

WHAT'S THE USE OF A *FREE* MEDIA?

The role of media in curbing corruption
and promoting quality of government

Mathias A. Färdigh



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
DEPT OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

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Ph. D Dissertation
Department of Journalism, Media and Communication
University of Gothenburg

Distribution:

Mathias A. Färdigh

Department of Journalism, Media and Communication

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

P.O. Box 710

SE 405 30 Gothenburg

Sweden

mathias.fardigh@jmg.gu.se

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To Carolina

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List of Papers

- Paper I** "Press Freedom and Corruption." (2012) with Emma Andersson and Henrik Oscarsson in Holmberg, Sören and Rothstein, Bo (eds.) *Good Government: The Relevance of Political Science*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 130-149.
- Paper II** "Free Media and Quality of Government: Media's Role in Promoting Impartial, Non-Corrupt Governments with High Quality." Under review.
- Paper III** Media Freedom, Media Accessibility and Quality of Government. Explaining Government Performance in Europe using Media System Characteristics." Under review.

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This dissertation is dedicated to you, as the most beloved. What a long, strange trip it's been...

Mathias A. Färdigh
Xicheng, Beijing, China, June 2013

- ¹ The quote is from the song "Truckin'" (Hunter/Garcia/Weir/Lesh) on the album *American Beauty* (1970) by the Grateful Dead.
- ² The quote is from the song "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" (Harris) on the album *Somewhere In Time* (1986) by Iron Maiden.

“The more I observe the main effects of a free press, the more convinced am I that, in the modern world, freedom of the press is the principal element of freedom.”

– Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835

Introduction

That free media and free media systems are carriers of democracy is a fairly uncontroversial statement. Ask virtually anyone on the street about the importance of media for a democratic society and most people would respond with the common perception – that free media is a prerequisite for an open society. The freer media, the greater the transparency, the more informed and involved the citizens, the more responsiveness, accountability, and by its extension, the more democracy, the less corruption and abuse of power, and higher “quality of government”.

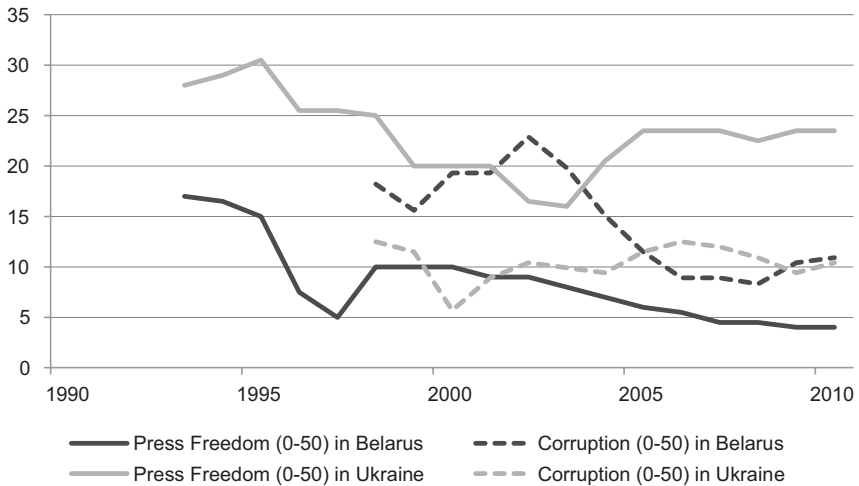
The conventional wisdom has also been confirmed empirically by scholars in various disciplines. Many studies emphasize media freedom and its positive effect on political systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; 2012; Terzis, 2008), processes of democratization (Adserà et al., 2003; Norris, 2004; Becker, Vlad & Nusser, 2007; Prior, 2007; Norris, 2008), economic development (Djankov et al., 2003b; Coyne & Leeson, 2004; Besley & Prat, 2006), and curbing corruption (Ahrend, 2002; Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Chowdhury, 2004; Macdonell & Pesic, 2006; Freille et al., 2007; Lessmann & Markwardt, 2010). These findings have resulted in numerous policy proposals and general recommendations from international actors (i.e. the World Bank, UN, EU, OECD) stating that once the media is allowed to operate freely it will serve as a fourth estate within the framework of a prospering liberal democracy.

The main argument for the importance of media freedom is the “watchdog” role of the news media and free media as a disseminator of information that may serve to empower the citizens. By highlighting policy failures, corruption in the judiciary, exposing maladministration by public officials and scandals in the corporate sector, the news media possess this watchdog role. Thus, the media as a fourth estate can function to promote government transparency, accountability, and public scrutiny of those in power (Norris, 2008: 68). Norris

(2008) takes a systematic look at the evidence that media freedom and more liberal media landscapes strengthen democracy, human development and “good governance” and concludes that free media can be considered as one of the classic checks and balances in the division of powers. Investigative journalism can open the government’s record to external scrutiny and critical evaluation, and hold authorities accountable for their actions, whether public sector institutions, non-profit organizations, or private companies.

Similarly, Brunetti and Weder (2003) found that there was less corruption in nations with a free press. They state that free media is probably one of the most effective institutions to uncover transgressions by government officials. The reason, they argue, is that any independent journalist has a strong incentive to investigate and uncover stories of wrongdoing and thereby expose and hinder misuse of public office, malfeasance, and financial scandals. Their conclusion is that countries with free media should therefore, *ceteris paribus*, have less corruption than countries where the media is controlled and censored (Brunetti & Weder, 2003: 1801). In competitive multiparty democracies, voters can use information provided by the media to hold parties and leaders to account by “kicking the rascals out” (see e.g., Brunetti et al., 1998; Ahrend, 2002; Chowdhury, 2004; Fell, 2005). At the same time, it is difficult to pinpoint what mechanisms in the free media operate to achieve this, and how to explain the discrepancies and the outlier countries from the otherwise robust relationship between freer media and less abuse of power, or more exactly: why free media leads to lower levels of corruption and higher levels of “quality of government” in some cases and not in others.

Let me give two examples. Ukraine is considered to have the freest media among all the post-Soviet states. Although negative trends became apparent in 2010, the freedom of the media has improved significantly since the “Orange Revolution” of 2004. In the Freedom of the Press report from Freedom House (2012), Ukraine earned the status “Partly Free”. In the second example, Belarus, the freedom of the media is instead tremendously restricted. State-owned media are subordinated to the president and harassment and censorship of independent media are standard. In the same report from Freedom House (2012), Belarus is placed fifth from the bottom of the 197 countries included with the status “Not Free”. To illustrate this puzzle the graph presented below gives a visual representation of the two examples.

Figure 1 Media Freedom and Corruption in Belarus and Ukraine

Source: Freedom of the Press Index, Freedom House (1993–2010) and Corruption Perception Index, Transparency International (1998–2010).

Evidently, Ukraine and Belarus have developed in two different directions in terms of media freedom. The puzzle, however, lies in the fact that, contrary to what could be expected from the results of previous research, the level of perceived corruption is in principle the same for both Ukraine and Belarus – media freedom is thus not always associated with lower levels of corruption.

In addition to the examples given above, there is a huge variation in both perceived corruption and “quality of government” among countries with free media. How can this be explained?

This thesis suggests that there is a robust relationship between both *media freedom and corruption* and *media freedom and quality of government* which here refers to the ability a regime has to perform its activities in an efficient, impartial way without corruption. However, atypical cases and a huge variation in levels of corruption and quality of government across countries with free media indicate that more research is needed. Is the variation mainly caused by the media or is it determined by other factors? In order to establish which aspects of media freedom promote high quality of government, this thesis argues that the indicators of media freedom need to be more nuanced and more precise. This thesis will suggest that *access* to media is a complementary indicator to the

freedom of the media and the Freedom House's annual press freedom index – it is essential that citizens have access to the information conveyed to them by the free media. Moreover, this thesis also argues that the indicators of quality of government (QoG) need to be more nuanced. Firstly, this thesis suggests a distinction between "business QoG" and "public service QoG". To be more precise, media freedom has varying importance for quality of government, depending on whether quality of government is studied as something good for investors and the possibilities of a successful venture into a foreign market or as something that reaches ordinary citizens through improved, non-corrupt, impartial public services. Secondly, this thesis proposes a distinction between the *input* and the *output* side of public authority. More precisely, it is proposed that media is likely to play different roles depending on whether its effects are studied within the *access* to or the *exercise* of public authority.

The thesis is divided into three separate studies where the relationship between media, corruption, and quality of government, and the analytical model of the focal relationship, is tested against different data and from various aspects. In the first study (Paper I), the robustness of the well-established relationship between free media and corruption is examined, partly by replications of earlier findings with an expanded number of observations, and partly by the application of new estimation techniques. The second study (Paper II) examines the relationship between media freedom and two different concepts of quality of government in the 27 member states of the European Union. Finally, the third study (Paper III) examines the media at the system level and in what ways characteristics of media systems contribute to promoting quality of government in 36 European countries. These three studies together intend to answer the overall question: *If, how and under what circumstances* media can promote high quality of government.

What Do We Know about the Relationship?

There are relatively few empirical studies on the relationship between media freedom and quality of government and those that exist have mainly used the level of corruption as the indicator of quality of government. Media scholars have developed theoretical arguments about the importance of the media but with few empirical results to lean on. Economists and political scientists have conducted empirical studies but have been more interested in other determinants of government performance and quality of government than media free-

dom, or have used media freedom as one of several other variables that are likely to influence the relationship of interest (see the research matrix in the appendix).

More recently, however, the interest in media freedom among social scientists has increased and today a growing number of empirical studies have established that there is a robust relationship between media freedom and the level of corruption across countries – the freer the media, the lower the levels of corruption. The relationship maintains its strength both in cross-sectional comparisons and time-series cross-sectional comparisons between countries over time.

Some researchers put a lot of effort into studying the relationship of free media and corruption. They utilize alternative measures for both independent and dependent variables, and perform several robustness checks. Nevertheless, they manage to draw misleading conclusions about the significance of free media for the level of corruption. For example, Brunetti and Weder (2003) implied significant negative effects of media freedom on three out of four utilized corruption indices, and thereby they concluded that in countries where the media is reasonably free from any kind of restriction concerning its activities, corruption levels are likely to be low. They also conclude that if Nigeria, as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, could manage to increase media freedom to the level of Belgium, it would reduce corruption to western European levels (Brunetti & Weder, 2003: 1821). This exemplifies a rather naïve notion of the nature of the relationship between media and corruption in many previous studies. High levels of media freedom are not a “quick fix”. Instead, there are results from other studies suggesting that the media’s role in making information available for the public must be accompanied by the public’s access to sanctioning mechanisms and the capacity of citizens to act upon the available information (Lindstedt & Naurin, 2010).

In line with these results, other studies have found that the presence of democratic mechanisms of control, such as free media, in combination with an increasingly informed public explained the lower level of corruption and the distribution of less corrupt practices and less governmental ineffectiveness (Adserà et al., 2003). Chowdhury (2004) argues that the role of the media as an “informative device”, and the standing of democracy acting as a sanction mechanism, should both help restrain corruption. The empirical findings from his study support this conclusion in that both free media and democracy proved to be powerful and significant controls on corruption. Ahrend (2002) studies the impact of the population’s level of education on corruption and shows that the nature of the relationship depends on how free the media is. The result of this study suggests that it may be counterproductive to initiate efforts to improve

schooling and education in countries with low levels of media freedom. Hence, a high degree of free media acts as a channel through which education decreases corruption, but only under certain conditions. In countries where media freedom is relatively well developed there is a positive threshold effect of education on corruption. However, in countries where media freedom is low, education increases corruption.

