does not maintain a culture-bound view of freedom. The methodology of the index is grounded in basic standards of political rights and civil liberties, derived in large measure from relevant portions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These standards apply to all countries and territories, irrespective of geographical location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development. The report operates from the assumption that freedom for all peoples is best achieved in liberal democratic societies.

The Freedom of the Press index was established in 1980 to assess media freedom with a separate tool based on universal criteria, primarily Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The index aims to evaluate the environment in which the media operate in each country, as well as the degree of news and information diversity available to the public, from either local or transnational sources. Freedom House recognizes cultural differences, diverse national interests, and varying levels of economic development and acknowledges that cultural distinctions or economic underdevelopment may limit the volume of news flows within a country. However, these and other arguments are not acceptable explanations for outright centralized control of the content of news and information. Some poor countries allow for the exchange of diverse views, while some developed countries restrict content diversity. Freedom House seeks to recognize press freedom wherever it exists, in poor and rich countries, as well as in countries of various ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Similar to the Freedom in the World report, the Freedom of the Press index aims to measure conditions on the ground rather than government performance, and as such examines a wide range of potential factors that can restrict media freedom, including pressures from both state and nonstate actors.

Methodologies and Process

The Freedom in the World index includes both reports and political rights and civil liberties ratings for a current count of 195 countries and 14 select territories. The findings are reached after a multilayered process of analysis and evaluation by a team of more than 60 country analysts and 20 senior-level academic advisers.

The ratings, which are proposed by the country analysts, are reviewed individually and on a comparative basis in a series of six regional meetings—Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and Western Europe—involving the analysts, academic advisers, and Freedom House staff. The ratings are compared to the previous year's findings,

and any major proposed numerical shifts or category changes are subjected to more intensive scrutiny. These reviews are followed by cross-regional assessments in which efforts are made to ensure comparability and consistency in the findings. Many of the key country reports are also reviewed by the academic advisors. Although there is an element of subjectivity inherent in the findings, the ratings process emphasizes intellectual rigor and balanced and unbiased judgments.

The ratings process is based on 10 political rights questions and 15 civil liberties questions.¹⁰ The political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: electoral process (3 questions), political pluralism and participation (4 questions), and functioning of government (3 questions). The civil liberties questions are grouped into four subcategories: freedom of expression and belief (4 questions), associational and organizational rights (3 questions), rule of law (4 questions), and personal autonomy and individual rights (4 questions). Scores are awarded to each of these questions on a scale of 0 to 4, where a score of 0 represents the smallest degree and 4 the greatest degree of rights or liberties present. The highest score that can be awarded to the political rights checklist is 40 (or a total score of 4 for each of the 10 questions). The highest score that can be awarded to the civil liberties checklist is 60 (or a total score of 4 for each of the 15 questions). The scores from the previous index edition are used as a benchmark for the year under review.

Each country and territory's total political rights and civil liberties scores correspond to a political rights rating from 1 to 7 and a civil liberties rating from 1 to 7; a rating of 1 indicates the highest degree of freedom and 7 the lowest degree of freedom. Each pair of political rights and civil liberties ratings is then averaged to determine an overall status of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. Those whose ratings average 1.0 to 2.5 are Free, 3.0 to 5.0 are Partly Free, and 5.5 to 7.0 are Not Free.

The research and ratings review process is the same in the case of the Freedom of the Press index. The most recent iteration of the methodology—which has been refined and expanded over the years but has preserved its broad level of comparability—has been used since 2003. This methodology comprises 23 questions and 109 indicators divided into three broad categories: the legal environment, the political environment, and the economic environment.¹¹ For each question, a lower number of points is allotted for a more free situation, while a higher number of points is allotted for a less free environment. Each country is rated in these three categories, with the higher numbers indicating less freedom. A country's final score is based on the total of the three categories: A score of 0 to 30 places the country in the Free press group; 31 to 60 in the Partly Free press group; and 61 to 100 in the Not Free press group.

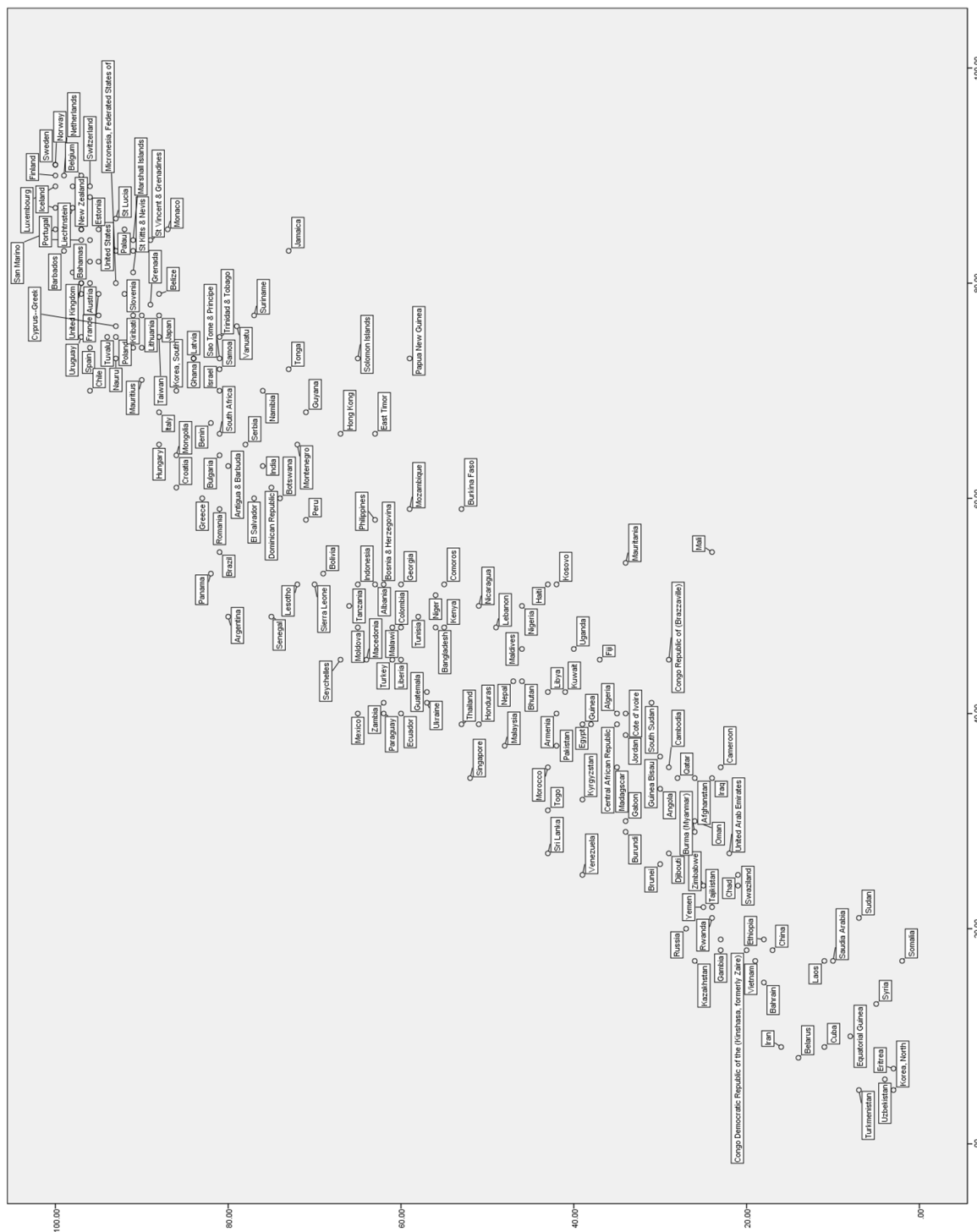
The legal environment category (0–30) encompasses an examination of both the laws and regulations that could influence media content and the government's inclination to use these laws and legal institutions to restrict the media's ability to operate. We assess the positive impact of legal and constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression; the potentially negative aspects of security legislation, the penal code, and other criminal statutes; penalties for libel and defamation; the existence of and ability to use freedom of information legislation; the independence of the judiciary and of official media regulatory bodies; registration requirements for both media outlets and journalists; and the ability of journalists' groups to operate freely.