Additionally, the results from other studies also imply interaction effects of free media. Lessman and Markwardt (2010) investigate the relationship between decentralization and corruption and whether media freedom has a conditional influence of decentralization on corruption. Their finding suggests that decentralization counteracts corruption in countries with a high degree of media freedom, while countries with a low degree of media freedom suffer from decentralization (Lessman & Markwardt, 2010: 632). Charron (2009), on the other hand, examines the relationship between two non-trade forms of international openness (social and political) and government corruption while taking into account the countries' level of media freedom. The analysis shows that socio-political openness (that is, openness to trade, international organizations, and social flows of information) has little or no impact on corruption in the absence of free media. Moreover, while the empirical evidence suggests that political and social openness have a significant impact in fighting corruption given the presence of free media, the impact of such international forces is negligible in cases where the level of media freedom is low.

While the studies mentioned above all utilized aggregate measures of media freedom and did relatively little in matters of testing for sensitivity to changes in the set of conditioning variables, there are exceptions. In addition to testing for the robust relationship between the aggregate media freedom and corruption, Freille et al. (2007) employ previously unexplored data concerning different forms of restrictions (judicial, economic and political) on media freedom and show that analyses of subcomponents of media freedom are fruitful to pinning down what causal mechanisms are driving the relationship. Interestingly, their analyses reveal that improvements in certain sub-dimensions of media freedom can have an important impact on corruption. Hence, reducing *political* influence on the media may be the most effective way to reduce corruption levels.

In conclusion, empirical studies claim to have evidence for a robust relationship between media freedom and variations in corruption. They have also, however, come to ambiguous conclusions about the significance of free media for the level of corruption. Just making media free does not necessarily lead to lower levels of corruption. This thesis suggests that the relationship may not

be simple and straightforward since effects are heterogeneous and not uniform across different types of countries. Moreover, other conditions, such as accessibility, responsiveness and accountability, also have to be set and put in place.

Three Basic Pre-Requisites for Substantial Effects of Free Media

In this section I argue that the importance of free media presupposes three basic conditions in order to work against corruption and generate quality of government. To be more precise, first of all, free media is just one condition that has to be fulfilled in order to make any difference when it comes to corruption and quality of government. The point of departure is that besides the free media as one essential condition, there is also a need for three other conditions to be in place, namely *accessibility*, *responsiveness*, and *accountability*.

In line with the results from the research presented above, the most fundamental level where one can expect free media to play an important role is in the watchdog function and the public exposure of corruption. Free media openly and continuously scrutinize those in power and if media, with sufficient resources, are allowed to operate freely, they sooner or later will find and reveal malfeasance and corruption. It is also in the risk of getting caught and exposed by the media where arguably the free media possesses its strongest preventive function against abuse of power and corruption. The acts of those in power may prove to be delinquent in the legal sense and therefore liable for penalties and imprisonment. But what if free media reveals information about misconduct and corruption and nothing happens? This is where the interplay between accessibility, responsiveness, and accountability becomes important.

The watchdog function of the media has to do with media processing information about misbehavior, but also and not least important, people's ability to obtain the information (accessibility), the possibility for the government and public administration to know what the people want (responsiveness), and people's right to hold those in power accountable for their actions (accountability) – i.e. the ability for citizens in a democratic society to vote for or against a corrupt candidate whose misbehavior is uncovered by the free media. Without these three conditions being fulfilled, the media is likely to have no or very little impact.

Some scholars describe this relationship between the media, on the one hand, and democracy, on the other, in terms of a social contract (see e.g., McQuail, 1992; Kieran, 2000; Strömbäck, 2005). The media requires democracy to operate freely, and by respecting and protecting the freedom and the independence

of the media from the state, democracy fulfills its part of the social contract with the media.

At the same time, democracy requires a free flow of information and a watchdog function independent of the state. Free media watch and monitor the government and public administration, inducing them to keep their promises and implement their programs, and thus free media help the government to adapt its policies to the changing public opinion (see e.g., Bühlmann & Kriesi, 2013).

Consequently, the answer to questions about the media's role in fighting corruption and promoting high quality of government institutions is stipulated by accessibility, responsiveness and accountability, and takes its basis in theories about the *power of media* and of *media effects*. Media effects are typically conceptualized as “the social or psychological changes that occur in consumers of media message systems [...] as a result of being exposed to, processing, or acting on those mediated messages” (Bryant & Zillmann, 2009: 13f). Even though much has happened since the first studies of media effects were conducted, the crucial distinction between different types of media effects add up to Lasswell's “who says what to whom with what effect”. The media may not be very successful in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling people what to think about, and the classic agenda-setting function of the mass media approach formulated by McCombs and Shaw (1972). Moreover, the media is more influential when it comes to cognitive effects and changing what people think and know (activation and reinforcement), than at influencing and changing people's values and behavior (conversion) (see e.g., Lazarsfeld et al., 1944; Asp, 1986).

The media has effects that are clearly manifested by the agenda-setting function (see e.g., McCombs, 2004; Larcinese et al., 2011), and by framing and priming political issues and news (see e.g., Iyengar, 1991; Price et al., 1997; Entman, 2004; de Vreese, 2012). Citizens can physically only be in one place at a time. Simultaneously, people have a fundamental need to be informed and to understand the world they live in. Because of the inability to be everywhere, see everything, and understand everything, people rely on the media and journalists to reflect, review, and interpret various social phenomena. The media thus assist people in assembling the public image and their understanding of how reality is constituted (Lippmann, 1922; Matthes, 2009). People are thus dependent on information, images and interpretations of reality conveyed to them by the media, and this regardless of its correspondence with reality. Consequently, people's perceptions of corruption and quality of government are based on their own experiences and indirect information from various sources, both including

mediated sources of information and informal sources of information (such as rumors and face-to-face conversations).

Therefore, to fully understand the part media play in the fight against corruption and in promoting high quality of government, one has to take into account and understand the part the media plays in how people learn and make political decisions. In line with this reasoning, it is also relevant to understand how characteristics of the media system and technological change in the media system affect the flow of information and how people learn about politics and government performance.

Since the end of the 1990s, we have witnessed a global change in which digital media have gained momentum, both displacing and complementing traditional media (see e.g., Westlund & Färdigh, 2011). The exponential growth of the Internet has facilitated the creation of various types of digital media sources for information. When new media, with new features, are introduced to the media environment, they increase the competition for people's attention. Previous research suggests that the efficiency with which people can find the media content they seek affects whether they learn about politics or not. Hence, due to a lack of efficiency, people often acquire information and learn politically relevant facts as a "by-product" of non-political routines (Downs, 1957; Popkin, 1991). The by-product theory of information is just one example of political behaviors that seem to depend on what kind of media are available and how much choice they offer (see e.g., Campbell, 1960; Converse, 1962; Key, 1966), and contribute to the fact that technological changes in the media system also have effects on the flow of information and how people learn about and encounter politics. Converse (1962: 591), states that, "[t]he dramatic changes in information propagation are too familiar to require much elaboration [...] The cumulative change has been of awesome proportions [...] [C]onditions of information propagation have shifted in ways that affect a vast majority of the population". In accordance with this statement about television, Kinder (2003: 357), observes that, "[o]ver the last half of the twentieth century, mass communications have transformed the landscape of American politics, vastly increasing the information about public affairs that is available to ordinary citizens. Through multiple channels [...] the volume of information relevant to politics circulating through American society is massive and increasing". Similarly, Prior (2007: 3) argues, "[i]f changes in communications technology are consequential, neglecting them in our theories of the political process is a consequential mistake. Political science tends to treat ordinary people's political

behavior as if it can be explained without reference to the media environment in which they live.” The acknowledgement of these “massive” changes “of awesome proportions” has not been accompanied by an understanding of the political consequences of traditional and new media.

In conclusion, besides media freedom, there are three basic conditions that must coexist in order for the media to play a substantial role in the fight against corruption and in promoting quality of government: (1) accessibility; (2) responsiveness; and (3) accountability. The focus of this thesis is on the first condition – accessibility. The accessibility condition is about the possibilities for people to get hold of and obtain information conveyed to them by the free media. The responsiveness condition links “input” and the access to public authority to “output” and the way in which this public authority is exercised, while the accountability condition links “output” and the exercise of public authority to “input” and the access to public authority. If any of these conditions is missing, then the media are less likely to have a substantial effect on and play a less important role in the fight against corruption and in promoting quality of government.

Quality of Government

According to the literature, the “quality of government” factor has considerable effects on growth, economic development and a number of important noneconomic phenomena (see, e.g., Evans & Rauch, 1999; Easterley, 2001; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2006; North et al., 2009, or see Holmberg et al., 2009, for a thorough summary). There is however no consensus on what “good governance” and “quality of government” comprise. Political scientists, historians, sociologists and economists have developed a large number of theories on institutional development (see e.g., Marx, 1872; Weber, 1958; Demsetz, 1967; North, 1981; 1990; Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995; Landes, 1998), and several attempts have been made to define conceptually the quality of political institutions or quality of government (see, e.g., Clauge et al., 1999; Djankov et al., 2002; Knack & Kugler, 2002; Djankov et al., 2003a; Botero et al., 2004; La Porta et al., 2004). Research on good governance has grown rapidly in recent years (see, e.g., Seligson, 2002; Gilley, 2009; Rothstein, 2009; Norris, 2011), but due to lack of consensus, mainly caused by normative differences in ideological approaches with too much focus on deregulation and free markets and whether a good government should intervene or not intervene in everyday life, it has not fully succeeded in reaching a conceptually viable definition of what

good governance and quality of government really is. Instead, there is more of a consensus that efficient, trustworthy, reliable, impartial, and competent government institutions reduce corruption and enhance bureaucratic quality and that this consequently leads to high quality of government.

Numerous empirical indications show that the opposite to human well-being (such as high infant mortality, early death and illness, lack of access to safe water, unhappiness and poverty) are not caused by a lack of technical equipment, effective medicines or other types of knowledge. Instead, it is caused by the fact that a majority of the world's population has to live in societies that are dominated by dysfunctional government institutions (see e.g., Rothstein, 2011; Holmberg & Rothstein, 2012). Nevertheless, we still do not know how high quality government institutions are created. In the words of Rothstein (2005: 4), "we know that this sometimes happens, but we lack a theory of under what circumstances it is more likely to happen" (see e.g., La Porta et al., 1999; Hunther & Shah, 2005; Kaufmann et al., 2009).

Following the work of Rothstein and Teorell (2008) this thesis treats quality of government as an "output" related concept and refers to the ability of a regime to perform its activities in an efficient, impartial way without corruption.

Quality of Government as an Output-Related Concept

A broad range of criteria could be drawn from the numerous definitions of "good governance". At the same time the multitude of suggested meanings makes it difficult to distinguish the concept of good governance and quality of government from related concepts.

Rothstein and Teorell (2008) discuss the problems that arise from the use of existing definitions of quality of government and emphasize that the definitions are either extremely broad or too specific, or they deal only with corruption. Too broad definitions of quality of government are likely to capture everything, or in the words of Keefer (2004: 5), "If the study of governance extends to all questions related to how groups of people govern themselves [...] then there are few subjects in all of political science and political economy that do not fall within the governance domain." Instead, Rothstein and Teorell argue that some political institution or aspects of "politics" simply must matter more than others for what should count as quality of government. The critique is voiced by Grindle (2004: 530), that "the good governance agenda is overwhelming" and in particular, that it fails to distinguish between various institutional par-

ticularities and more basic principles. On the other hand, Rothstein and Teorell imply that attempts to be more specific in definitions of “good governance” and quality of government have proved at least as problematic. Too specific definitions omit important consequences of quality of government, and functionalist definitions make it impossible to generalize what quality of government is at the conceptual level: the type of institutional arrangements that cause growth in one country may be completely different in other countries (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008: 168).

Finally, Rothstein and Teorell mean that quality of government cannot solely be defined as the absence of corruption. Quality of government encompasses more. Here, they endorse Rose-Ackerman (2004), and argue for the inclusion of many other practices that are usually not seen as corruption, such as clientelism, nepotism, cronyism, patronage, discrimination, and cases where administrative agencies are “captured” by the interest groups that they are set out to regulate and control (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008: 169).

Rothstein and Teorell try to overcome the definitional confusion by using an output-related construct. They concede that democracy and quality of government overlap to some extent but consider democracy only as “a necessary but insufficient criterion of QoG” because “if QoG were merely to equal democracy, the importance of how power is *exercised* would be left out” (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008: 166). Instead, they argue for a more precise definition and a conceptualization of quality of government that incorporates insights from political philosophy accompanied by empirical research about the effects of different institutional arrangements – impartiality – which is defined as: “when implementing laws and policies, government officials shall not take into consideration anything about the citizen/case that is not beforehand stipulated in the policy or the law” (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008: 170).

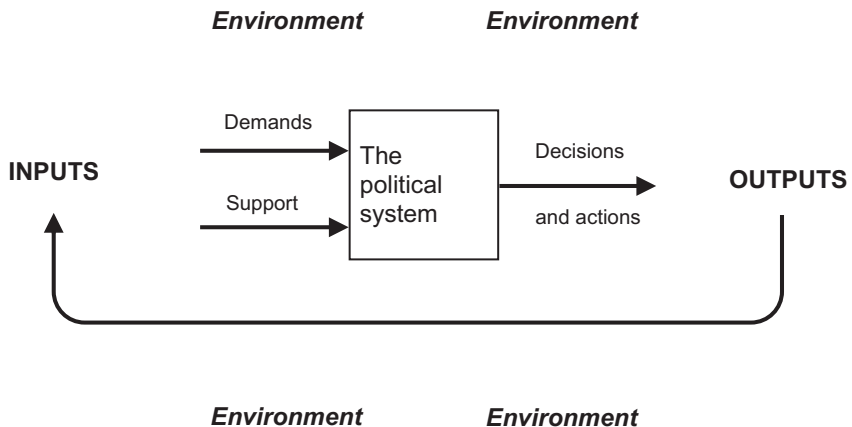
Their reasoning about impartiality is based on the fact that a state regulates relations with its citizens on the basis of inputs and outputs. As mentioned earlier, the input side relates to the *access* to public authority, and the output side refers to the way in which that authority is *exercised*.

Their main argument for including impartiality on the output side when defining quality of government is because political equality, as the fundamental norm of democracy on the input side and the way a particular democracy can constitutionally organize access to power, can vary a great deal (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008: 170). Rothstein and Teorell also emphasize two other important arguments for why democracy alone is not sufficient to define quality of government. The first argument is the well-known fact that there are simply

no guarantees that a majority will respect the principle of impartiality, once government power is to be exercised. The second argument is the lack of a straightforward linear relationship between electoral democracy in the access to public power and impartiality in the exercise of public power. On the contrary, previous research implies that democracy instead seems to be curvilinear related to the level of corruption and quality of government (see e.g., Monitola & Jackman, 2002; Sung, 2004; Charron & Lapuente, 2010).

This “overlap” between democracy and quality of government and the treatment of electoral democracy as an “essential but not sufficient” criterion of quality of government are both very interesting and highly relevant for understanding the role of free media. Both are guided by the norm of impartial treatment, but belong to different parts of the political system (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008: 170; Rothstein, 2009: 318). Electoral democracy is a way of structuring inputs from society whereby all citizens are treated equally through free and fair elections (Rothstein, 2009: 318). Influenced by Rothstein and Teorell (2008), this thesis suggests that quality of government is defined by impartial treatment on the output side, where laws and policies are implemented (see e.g., David Easton’s model of political systems below (Easton, 1965: 32)).

Figure 2 David Easton’s Model of Political Systems



Source: Easton (1965: 32).

Consequently, it is therefore fundamental that the conceptual separation of electoral democracy and quality of government also has implications for our understanding of the role of free media.

Previous research on media freedom has mainly been performed on the input side, or at best, a very specific part of the output side relating to media freedom and incidences of corruption, as one among other indicators of government performance (Ahrend, 2002; Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Chowdhury, 2004; Lederman et al., 2005; Freille et al., 2007). This leads to an extensive knowledge of the role of the media for “the elected side” of government, such as democracy, politics and the access to public authority but less knowledge in terms of the media’s importance and impact on the “non-elected side” of government, such as public administration and the way in which that authority is exercised. Both are necessary and underpin electoral accountability. Free and fair democratic elections, on the input side, are a precondition for electoral accountability. However, and as argued earlier, it is on the output side and the exercise of public authority where the citizens’ formation of preferences about how well those in power actually fulfill their mandate take place. The output side both involves citizens’ personal experiences of public services and their interaction with information from the media (Kumlin, 2004). Previous studies show a strong and robust negative relationship between free media and corruption but miss other important aspects of government performance and quality of government.

In this thesis the aim is to follow Rothstein and Teorell (2008) and their output related concept as far as possible and refer to quality of government as the ability a state has to perform its activities in an efficient, impartial way and without corruption. Another aim is to overcome the gap between this theoretical concept of quality of government and its operational counterparts, and to utilize empirically measureable indicators of quality of government.

The first operational definition of quality of government includes three different indicators: “corruption”, “law and order” and “quality of bureaucracy”, and is similar to the indicators used in the political economics literature as measures of government efficiency (see e.g., Knack & Keefer, 1995; Hall & Jones, 1999; La Porta et al., 1999). The first component is an evaluation of corruption within the political system and focuses on *fiscal corruption* in the form of demands for special payments and bribes connected with import and export licenses (exchange controls, tax assessments, etc.), and *actual* or *potential corruption* (excessive patronage, nepotism, job reservations, “favors-for-favors”, secret party funding, and suspiciously close ties between politics and business). The

second component, law and order, also consists of two different parts. “Law” focuses on the strength and impartiality of the legal system, whereas “order” focuses on the execution of the law. Finally, the third component captures the institutional quality and strength of the bureaucracy (such as the ability of a country to be governed without interruptions or major changes in policy or government services).

The second operational definition of quality of government also includes three different indicators: “corruption”, “impartiality” and “quality”, but is more closely related to the output of public services and citizens’ experiences of public education, public health care, and law enforcement. “Quality” corresponds to the difference between the service one expects and the service one gets from the police force, public education and public health care system. “Impartiality” here means all citizens are treated equally by the police force, in the public education system, and in the public health care system. “Corruption” is about the prevalence of corruption in the police force, the public education system, and the public health care system.

The use of these two definitions of quality of government should be seen as an attempt to elaborate the dependent variable and implies that the effects of free media differ depending on which definition of quality of government we choose to use. This supposedly also leads to changes and a more nuanced view of the importance of media freedom in processes of establishing, improving and maintaining quality of government.

Determinants of Quality of Government

What explains differences in quality of government between countries? First of all, there are other factors than the media that matter. La Porta et al. (1999) argue that the theories on the determinants of quality of government can be divided into three broad categories: political theories (see e.g., Marx, 1872; North, 1990; Olson, 1993), economic theories (see e.g., Demsetz, 1967; North, 1981), and cultural theories (see e.g., Banfield, 1958; Weber, 1958; Putnam, 1993; Landes, 1998). They also emphasize the need to find reasonably exogenous sources of variation in the political, economic, and cultural characteristics of countries to be able to explain the variation in quality of government across countries. Empirically, they present clear evidence of the systematic influence of historical circumstances. The level of quality of government is in part determined by economic development, but is also shaped by systematic variation in the historical circumstances of individual countries: ethnolinguistically homog-

enous countries have governments with better quality than the heterogeneous ones. Predominantly Protestant countries have better governments than either predominantly Catholic or predominantly Muslim countries. Common law countries have better governments than French civil law and socialist law countries (La Porta et al., 1999: 265-6).

Recent years have also seen an increasing body of literature studying the influence of legal traditions and arguing that the legal traditions established in Europe centuries ago are the key factor in explaining contemporary differences between countries in the quality of institutions and socio-economic outcomes (see e.g., Levine, 2005; La Porta et al., 2008). The main theoretical argument is that common law and civil law countries have distinct routines of governmental control of the economy and different institutions supporting these routines. In contrast, other scholars emphasize that the development of a certain kind of state infrastructure is the essential feature explaining institutional, economic and social development. They argue that the state formation process precedes the legal traditions in that the state infrastructure characteristics constrain or enable subsequent rulers' capacity to implement their will and should be seen as an outcome of the power balance between ruler and administrators rather than of legal traditions (see e.g., Charron et al., 2012). Moreover, numerous studies analyze the impact of electoral rules, different types of political regimes and institutions on quality of government (see e.g., Clauge et al., 1996; Monitola & Jackman, 2002; Persson & Tabellini, 2003; Keefer, 2007; Bäck & Hadenius, 2008). For example, Kunicová and Rose-Ackerman (2005) argue that the incentives for and the probability of political actors monitoring and discovering corrupt political rent-seeking are shaped and affected by the electoral rules in that PR systems lead to more severe collective action problems for voters and opposition parties in monitoring corrupt incumbents (Kunicová & Rose-Ackerman 2005: 585).

Despite the inconclusive results of the relationship between decentralization and quality of government, the means to restrain the central power and to make governments and the bureaucracy more efficient and responsive also seems to be important for the variation in quality of government. Some scholars argue in favor of decentralization, claiming that it improves government efficiency (Fisman & Gatti, 2002; Hunther & Shah, 2005). Other scholars argue that decentralization reduces the opportunities for accountability and is likely to lead to more corruption (Treisman, 2000; Gerring & Thacker, 2004; Treisman, 2007).

Finally, several findings point to a negative relationship between political empowerment and the level of corruption, reflected in the fact that a larger number of women in positions of political power leads to lower levels of corruption (Dollar et al., 2001; Swamy et al., 2001). Although the causal direction of the relationship has been questioned (see e.g., Sung, 2003; Bjarnegård, 2006; Goetz, 2007), there is consensus that the number of women in leading political and bureaucratic positions within a society is a useful “proxy” for quality of government (see e.g., Wängnerud, 2008).

All in all, this thesis controls the relationship between media freedom and quality of government against eight different determinants of countries’ quality of government.

Media Freedom

There is a lack of conceptual agreement in the scholarly literature on mass communication about what defines media freedom. Early definitions of the concept reflect the post-Second World War geopolitical construction and primarily focus on freedom from government control (see e.g., Lowenstein, 1970; Weaver, 1977; Picard, 1985; Hachten, 1987; Hagen, 1992). Later definitions of the concept differentiate between a classical liberal perspective on media freedom – the media should serve to protect the individual from the abuses of the state – and a more radical democratic perspective – the media should seek to redress the imbalances in society, between the degree of freedom enjoyed by the media and the degree of freedom for people to get access to the media content (see e.g., Curran, 1996; Price, 2002; McQuail, 2005). As argued earlier, the free media’s processing of information has to be accompanied by accessibility for it to have a substantial effect on quality of government.