Under the political environment category (0–40), we evaluate 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 and the diversity of news available within each country; 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.

The third category examines the economic environment (0–30) for the media. This includes the structure of media ownership; transparency and concentration of ownership; the costs of establishing media as well as any impediments to news 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 and sustainability of the media.

Appendix B



Freedom in the World

Freedom of the Press

Endnotes

1. See for example: Sen, A. (1999), *Development as Freedom*, Alfred A. Knopf Inc, New York; Besley, T., Burgess, R. and Prat, A. (2002) *Mass Media and Political Accountability* in R. Islam ed. *The Right to Tell – Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, World Bank, 2002; Macdonell, R. and Pestic, M. (2006), *The Role of the Media in Curbing Corruption* in R. Stepenhurst, N. Johnston and R. Pelizzo eds. *The Role of Parliament in Curbing Corruption*, World Bank; or Stapenhurst, R. (2000), *The Media's Role in Curbing Corruption*, World Bank Institute. On the negative influence on economic productivity in developing countries see Weaver, D., J. Buddenbaum and J. Fair (1985) *Press Freedom, Media, and Development, 1950–1979: A Study of 134 Nations*, *Journal of Communication* 35: 104–17.
2. *Why Press Freedom Pays In Poverty Fight*, World Bank, April 30, 2004, available at <http://go.worldbank.org/I8OQXWV2J0> (retrieved 09/05/13).
3. Ibid.
4. See for example: Nixon, R. (1960) *Factors Related to Freedom in National Press Systems*, *Journalism Quarterly* 37(1): 13–28; Tran H., Mahmood, R., Du Y. and Khrapavitski A., (2011) *Linking Measures of Global Press Freedom to Development and Culture: Implications from a Comparative Analysis*, *International Journal of Communication* 5: 170-191; and Pal S., Dutta N., and Roy S., (2011) *Media Freedom, Socio-Political Stability and Economic Growth*, Working Paper available at http://esnie.org/pdf/textes_2011/Dutta-Media-Freedom.pdf (retrieved 09/05/13).
5. Sobel, R. S., Dutta, N., and Roy, S. (2010). *Beyond borders: is media freedom contagious?*. *Kyklos*, 63(1), 133-143.
6. Whitten-Woodring, J. (2009). *Watchdog or lapdog? Media freedom, regime type, and government respect for human rights*, *International Studies Quarterly*, 53(3), 595-625.
7. Becker, L. B., Vlad, T., and Nusser, N. (2007). *An evaluation of press freedom indicators*, *International Communication Gazette*, 69(1), 5-28.
8. Treisman, D. (2009), *Twenty Years of Political Transition*, University of California, November 2009, available at <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/treisman/Papers/Final%20Helsinki%20paper%20nov%2009.pdf> (retrieved 09/05/13).
9. Among the remaining cases, the *Freedom in the World* score change preceded changes in press freedom in two countries. However, due to methodological difficulties it was impossible to verify that this difference indeed meant that there was an opening in general freedoms followed by press freedom (Bhutan) or that the press, for some reason, was not harassed in the first years of a deteriorating situation (Honduras). In one of the cases there were no reports produced for the period in question, while in the other the decline in the *Freedom in the World* score was a result of a decline in the subscore measuring media freedom.
10. For the complete methodology description and questions for *Freedom in the World*, see: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2013/checklist-questions-and-guidelines>.
11. For the complete methodology description and questions for *Freedom of the Press*, see: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press-2013/methodology>.

**Advisory Council
for the
Center for International Media Assistance**

Esther Dyson

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Dale Peskin

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Adam Clayton Powell III

Ellen Hume

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Jerry Hyman

Adam Schiff

Alex S. Jones

Kurt Wimmer

Shanthi Kalathil

Richard Winfield

Susan King

Center for International Media Assistance

National Endowment for Democracy

1025 F Street, N.W., Suite 800

Washington, DC 20004

Phone: (202) 378-9700

Fax: (202) 378-9407

Email: CIMA@ned.org

URL: <http://cima.ned.org>



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