Asante (1997) discusses the concepts of media freedom and elucidates several definitions of press freedom, referring to Weaver (1977) and Dennis and Merrill (1991). Dennis and Merrill defined freedom of the media: “as the right to communicate ideas, opinions, and information through the printed word without government restraint” (Dennis & Merrill, 1991: 5). Weaver, on the other hand, defines media freedom in three fundamentally different ways: (1) as the relative absence of governmental restraints on the media; (2) as the relative absence of governmental and other restraints on the media; and (3) as not only the absence of restraints on the media, but also the presence of those conditions necessary for the dissemination of a diversity of ideas and opinions to a relatively large audience such as enforced right of access to newspapers and

radio stations (Weaver, 1977: 152). As argued earlier, media freedom is linked to and assumes people's ability to obtain the information about, for example, how public authority is exercised.

Indicators of Media Freedom and Its Correlates

Freedom is a prerequisite for the media to play any role in the fight against corruption and for promoting high quality of government. But when can we say that media could be considered free and in that case, free from what? Empirically, the most common way for scholars to measure variations in freedom of the media across countries is to utilize the composite Freedom of the Press Index compiled annually by Freedom House (see e.g., Ahrend, 2002; Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Chowdhury, 2004; Norris, 2008; Charron, 2009; Lindstedt & Naurin, 2010).

However, research on media freedom goes back to at least the early 1960s. The work of Nixon (1960) makes use of the International Press Institute (IPI) ratings of media freedom in investigation of the relation between level of daily newspaper circulation and economic development and literacy (see e.g., Gilmor, 1962). Additionally, Nixon (1965) also used a panel to rank media freedom in countries around the world as an alternative for the IPI ratings when replicating his earlier findings. Farace and Donohew (1965) used the Nixon (1965) media freedom measure and discovered that additional variables such as life expectancy, population and education were also positively related to media freedom. Nam and Oh (1973) also utilized Nixon's (1965) Press Freedom Index and found that freedom of the media is a function of subsystem autonomy in the overall political system – in political systems in which the various actors have freedom of activity, the media operates accordingly.

Lowenstein (1970) developed a measure of Press Independence and Critical Ability (PICA), based on 23 separate indicators, including restraints on media through legal controls, ownership of news agencies and their resources, self-censorship, and economic hardship. The rating was collected with expert-surveys from the legendary Freedom of Information Center at the University of Missouri. The resulting classification of the media closely matched those of Nixon's earlier surveys. Weaver (1977) later used the Lowenstein (1970) classification of media freedom and discovered that increase in economic productivity leads to less stress in the political system, and moreover that this decreased political stress leads to increased media freedom.

Weaver et al. (1985) attempted to replicate the findings from 1977 but concluded instead that increases in economic productivity in developing countries may have negative effects on media freedom. For these analyses, Weaver et al. used the relatively new measure of media freedom developed by Freedom House. The Freedom of the Press index in itself is incredibly complex and, in very simple terms, it measures media freedom from three different dimensions: (1) economic factors that affect the access to information; (2) political pressures that influence reporting; and (3) legal environment for the media. When the three subcomponents are analyzed and compared systematically the results suggest that freedom from laws and regulations fails to qualify as robust, while freedom from political and economic pressures (in that order) prove to drive the strong relationship between media freedom and corruption (Freille et al., 2007; see also Färdigh et al., 2012).

Moreover, previous research implies the consistency of the three most prominent press freedom measures (from Freedom House, IREX and Reporters without Borders), and that the measures hold high reliability. Becker, Vlad and Nusser (2007) and Becker and Vlad (2011) have undertaken additional analyses, of both the internal and across-time reliability, and additionally also examined the relationship between these three measures of media freedom and the measures reflected in the public opinion surveys of Gallup and WorldPublicOpinion.org. The results show strong evidence of reliability in that the Freedom House measure and the Reporters without Borders measure are highly correlated. Becker and Vlad also argue for a high validity in that the Freedom House measure in particular, reflects known changes in the media environment (Becker & Vlad, 2011: 32).

In conclusion, the annual measures of media freedom are both highly correlated and hold high reliability. However, there is a need for complementary indicators in order to establish the role of the media in promoting high quality of government – the presence of free media is not a sufficient criterion.

Media Systems and the Accessibility Factor

It is essential that citizens have access to the information conveyed to them by the free media. The point of departure is that accessibility is an important “triggering” factor in that the degree of accessibility affects the impact of media freedom on quality of government. At the system level access to media is determined by the media system, which in turn is determined by specific national characteristics, such as the political system, the relationship between economic

and political interests, historical and cultural circumstances, the development of the civil society, and so on and so forth.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) studied how countries' political and economic systems influence the media system and argued that media institutions both reflect the society they operate in and by themselves also affect social structures, influencing and changing the society (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 8, cf., Siebert et al., 1956). They derive four different dimensions, in which the relationship between political and economic systems and the media system is most evident. The first dimension is how the media market in different countries has evolved over time, with an emphasis on a strong or weak development of the mass distributed daily newspapers. The second dimension is political parallelism, i.e. the link between the media system and the political power, and the reflection of political power and the political system in the media system. The third dimension examines the development of a journalistic profession and the scope of journalistic professionalism. Finally, Hallin and Mancini investigate the power of the political system to shape the structure and functioning of the media system. Thus, these four dimensions also determine the accessibility of information.

Hallin and Mancini identify and distinguish three fundamental ideal models to describe how political and economic systems influence the media system: (1) the *Mediterranean* or *Polarized Pluralist Model* – characterized by countries that have democratized relatively late, a strong government intervention in the economy and an elite-oriented press. The public service companies tend to follow national governments and parliamentary systems and journalism is less professional. The links between political actors and journalists are strong, while the legal system is relatively weak (e.g. Italy, France, Greece, Portugal and Spain); (2) the *North/Central Europe* or *Democratic/Corporatist Model* – characterized by countries with a long democratic tradition. Politics is characterized by consensus and a strong state with a well-grounded legal system. The publishing sector has an important part in this model. There is competition in the market for print media, but despite this the market is regulated through various political and cultural activities such as press subsidies. Other features are non-commercial public service and a high degree of autonomy for the broadcasters. The journalism is professional and self-regulating with common ethical standards for radio, television and newspapers (e.g. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands and Germany); (3) the *North Atlantic* or *Liberal Model* – is instead characterized by a long tradition of democracy, strong and widespread press freedom and strong individualism. Newspaper circulation is relatively high, although lower than for the countries

in the Democratic/Corporatist model. Politically, most of the countries have a majority system. Generally, media are not strongly linked to the government and political parties, but are instead governed by commercial interests and the journalistic professionalism is relatively strong (e.g. United Kingdom, USA, Canada and Ireland).

Based on the study in 2004 these three models were complemented with a fourth model in Terzis (2008), (4) the *Eastern European or Post-Communist Model*. The countries included in the fourth model have, strictly speaking, not much else in common concerning history, culture religion and level of development than just the history of communism and the communist system. Like the countries in the Polarized Pluralist model, the post-communist countries are characterized by late democratization and incomplete, or for some countries, very complex, modernization, combined with strong control from the state, widespread clientelism, and state paternalism. The newspapers and the newspaper media underwent major changes from 1989 onwards. When the state monopoly on the newspaper market disappeared, this meant for example, that a flood of new newspapers emerged and the number of regional and local newspapers increased markedly. Broadcast media struggles to keep its independence and to demonstrate political independence, but still to work as a political actor actively striving to promote the ruling power (e.g. Poland, Czech Rep., Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia).

Table 1 The Four Models of Media System Characteristics

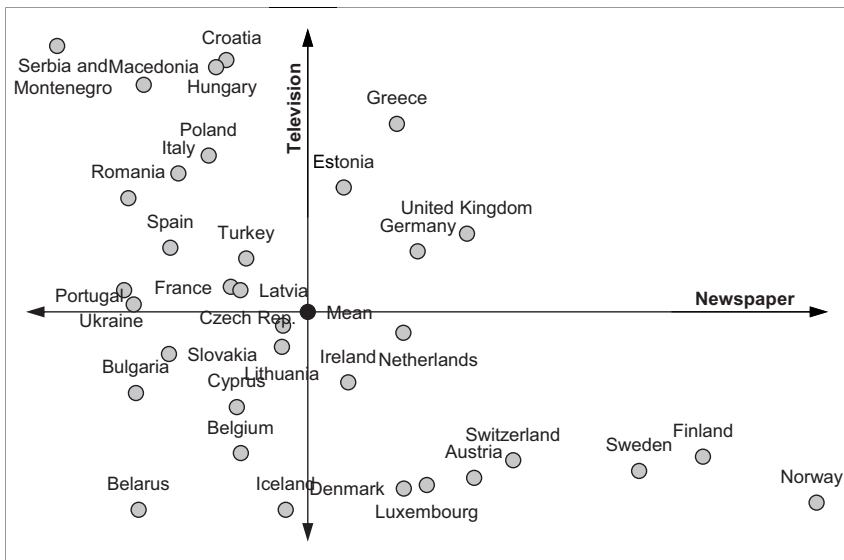
<i>Media System Dimensions</i>	Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model	North/Central Europe or Democratic Corporatist Model	North Atlantic or Liberal Model	Eastern European or Post-Communist Model
Media Structure	2	4	3	2
Political Parallelism	3	1	2	4
Journalistic Profession	2	4	3	1
Role of the State in Media System	3	3	2	4

Comments: The media structure scale goes from 1 (weak) to 4 (strong); the political parallelism scale goes from 1 (autonomy) to 4 (strong); the journalism profession scale goes from 1 (unprofessional) to 4 (professional); and the state intervention scale goes from 1 (none) to 4 (large extent).

Source: Hallin & Mancini (2004); Terzis (2008).

Without engaging in the vivid academic discussion about the adequacy of their suggested framework for understanding variations between different systems around the world (see e.g., the summary of argumentation in Hallin & Mancini, 2012), Hallin & Mancini suggest that political, economic and media systems are interrelated and therefore also crucial for accessibility. This is most clearly reflected in comparisons based on media structure and newspaper markets, but is also noticeable in comparisons of patterns of use and consumption. For example, Hallin and Mancini suggested a geographical distribution of newspaper-centric media systems (mainly in northern Europe) and television-centric media systems (mainly in southern Europe). In Figure 3 this geographical distribution is confirmed by using average newspaper circulation per 1000 adults and viewing time per individual (in minutes).

Figure 3 *The Relationship between Newspaper-centric and Television-centric Media Systems in 36 European Countries*



Source: World Association of Newspapers, World Press Trends (2007) and Key Fact Television, IP International Marketing Committee (2007).

In the development of newspaper and television markets, national characteristics such as the relationship between economic and political interests play an important role, while the importance of historical and cultural circumstances is diminishing. This is due to diverse processes of change, such as democratization, modernization, globalization and an increasing internationalization of media ownership and ownership structures. There are for example, former communist countries that have passed the southern European countries and in some cases, even their western European neighbours when it comes to number of newspapers and share of Internet advertising (see e.g., Färdigh, 2010). This is most clearly defined over time and primarily among former Communist countries and countries in the Polarized Pluralist media model.

Inspired by Hallin and Mancini (2004), this thesis looks more closely at two different media system characteristics that are potential explanatory factors of the variation in quality of government across countries. The first captures three important aspects of media freedom (economic, political and judicial control over media content). In addition to the indicators of media freedom, this thesis proposes that there is a need to investigate people's ability to obtain information. Therefore, accessibility of media content is the second characteristic, which this thesis put forward as an important "triggering" factor that can provide more information about the relationship with and the cross-country variation in quality of government. Hallin and Mancini (2004) show that the variation in characteristics of media systems across countries, such as newspaper markets and newspaper circulation, derives from historical diversity in that specific media systems have developed under particular historical conditions. However, other researchers have also shown its importance for the level of corruption and quality of government (Besley & Burgess, 2001; Adserà et al., 2003; Besley & Prat, 2006; Pellegrini & Gerlagh, 2008). Simply making information available will not prevent corruption or help countries develop high quality of government, unless favorable conditions such as media circulation are already in place for publicity, responsiveness and accountability.

Study Rationale

Scholars from various disciplines have confirmed a robust relationship between freedom of the media and corruption. However, considering the variation in both perceived corruption and quality of government among countries with free media and the discrepancies and outlier countries within this robust relationship, more research is needed – something seems to be missing. This thesis

sets out to investigate if, how and under what circumstances free media can work against corruption and promote high quality of government.

In order to try to find out what is missing, the indicators of both media freedom and quality of government need to be more nuanced. This thesis proposes three basic conditions for substantial effects of free media and investigates how accessibility – the abilities for people to get hold of and obtain information conveyed to them by the free media – could help us further in trying to explain the variation in quality of government across countries. Furthermore, this thesis examines whether the importance of media freedom is differentiated between different measures of quality of government. For this extensive area of research to be both feasible and researchable two research questions are formulated and investigated:

- RQ 1:** How does the relationship between media freedom and quality of government change when utilizing different specifications of quality of government?
- RQ 2:** In what ways does accessibility affect quality of government?

The base premise of this thesis is that the risk of exposure and getting caught could be assumed to be larger where free media and journalists are able to provide citizens with impartial and sufficient information, and independently scrutinize those in power. Officials ponder the expected costs and benefits of a corrupt act (see e.g., Root, 1996; Treisman, 2000; 2007). Thus, better quality of government is more likely to occur in countries with free media (see e.g., Zaller, 2003; Norris, 2008).

The first research question aims to demonstrate that media freedom has an important influence on quality of government. Built on what is known from previous research the level of corruption is an important indicator of whether a country has high or low quality of government. However, since quality of government cannot be defined solely as the absence of corruption, more indicators of quality of government are required. This question therefore sets out to examine the relationship between media freedom and quality of government utilizing two different definitions of quality of government

The second research question derives from the assumption that certain media system characteristics are more likely to generate higher quality of government than others. The main theoretical argument is that media freedom enhances government efficiency and responsiveness, while strengthening people's trust in those who govern them. Free media is often associated with well-functioning

markets and improved investment climate. Therefore, it has been increasingly acknowledged as a key to democratic and socio-economic development in that media freedom represents an important and necessary instrument for citizens – ensuring people's access to sufficient information and to act and react in accordance with their interests and preferences – for understanding the world surrounding them. Media freedom offers possibilities for the government and public administration to get information about and to adapt their policies to the public opinion, and to enable the public to hold government and those in power accountable for their actions. Thus, free media advocates responsiveness and accountability through its role as watchdog over the abuse of power, providing information on issues and facilitating informed electoral choices through its role as a civic forum for political debate, and strengthening government responsiveness to social problems as an agenda-setter for policy-makers. In turn, a complete realization of the right to a free flow of information cannot take place without a free media.

The first set of media system characteristics examined is independence from governmental influence and power, and whether quality of government is more likely to be higher in countries where media systems are characterized by: (a) less economic considerations that can influence the media's activities; (b) less political control over the news media content; (c) fewer laws and regulations that could influence media content and where government's inclination to use these laws and legal institutions is lower.

As the second set of media system characteristics, this thesis examines the user perspective and the accessibility of media content and if and how media systems characterized by extensive reading of newspapers, viewing of television and high levels of Internet penetration contribute to higher levels of quality of government.

A central contribution of this thesis is thus to find some answers to the question posed previously: why some countries with free media end up with different levels of corruption and quality of government. Testing the impact of media system characteristics on quality of government is admittedly challenging. The empirical tests are modest in nature and are intended to demonstrate that (a) the indicators of media freedom need to be more nuanced and more precise in order to establish which aspects of the free media promote high quality of government; (b) the indicators of quality of government also need to be more nuanced; and more importantly (c) the proposition of this thesis to include complements to the commonly used media freedom indices leads to greater understanding of the relationship between free media and quality of government.

What's the Use of a Free Media?

According to King et al. (1994: 15), two criteria should guide our choice of research questions: it should be important in the “real” world, and it should make a specific contribution to an identifiable body of scholarly literature. Assuming that media freedom really has the effects on corruption and quality of government across countries that have been claimed, I feel the criterion of importance is amply fulfilled. This dissertation contributes to the existing research field in at least three different ways that have both empirical and methodological implications for our understanding of the importance of free media.

Paper I: Free Media and Corruption

The first study takes its starting point in the widespread and commonly held belief that a free and independent press fulfills an important role in fighting corruption. The study demonstrates that research on the relationship between press freedom and corruption is far from complete, and that additional and new approaches are needed in order to learn more.

The overall purpose of the empirical analyses was to check the robustness of findings from earlier studies of the relationship between press freedom and corruption. The strategy applied in all analyses included (a) replications with an expanded number of observations: we reanalyze the explanatory models of corruption from two earlier studies; Freille et al. (2007) and Lindstedt and Naurin (2010). These two studies are selected for being among the most elaborated analyses of the relationship between press freedom and corruption. We use the base model of Freille et al. as a starting point and replicate their analysis; (b) the use of three different measures of corruption: as additional robustness checks, three highly correlated but different measures of corruption are included as dependent variables in the regression models one at a time. All three measures of corruption originate from credible sources and are used regularly in empirical analyses of corruption and claim to assess variations of the incidence of corruption within and between countries (Pearson's $r = 0.86-0.97$); and (c) the application of new estimation techniques that are tailored to handle estimation problems that arise from having many time-invariant variables when modeling regressions: we reasoned that the robustness check with the highest potential to alter what we know about the relationship between press freedom and corruption is to rerun previous studies with new estimation techniques. All analyses were performed using both a standard OLS method and a new estimation tech-

nique called “fixed effects vector decomposition” (FEVD), more or less tailored for data analyses of time-series cross-section data enclosing many time-invariant variables (Plümper & Troeger, 2007). This estimation technique has also previously been shown to generate new findings that did not correspond to previous results in studies of, for example, human well-being (Boyce, 2009), crime (Worrall, 2008), trade and foreign direct investments (Márquez-Ramos, 2008), deficit spending (Schneider, 2010), bureaucratic efficiency (Dahlström et al., 2010), and public policies (Plümper & Schneider, 2007).

In terms of empirical and theoretical implications, the results of Paper I stress the importance of looking beyond the simple models of direct effects of media freedom and the level of corruption; the relationship is more complicated than that. Firstly, the causal relationship between media freedom and corruption remains robust and there are significant direct linear effects of media freedom on all three measures of corruption. Moreover, the effects of media freedom remained significant and robust, even after we exposed it to the alternative estimation technique. At the same time it is important to note the controversy over the quality of the estimates and the standard errors provided by this alternative estimation technique and Plümper and Troeger’s (2007) FEVD procedure.

In short, Greene (2011a) claims that FEVD is an inconsistent estimator, the standard errors are too small, and the efficiency gains described in Plümper & Troeger (2007) are illusory. Breusch et al. (2011a) make similar claims and in addition propose a pretest and a shrinkage estimator (see e.g., Beck, 2011; Breusch et al., 2011a; 2011b; Greene, 2011a; 2011b; Plümper & Troeger, 2011). In Paper I, the use of FEVD is not crucial, in a strict sense. Instead, and just as Greene (2011a) clearly shows, the FEVD produces nothing different from the FE regression, both in terms of coefficient estimates and SEs. Therefore, the results from our study confirm the results from previous research suggesting a robust relationship between press freedom and corruption.

Secondly, the result from Paper I underlines that the curvilinear relationship noted by numerous scholars seems best modeled with an interaction between the level of democracy and the level of media freedom. The results suggest that the role of media freedom in fighting corruption differs depending on whether the specific country has a well or newly established electoral democracy or none at all. This may well be one of the keys to the question of large variations in quality of government across countries with free media. Among the well-established democracies, the level of media freedom is very important for the ability to fight corruption. On the other hand, among the newly established democracies, the level of media freedom is of less importance and, most notably, among

countries with weak electoral democracy, the level of media freedom has a relatively small impact when it comes to combating corruption.

This has implications for the prevalent view that media freedom fulfills an important role in fighting corruption. Free media seems to be one of the major solutions in curbing corruption. However, international organizations, policy proposals and general recommendations emphasize the importance of free media, media plurality and competition as an antidote to many global problems. Within this context, the results in Paper I could help to diversify our views of how and when free media is likely to contribute in the fight against corruption, in processes of democratization, and improving countries' quality of government.

Paper II: Elaborating Quality of Government

In the second study, the relationship between media freedom and quality of government in 27 Member States of the European Union is examined. The point of departure of this study is that a state regulates relations with its citizens on two dimensions: the input side which relates to the *access* to public authority, and the output side which refers to the way in which that authority is *exercised*.

A number of studies have established a relationship between free media and democracy and between free media and incidence of corruption, and consequently we have an extensive knowledge of the role of free media for the elected side of government and the access to public authority, but less knowledge of the free media's role in the non-elected side of government and the way in which authority is exercised.

Both are necessary and form the foundation of information for electoral accountability. In this study I argue that the concept of quality of government, unlike the concepts of democracy and of corruption, captures both the input and the output side of public authority. Therefore, Paper II sets out to elaborate the "dependent variable" and what will happen with the explanation power of free media when different specifications of quality of government are utilized.

Two different specifications are used for capturing countries' quality of government. The first operational definition includes three different dimensions or indicators of quality of government: "corruption", "law and order" and "quality of bureaucracy", used by Hall and Jones (1999) for conceptualizing the quality of "the institutions and government policies that determine the economic environment" (Hall & Jones, 1999: 97). The same definition has also been used in the political economics literature as indicators of government efficiency

(Knack & Keefer, 1995; La Porta et al., 1999). The second operational definition is more related to the specific output of public services and includes three similar dimensions of quality of government: “corruption”, “impartiality” and “quality”, but focus more on public education, law enforcement, and the public health care system.

This gives one “good-for-business” definition and one “good-for-public-services” definition of countries’ quality of government.

In conceptualizing media freedom Paper II is inspired by previous research conducted on media freedom and uses the same definition of media freedom and the view of media that says media can only inform, educate and report critically on those in power and thus contribute to quality of government if media freedom is guaranteed. This means to operate freely vis-à-vis political power and political constraints, such as political censorship and self-censorship, but also against economic and legal pressures such as selective maintenance of advertising or subsidies by the state or other actors and legal guarantees for the freedom of expression, the penal code and potentially negative aspects of security legislation as well as independence of the judiciary and official media regulatory bodies.

To obtain independent direct effects of media freedom, control variables concerning countries’ political regime type, electoral system, centralization, economic development, and political empowerment are included and controlled for in the model.

This study produces diverse results. Whether free media could be considered as an important predictor of quality of government or not depends on which of the two definitions of quality of government one uses in the analysis. There is a strong and positive influence of media freedom on the variation in quality of government across countries when conceptualized as “good-for-business” (operationalized by the commonly used “QoG” index retrieved from the International Country Risk Guide). Thus the results confirm earlier findings and demonstrate the effectiveness of free media. However, when one instead uses the “good-for-public-services” definition of quality of government, the significant positive relationship between media freedom and quality of government turns insignificant and disappears. Instead, an interaction effect suggests that the ability to explain and improve quality of government is absolutely best done if media freedom and women’s opportunities for political empowerment are increased *simultaneously* and this results in a significant positive effect on the *quality* dimension of public services, not on the impartiality dimension or the corruption dimension.

This diverges from the results of previous research. The results of this study correspond to the findings in Paper I that suggested a curvilinear relationship and a variation in the role of free media in combating corruption that depends on the level of democracy. Instead of an overall positive effect from free media, the results in Paper II suggest the need for a “big bang condition”; many things must be in place for the free media to have an impact.

Empirically, the results from Paper II have implications for – and pinpoint that there is a lot of work left to do in trying to find out – workable indicators of quality of government that fill the gap between theory and the equivalent empirical world. Moreover, the results in Paper II emphasize that the importance of media freedom in the processes of establishing, improving and maintaining quality of government needs to be more nuanced. However, this is a first attempt to examine the role of free media in creating and increasing countries’ quality of government. Therefore, we have to be cautious about drawing too strong conclusions from this study, as it has its limitations. More research on the role and consequences of free media needs to be conducted.

Paper III: Elaborating Media System Characteristics

The third study takes its starting point in experiences and insights gained through the implementation of the two previous studies (Paper I and Paper II), and not least previous research conducted within this area and which has formed the basis for the understanding of the relationship between media freedom and quality of government.

The importance of free media has been studied from several angles, and the findings from previous research (based on both cross-sectional and time-series data) suggest a robust positive relationship between media freedom and democracy (Pasek, 2006; Groshek, 2011), economic development (Djankov et al., 2003b; Norris, 2008), and lower levels of corruption (Ahrend, 2002; Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Chowdhury, 2004), especially in countries that have passed the “threshold” of implementing democratic rule. However, contrary to what could be expected from previous research, there are significant variations in outcomes among countries with equivalent levels of media freedom. Moreover, despite these coherent results from empirical studies, it is an intricate task to pinpoint what sorts of mechanisms within media freedom lead to lower levels of corruption. Despite the proven consistency of the three most prominent measures of media freedom (from Freedom House, IREX and Reporters without Borders), and that the measures hold high reliability (see e.g., Becker et al., 2007; Becker & Vlad, 2011), something seems to be missing.

In Paper III, the aim is to propose two possible processes which would augment understanding of the roles of free media in establishing and maintaining well-functioning governmental institutions, and why free media sometimes leads to higher quality of government and sometimes not. Firstly, the study suggests a need for complementary and more precise measures of countries' media systems in order to get beyond the perception of free media as a "quick fix". Secondly, the study suggests that quality of government needs to be specified further. Free media is essential for democracy and therefore there is a risk of spurious correlations. Moreover, a high level of democracy is not a guarantee of high quality of government. Instead, the concept of democracy captures the input side and the *access* to public authority and misses the way in which public authority is *exercised*.

Inspired by Hallin and Mancini (2004), Paper III tries to elucidate these dilemmas by using the concept of quality of government and the ability a regime has to perform its activities in an efficient, impartial way without corruption, and by incorporating other dimensions. It looks both at countries' media freedom and media accessibility which are controlled against economic and historical determinants of quality of government emphasized by La Porta et al. (1999): economic development, ethnolinguistic fractionalization, legal origin, and religious affiliation, and political empowerment based on the results from Paper III.

The results from Paper III suggest that the dimensions traditionally used for assessing countries' media freedom have a significant effect on the variations in quality of government across the European countries per se. However, this seems only to be the case for the subcategory that examines political pressures and controls. Instead, the characteristics that capture media accessibility are just as important in explaining the variation in the European countries' quality of government. The importance of both media freedom and media accessibility are so strong that two out of three historical factors completely lose their explanatory power in terms of direct effects. Therefore, the results of this study raise the question of how successful the indices commonly used to examine and to compare media freedom across countries actually are in capturing relevant aspects of media freedom and media systems and what conclusions can be drawn about the free media's role in promoting quality of government.

The explanatory power of the historical factors varies with a different sample of countries and regions. From this perspective, the sample of European countries has consequences for the generalizability of the results of this study. However, when it comes to elaborating countries' media system characteristics and

to utilize alternative and more precise measures of countries' media, the results contribute with important aspects of the importance of media system characteristics and their relevance for the variation in quality of government across countries. For example, this study suggests that citizens' access to online media information seems to be very important as a supplement for citizens in countries where mass circulation newspapers are absent. The exponential growth of the Internet has facilitated the creation of various types of digital media sources for information. Freedom is a basic condition and is essential for the media to play any role in promoting quality of government, but the results of Paper III additionally imply that accessibility and citizens' ability actually to obtain the information delivered by free media are at least equally important.

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Appendix 1 Research overview

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
Ades, Alberto and Rafael Di Tella. 1999. Rents, Competition and Corruption. <i>American Economic Review</i> , 89:982-93.	None	Economics	Market structure determine the the level of corruption in the economy. Other things equal, countries where firms enjoy higher rents tend to have higher corruption levels	Higher rents tend to lead to higher levels of corruption
Adserà, Alicia, Carles Boix, and Mark Payne. 2003. Are You Being Served? Political Accountability and Quality of Government. <i>The Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization</i> 19 (2):445-90.	Clear	Economics	Both the presence of democratic mechanisms of control and an increasingly informed electorate explains the level of corruption and the distribution of corrupt practices governmental ineffectiveness	The presence of a well-informed electorate in a democratic setting explains between one-half and two-thirds of the variance in the levels of governmental performance and corruption
Ahrend, Rudiger. 2002. Press Freedom, Human Capital, and Corruption. Working Paper 2002-11: London:DELTA/London School of Economics.	Clear	Economics	Increases in secondary and higher education have a negative impact on corruption in countries that lack press freedom. By contrast, there is no such negative effect from primary education. Countries with low levels of civil monitoring of those in public office, increases in education might not have the expected positive impact on corruption, as they might principally increase agents' rent seeking capacity.	No evidence that corruption negatively affects press freedom but however, strong empirical evidence that a lack of press freedom leads to higher levels of corruption
Becker, Lee B., Tudor Vlad and Nancy Nusser. 2007. An Evaluation of Press Freedom Indicators, <i>The International Communication Gazette</i> , 69(1): 5-28.	Clear	Media studies	Evaluation of press freedom indicators	No

APPENDIX

Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
Real per Capita GDP; Schooling; Lack of political rights; Share of imports in GDP; Fuel and mineral exports; Trade distance	No	Cross-section	No	BI Corruption Index (The Economist Intelligent Unit) and WCR Corruption Index (World Competitiveness Report)	1980 (BI) 52 countries and 1990 (WCR) 31 countries
Level of democracy (Polity); Free circulation of daily newspapers per person (World Bank)	Economic development (Log of per capita income); Cultural values (percentage of the population of each country that belongs to Catholicism; Islam; Protestantism and Ethnic fractionalization); Institutional framework (type of legal code, former communist countries, Constitutional framework); Economic structure (asset specificity, size of government, economic openness, proportion of pop. >65 years, living in cities) Population and geographical area	Cross-section and Cross-section Time-series	Newspaper circulation as a proxy for quality of informational controls	Corruption; Bureaucratic quality; Rule of law; Risk of expropriation (The ICRG)	100 countries 1980-95 and Cross-sectional 1997-98
Press freedom index (Freedom House); Primary and secondary education (World Development Indicators); per capita GDP (in PPP terms)	STEP I: Trade openness (the sum of exports and imports over GDP); Income levels (log of GDP per capita). STEP II: Press Freedom; Rule of law	Cross-section-Time-series	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House)	Corruption Perception Index (ICRG)	109-130 countries 1984-1995
No	No	Cross-section-Time-series	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House); Press Freedom Index (Reporters sans frontières); Press Freedom Index (IREX); Press Freedom Index (Committee to Protect Journalists)	No	Freedom House: 1981-2004; RSF: 2002-2003; IREX: 2001-2003; CPJ: 2003

Continued

Appendix 1 Research overview (continued)

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
Becker, Lee B. and Tudor Vlad. 2011. The Conceptualization and Operationalization of Country-Level Measures of Media Freedom. In Price, Monroe E. and Susan Abbott (eds.) Measures of Press Freedom and Media Contributions to Development – Evaluating the Evaluators. New York: Peder Lang Publishing.	Clear	Media studies	Evaluation of press freedom indicators	No
Besley, Timothy and Robin Burgess. 2001. "Political agency, government responsiveness and the role of the media." <i>European Economic Review</i> 45: 629-40	Clear	Economics	Media and government responsiveness	States that are more responsive tend also be those with high levels of newspaper circulation, electoral turnout, and literacy (richer states do not tend to be more responsive than poor states).
Besley, Timothy, and Andrea Prat. 2006. Handcuffs for the Grabbing Hand? Media Capture and Government Accountability, <i>American Economic Review</i> , 96(3):720-36.	Partial	Economics	The formal safeguards of media freedom enshrined in law are no guarantee of a media sector that is free from political interference.	Greater media independence, media commercialization and plurality influence whether or not the media are captured. Political transparency and efficient news production are valuable in societies with noncaptured media, but do not directly influence media capture.
Brunetti, Aymo and Beatrice Weder. 2003. A free press is bad news for corruption. <i>Journal of Public Economics</i> , 87:1801-24.	Clear	Economics	Press freedom and corruption	The direction of causation runs from higher press freedom to lower corruption.

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Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
No	No	Cross-section- Time-series	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House); Press Freedom Index (Reporters sans frontières); Press Freedom Index (IREX); Press Freedom Index (Committee to Protect Journalists)	No	Freedom House: 1980-2008 (154-195 countries); RSF: 2002-2008 (139-170 countries); IREX: 2001-2007 (19-75 countries); Gallup Confidence in Media: 2005-2006 (126 countries); WPO: 2008-2009 (20-23 countries)
Per capita income; Per capita newspaper circulation; Electoral turnout; Political entrenchment (number of seats in the state assembly won by the party of the current chief minister in the last election; Political turnover (dummy); Literacy rate	No	Cross-section; panel data	Per capita newspaper circulation	Responsiveness: food shortage (total food grain production measured in tonnes) and government response (public distribution of food grains measured in tonnes)	India (16 major states) Averaged over the period 1958-1992
Media concentration and Media ownership (Newspaper circulation)	No	Cross-section	Media concentration and Media ownership (Newspaper circulation)	Years in office of chief executive (Beck et al. 2001); Corruption (ICRG).	88 countries (1997; 2001; 2004)
External control on corruption (Press freedom)	Quality of bureaucracy; Rule of law; Education; Trade (export+import); Black market premium on foreign exchange; Ethnolinguistic fractionalization; Political rights; GDP per capita in PPP terms; Level of democracy; Fraction of Protestants; Fractions of European languages	Cross-section	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House), Press Independence (Humana, 1992; The World Human Rights Guide).	Corruption (ICRG), (World Bank, World Development Report), (IMD, World Competitiveness Report), (Transparency International)	125-128 countries. ICRG: average for 1994-1998; Press freedom: 1996-1999

Continued

Appendix 1 Research overview (continued)

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
<p>Camaj, Lindita. 2012. The Media's Role in Fighting Corruption: Media Effects on Government Accountability. <i>Journal of Press/Politics</i>, 18(1): 21-42.</p>	<p>Clear</p>	<p>Media studies</p>	<p>Media freedom and corruption</p>	<p>The direction of causation runs from higher media freedom to lower corruption.</p>
<p>Charron, Nicholas. 2009. The Impact of Socio-Political Integration and Press Freedom on Corruption. <i>Journal of Development Studies</i>, 45(9): 1472-93.</p>	<p>Partial</p>	<p>Political science</p>	<p>Political and Social openness, Press freedom and corruption</p>	<p>While political and social openness have a significant impact in combating corruption given a free press, the impact of such international are negligible in cases where press freedom are low.</p>
<p>Chowdhury, Shyamal K. 2004. The effect of democracy and press freedom on corruption: an empirical test. <i>Economic Letters</i>, 85:93-101.</p>	<p>Partial</p>	<p>Economics</p>	<p>Democracy, Press freedom and corruption (Press freedom -> Voters' state of knowledge -> Democracy -> Selection of political parties -> State of corruption Persson & Tabellini 2000).</p>	<p>Democracy and press freedom have a significant impact on corruption, and between the two components of democracy it is the voters' participation that seems more robust.</p>

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	Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
	Media Freedom Index 2004-2008 average scores, Freedom House.	Media freedom seems to have a stronger indirect effect on corruption when coupled with powerful institutions of "horizontal accountability". Moreover, the association between media freedom and corruption is strongest in countries with parliamentary systems this impact amplifies as the judiciary independence increases.	Cross-section	Media Freedom Index (Freedom House)	Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)	111 countries Corruption and Media Freedom: average for 2004-2008.
	SOCIAL OPENNESS: a) Data on personal contact: Outgoing telephone traffic, Transfers, International tourism, Foreign population, International letters. b) Data on information flows: Internet hosts, Internet users, Cable television, Trade in newspapers (percent of GDP), Radios. c) Data on cultural proximity: Number of McDonald's (per capita), Number of Ikea, Trade in books; POLITICAL OPENNESS: Embassies in country, Memberships in International Organizations (IOs), Participation in UN Security Council missions (KOF Index of Globalisation data)	Trade openness; Log GDP; Democracy; Ethnic fractionalization; Conflicts; Press Freedom (High, Middle, Low); Africa; Middle East; SE Asia; Latin America	Cross-section and Cross-section Time-series, panel	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House)	Two different measures of corruption for reducing the likelihood of potential omitted variable bias (ICRG and Transparency International)	ICRG (139 countries 1984-2003); TI CPI (150 countries 1996-2006); Freedom House (1994-2006)
	Voters' state of knowledge (Press freedom Index) and Democracy (Vanhanen's democratization index based on two dimensions: public contestation (political competition) and right to participate (voters' participation))	Openness Index and predicted trade share (Openness to international trade); Gross domestic per capita income and seven geographic regions (Income and regional characteristics); Percent protestant (religious affiliation); ethnolinguistic fractionalization. Population that speaks any major European language and distance from the equator (instrumental variable for democracy); ELF and common law system (instrumental variable for press freedom)	Cross-section; panel data	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House)	Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)	About 70-97 countries 1995-2002

Continued

Appendix 1 Research overview (continued)

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
<p>Coyne, Christopher J, and Peter T Leeson. 2004. Read All About It! Understanding the Role of Media in Economic Development. <i>KYKLOS. International Review for Social Sciences</i> 57 (1):21-44.</p>	Clear	Economics	Press freedom and economic development	<p>A free media is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for economic development. The existence of a free media does not guarantee economic development. Other factors as political stability, economic environment outside the media industry, education, literacy, ideology, interest in politics and the desire to punish politicians who fail, play a role aswell.</p>
<p>Djankov, Simeon, Caralee McLiesh, Tatiana Nenova, and Andrei Shleifer. 2003. Who Owns the Media? <i>Journal of Law and Economics</i> 46 (2):341-81.</p>	Clear	Economics	Media ownership and economic development	<p>Countries that are poorer, more autocratic, with lower levels of primary school enrollment, and higher levels of state intervention in the economy also have greater state ownership of the media. In addition, countries with greater state ownership of the media have less free press, fewer political rights for citizens, inferior governance, less developed capital markets, and inferior health outcomes. Finally, the negative association between government ownership and political and economic freedom is stronger for newspapers than for television.</p>
<p>Fell, Dafydd. 2005. Political and Media liberalization and Political Corruption in Taiwan. <i>China Quarterly</i>, 184:875-93.</p>	Clear	Political science	Democratic and media reforms and political corruption	<p>The opposition parties are able to exploit the newly liberalized media to place the latent issue of money politics (corruption) on the election agenda.</p>

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	Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
	Free and effective media	No	No data	No	Economic development	No
	Ownership in the media industry with focus on newspapers and television.	Gross national product per capita; State-owned enterprise index (SOE); autocracy; Primary school enrollment	Cross-section	Ownership in the media industry with focus on newspapers and television. Market share of the audience and provision of local news content. Five largest daily newspapers (share in the total circulation of all dailies) and five largest television stations (measured by share of viewing).	A) Media freedom (Journalists jailed (RSF); Media outlets closed; Journalists jailed (CPJ); Internet freedom); B) Political and economic freedom (Political rights; civil liberties; corruption; security of property; risk of confiscation; quality of regulation; number of listed firms); C) Health outcomes (life expectancy; infant mortality; nutrition; access to sanitation; health system responsiveness)	97 countries 1999
	Party emphasis of the political corruption issue (anti-corruption campaign in newspapers and television)	No	Taiwan	Media liberalization (press censorship; competition in the print media; privately run cable television; removal of restrictions on media advertising)	Political corruption (Transparency International) and Political corruption in Taiwan's martial law using Heidenheimer's categories of "White, Grey and Black corruption"	Taiwan, 1991-2004

Continued

Appendix 1 Research overview (continued)

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
<p>Francken Natalie, Bart Minten, and Johan M. Swinnen. 2005. Listen to the radio! Media and Corruption: Evidence from Madagascar. LICOS Centre for Transition Economics, Discussion Paper No. 115.</p>	Clear	Economics	Media and corruption	<p>More transparent funding mechanisms and access to mass media reduce capture. The impact of the media is conditional on the characteristics of the population: with high illiteracy in poor regions, the effectiveness of newspaper and poster campaigns is limited and radio programs are more important to reduce capture.</p>
<p>Freille, Sebastian, Emranul M Haque, and Richard Kneller. 2007. A Contribution to the Empirics of Press Freedom and Corruption. <i>European Journal of Political Economy</i>, 23(2): 838-62.</p>	Clear	Economics	Press freedom and corruption	<p>Changes (improvements) in certain categories of press freedom can have an important impact on corruption. Reducing political influence on the media may be an important step towards reducing corruption levels. Improving economic conditions for the press sector and contributing to a competitive environment would help to curb corruption.</p>
<p>Gunaratne, Shelton A. 2002. Freedom of the Press: A World System Perspective. <i>International Communication Gazette</i> 64 (4):343-69.</p>	Clear	Media studies	Press freedom and political participation	<p>There is no encouraging sign of significant voter turnout and there is little evidence that a free press is doing anything to increase voting or participate in government generally. Data do not show an association between democratic participation (voting) and press/communication-outlets freedom.</p>

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Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
District capital; District school; Radio; Radio (mean); Literacy; Education level of the district facility director; If the district facility director is born in the district; if the district is officially declared as a red or highly unsafe district; the size of the public primary school/size of all primary schools (private and public); if the commune suffered from two or more droughts during the last four years; if the district facility director is new in his/her position.	No	Regional survey data	The number of local radio stations which can be received in the commune; the average number of regional radio stations in the district.	Capture of cash funds: cash funds received; Intended cash funds from the district facility level; Leakage of in-kind contributions.	1385 communes in 2001
Press freedom index (Freedom House)	First group: Economic development; Index of political rights; persistence of democracy (dummy). Second group: Sum of imports and exports divided by GDP and Share of imports of goods and services in GDP (openness to foreign competition); Proportion of fuel and mineral exports in merchandise exports (rents and quasi-rents); Government intervention; Military expenditure; electoral system; presidential executive system (dummy); Parliamentary system (dummy); Former British, French, Spanish (dummies); Ever a colony (dummy); Economic freedom; Origin of legal system (dummies for eng; soc; fre; ger; sca); Dominant religion (dummies for protestant and catholicism); Ethno-linguistic fractionalization; Sub-national governments spending of total.	Cross-section-Time-series	Press Freedom Index and the three sub-categories of press freedom (Freedom House)	Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)	51 countries 1995-2004
Press Freedom Index (Freedom House)	No	Cross-section-Time-series	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House)	Political participation (Voter turnout at national elections); Human development index	1994-2000, 186-192 countries

Appendix 1 Research overview (continued)

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
Huang, Haifeng. 2008. Media Freedom, Governance, and Regime Stability in Authoritarian State, paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA, 2008.	Clear	Political science	Media freedom/liberalization and corruption	Media freedom is costly for authoritarian rulers because it makes corruption more difficult to conceal, and it enables disgruntled citizens to coordinate and challenge the regime. However, a free media can also bring benefits to a ruler by informing citizens whether their poor social and economic situations are due to low government competence or exogenous factors.
La Porta, Rafael, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, Andrei Shleifer and Robert Vishny. 1999. The Quality of Government. Journal of Law, Economics and Organization, 15(1): 399-457.	None	Economics	Histories of individual countries determines government performance (quality of government)	Countries that are poor, close to the equator, ethnolinguistically heterogenous, use French or socialist laws, or have high proportions of Catholics or Muslims exhibit inferior government performance.
Lederman, Daniel, Norman V. Loayza, and Rodrigo R. Soares. 2005. Accountability and Corruption: Political Institutions Matter. Economics & Politics, 17(1): 1-35.	Partial	Economics	Political institutions and corruption	Political institutions determining the prevalence of corruption: democracies, parliamentary systems, political stability, and freedom of the press are all associated with lower corruption.

APPENDIX

	Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
	Free media	No	No data	No	Corruption and government legitimacy	No data
	Ethnolinguistic fractionalization; Socialist legal origin; French legal origin; German legal origin; Scandinavian legal origin; Catholic, Muslim; Other religions; Latitude; Log of GDP per capita	No	Cross-section-Time-series	No	Interference with the private sector: Property rights index; Business regulation index; Top marginal tax rate in 1994, Efficiency: Corruption; Bureaucratic delays; Tax compliance; Avg. government wages/ GNP per capita, Output of public goods: Log of infant mortality; Log of school attainment; Litteracy rate; Infrastructure quality index, Size of public sector: Transfers and subsidies of GDP; Government consumptions of GDP; SOEs in economy index; Public sector employments/total population, Political freedom: Democracy index; Political right index	From 47 to 152 countries
	Political variables: Democracy; presidential democracy; reelection; democratic stability; closed lists; State government; executive control; Freedom of the press	1) Cultural: region (dummies), landlocked country (dummy), longitude and latitude position, size of the county, tropical area (dummy), British legal tradition (dummy), ethno-linguistic fractionalization. 2) Policy: Relative government wages, Economic openness, size of the government, expenditures decentralization. 3) Development: Income, education.	Cross-section; panel data	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House)	Corruption Perception Index (ICRG) (alternative measures of corruption from Standard & Poor's DRI/McGraw-Hill; Gallup International; Global Competitiveness Survey I & II; World Development Report).	145 countries, 1984-1999

Appendix 1 Research overview (continued)

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
Lessmann, Christian, and Gunther Markwardt. 2010. One Size Fits All? Decentralization, Corruption, and the Monitoring of Bureaucrats. <i>World Development</i> , 38(4): 631-46.	Partial	Economics	Decentralization and corruption	The benefits of decentralization (decentralization as a feasible instrument for use in keeping corruption at bay) only occur if there is a supervisory body such as a free press: Decentralization counteracts corruption in countries with high degrees of freedom of the press, whereas countries without effective monitoring suffer from decentralization.
Lindstedt, Catharina and Daniel Naurin. 2010. Transparency is not Enough: Making Transparency Effective in Reducing Corruption. <i>International Political Science Review</i> , 31(4): 301-22.	Partial	Political science	Accountability and corruption	Just making information available will not prevent corruption if education, media circulation and free and fair elections (conditions for publicity and accountability) are weak
Mauro, Paolo. 1995. Corruption and Growth. <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> , 10:681-712.	None	Economics	Corruption and economic growth	Corruption lower investment, thereby lowering economic growth

APPENDIX

	Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
	Decentralization "de jure": whether a federal constitution exists (dummy), the number of vertical government tiers; Decentralization "de facto": an abbreviation for the degree of expenditure decentralization, degree of revenue decentralization, share of sub-national government employment to total)	Log of population size; log of GDP per capita; Sum of exports and imports as a share of GDP (degree of openness); the diversity index of ethnic fractionalization; Share of government expenditures in GDP (government size)	Cross-section	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House); Number of radios per 1,000 people; number of newspapers per 1,000 people	Corruption Perception Index (ICRG); Kaufman corruption index (the World Bank); Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)	51-64 countries, Independent variables 1980-95 and corruption measures 1996-2000
	1) Agent controlled transparency: Economic and Institutional Transparency; 2) Non-agent controlled transparency: Political transparency; Press Freedom Index (Freedom House) and Press Freedom Index (Reporters without Borders); 3) Conditions for publicity: Expected years of schooling; Combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrolment ratio and adult literacy rate; Newspaper circulation; Radio receivers; 4) Conditions for accountability: Electoral Democracy Polity (political competition; public participation; constraints on the executive); Electoral Democracy Freedom House (the right of opposition parties to take part; the fairness of the electoral process; the real power attached to elected institutions.	Rule of law (legal impartiality and popular observance of the law); GDP/Capita (PPP); Former British colony; Economic openness (Imports+exports/GDP); Democracy over time (mean value of the product of Freedom House's and Polity's electoral democracy indexes, 1972-2004); Energy imports (Import share of total energy use).	Cross-section	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House); Press Freedom Index (RSF); Newspaper circulation and Radio receivers (World Bank)	Perceived level of corruption (World Bank Governance Indicators Dataset); Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International); Corruption Perception Index (ICRG)	81-110 countries, 2000-2004
	Institutional efficiency: Political change (institutional); Political stability (social); Probability of Opposition Group Takeover; Stability of Labor; Relationship with neighboring countries; Terrorism; Legal System Judiciary; Bureaucracy and Red Tape; Corruption.	Ethnolinguistic fractionalization (instrument variable); Primary education; Secondary education; Population growth; Government expenditure/GDP; Revolutions and coups; Assassinations	Cross-section	No	Per capita GDP growth; Investment/GDP; Per capita GDP; purchasing-power parity value for the investment deflator (PPI60); deviation from the sample mean of PPI60 (PPI60DEV)	57 countries, 1971-79 and 68 countries, 1980-83

Appendix 1 Research overview (continued)

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
Macdonell, Rod, and Milica Pesic. 2006. The Role of the Media in Curbing Corruption. In <i>The Role of Parliament in Curbing Corruption</i> , ed. R. Stephenhurst, N. Johnston and R. Pelizzo. Washington DC: The World Bank.	Clear	Media studies	Press freedom and corruption	1) Exposing corrupt officials; 2) Prompting investigations by authorities; 3) Exposing commercial wrongdoing; 4) Reinforcing the work of anti-corruption offices; 5) Providing a check on anti-corruption offices; 6) Promoting accountability at the polls; 7) Pressuring for change to laws and regulations; 8) Avoiding adverse publicity
Montinola, Gabriella, and Robert W. Jackman. 2002. Sources of corruption: a cross-country study? <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> 32:147–70	None	Political science	Political competition and corruption	Political competition affects level of corruption, but this effect is nonlinear. Corruption is typically lower in dictatorships than in countries that have partially democratized. But once past a threshold, democratic practices inhibit corruption. There are mixed results with respect to the relationship of economic competition and corruption: government size does not systematically affect corruption, but membership of the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC) does. Corruption is also more pervasive in low-income countries which tend to underpay public sector employees.
Norris, Pippa. 2008. The role of the free press in promoting democratization, good governance, and human development. In Mark Harvey (ed.) <i>Media Matters. Perspectives on Advancing Governance & Development</i> . Internews Europe/Global Forum for Media Development. pp. 66-75.	Clear	Political science	Press freedom, economic development and democratization	A free press matter for a range of indicators of good governance, and it is integral to the process of democratization and for strengthen both political and human development

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Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
Media	No	No data	No	Corruption	No data
Political democracy: Freedom of group opposition; Political rights (Gastil); Effectiveness of the legislative body. Government intervention in the economy (share of government in total consumption and OPEC member (dummy)); Public sector size (government share of GDP); Level of economic development (indirect measure for level of public-sector wages) (Logarithm of real GDP per capita)	No	Cross- section	No	Corruption (Mauro); Legal system and judiciary; Bureaucracy and red tape; Corruption. Corruption perception index (TI)	66 countries 1980-83 and 51 countries 1988-92
Press Freedom Index (Freedom House); Press Freedom Index (RSF)	Economic development: logged per capita GDP in PPP (World Bank); level of development (the Human Development Index). Ex-British colony; Middle East; Ethnic fractionalization; Population size	Cross- section	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House); Press Freedom Index (RSF)	Democracy: Constitutional democracy (Polity IV); Participatory democracy (Vanhanen); Contested democracy (Przeworski). Good Governance: Political stability; Rule of law; government efficiency; regulatory quality; levels of corruption.	142-181 countries

Continued

Appendix 1 Research overview (continued)

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
Pasek, Josh. 2006. Fueling or following democracy? Analyzing the role of media liberalization in democratic transition. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. Philadelphia.	Clear	Political science	Media liberalization and democratization	There is a positive, contemporaneous relationship between media liberalization and democratization that suggests a bidirectional interaction between the two factors or that both are frequently the product of some external and untested factors. Expectations that democracy will result from increases in media freedom, or that media freedom will result from democratization seem misplaced (neither variable offers additional predictive validity beyond the scope of a single year).
Pellegrini, Lorenzo and Reyer Gerlagh. 2008. Causes of corruption: a survey of cross-country analyses and extended results. <i>Economics of Governance</i> , 9(3): 245-63.	Partial	Economics	Historical, cultural determinants and corruption	A medium-long exposure to uninterrupted democracy is associated with lower corruption levels, while political instability tends to raise corruption. The results also suggests that the diffusion of newspapers helps to lower corruption levels
Persson, Torsten, Guido Tabellini, and Francesco Trebbi. 2003. Electoral rules and corruption. <i>Journal of the European Economic Association</i> 1(4): 958–89.	None	Political science/ Economics	Electoral rules and corruption	Larger voting districts and thus lower barriers to entry, are associated with less corruption, whereas larger shares of candidates elected from party lists, and thus less individual accountability, are associated with more corruption.

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	Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House)	Annual GDP growth; GDP per capita; Infrastructure (electric power consumption per capita); Foreign aid per capita; Primary school enrollment; Media availability (Internet use per capita and mobile phone subscribers per capita); Africa; Thailand	Cross-section-Time-series	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House)	Changes in levels of democracy and autocracy (Polity IV).	190 countries, 1979-2004
	Protestants; Ethnolinguistic fractionalization; Fuels and minerals; Imports; Income in GDP per capita; Decentralization; Contemporary democracy; Government intervention; Instability; Government wage	latitude (instrumental variable)	Cross-section	Newspaper circulation	Kaufman corruption index (the World Bank); Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)	42-106 countries
	Age of democracy; Score of democracy; Institutionalized autocracy; Institutionalized democracy; Year of birth of the democracy; Federalism (dummy); Civil liberties and political rights (Gastil); Closed party lists; districts in the elections to the lower house; Number of lower-house legislators elected through a party list system; Number of seats in lower or single house; District magnitude; Electoral formula; District magnitude; Ballot structure	Ethnolinguistic fractionalization; Roman Catholic (percentage of population); Protestant (percentage of population); Colony of Spain; Years of independence; Religious tradition (dummy); Level of education; Regional country (dummy: Latin American/Caribbean); Legal system origin; Openness to trade; Log of the total population; Log of the per capita real GDP; OECD member countries; Africa; East Asia	Cross-section and Cross-section Time-series	No media measure	Corruption perception index (TI); Government effectiveness; Fair and predictable rules form the basis for economic and social interactions	80 countries in 1990s

Continued

Appendix 1 Research overview (continued)

Study	Media focus	Area of research	The relationship	Direction of the two-variable relationship
<p>Stapenhurst, Rick. 2000. <i>The Media's Role in Curbing Corruption</i>. Washington DC: World Bank Institute.</p>	<p>Clear</p>	<p>Media studies</p>	<p>Press freedom and corruption</p>	<p>1) Investigating and exposing corrupt officials and office-holders; 2) Prompting investigations by official bodies; 3) Strengthening anti-corruption bodies by exposing their flaws; 4) Helping to shape public opinion hostile to "sleaze" in government; 5) Pressure for changes to laws and regulations that create a climate favorable to corruption; 6) Anticipation of adverse media publicity prompting a preemptive response</p>
<p>Suphachalasai, Suphachol. 2005. <i>Bureaucratic Corruption and Mass Media</i>. University of Cambridge, Department of Land Economics, Environmental Economy and Policy Research. Discussion Paper Series, 2005(5):1-32.</p>	<p>Clear</p>	<p>Economics</p>	<p>Media competition and bureaucratic corruption</p>	<p>Competition and freedom in media sector have an influence on bureaucratic structure and consequently on equilibrium corruption. Different degrees of media freedom and competition affect production and employment decisions of media firms, and this in turn affects the effectiveness of media in monitoring corruption. Media competition appears to be a more important tool to combat corruption than press freedom.</p>

APPENDIX

	Independent variables	Is the relationship specified? (control variables; components; interaction)	Type of data	Media measure	Dependent variable	Number of years and countries
	Media(unspecified)	No	No data	No	Corruption	No data
	Media competition; Press freedom; Bureaucratic structures (size of bureaucracy, level of public wages)	Industrial country (membership of OECD); legal origin (common or civil law system); ethnolinguistic fractionalization (cultural diversity: prob. that two random persons within a society would come from different linguistic backgrounds); Number of procedures (level of penalty or stringency or regulation governments impose on private sector); Female education; population; Bureaucratic delays; regulatory quality; Lack of political right and civil liberty.	Cross-section	Press Freedom Index (Freedom House); Media competition (Kruckeberg and Tsetsura 2003/ Walden's World of Information Business Intellegence Reports); Media ownership (Djankov et al. 2001)	Index for corruption (corruption perception index (Kaufman et al. 2003), corruption perception index (Transparency International)).	2000

Free media have traditionally been seen as vital to democratization and economic development. International actors, such as UN, the World Bank, the EU, Transparency International, the OECD and the research field in its entirety regard free media as one of the main means of curbing corruption. Numerous policy proposals and recommendations stress the importance of media freedom. Nevertheless, our knowledge of how effectively media actually perform to combat corruption is still limited – albeit growing.

What's the Use of a Free Media? presents three independent empirical studies that contribute to an understanding of this role, analyzing the media's importance in curbing corruption and in promoting and generating high quality political institutions.

The research design and empirical approach broaden the analytical scope of earlier studies and stressing the need to look beyond simple models of direct effects of media freedom. The dissertation problematizes and elaborates the specifications of both media freedom and quality of government, thereby helping to bridge the gap between theory and the equivalent empirical world.



Mathias A. Färdigh is a researcher and lecturer at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) and the Quality of Government (QoG) Institute at the Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg. *What's the Use of a Free Media?* is his doctoral dissertation.