SENATE RESOLUTION #3084

TITLE:	**ASUW Opposition to the Wyoming State Legislature JAC's Recommendation to Defund Wyoming Public Media**
DATE INTRODUCED:	**01/30/2026**
AUTHOR:	**Vice President McGuire, Chief of Staff Hargett**
SPONSORS:	**Senators Cooper, Smith, Wellikson; Steering; Chief of Legislative Affairs Heffley; Safety, Wellness, and Advocacy Committee; Student At-Large Muzquiz, Alday, Mejia, Ruiz, Gonzalez, Zubia, Nava-Castillo, Hernandez Jimenez, Flores Cabrera, McAdams, Derksen, Parrill, Novotny, Mora, Reyes, Lawler, Garcia, Sanchez, Garcia, Delgadillo, Sosa, Lopez, Chacon, Tzompa, Ottoes, Lopez; Wyoming Competitive Speech Team, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx de Aztlán of UWYO, Graduate Student Council**

1. WHEREAS, the purpose of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming
2. (ASUW) is to serve our fellow students in the best manner possible; and,
3. WHEREAS, ASUW has previously expressed strong support for Freedom of
4. Expression in SB 2912 as found in Addendum A, and sees public media as a necessary
5. avenue through which this occurs; and,
6. WHEREAS, Wyoming Public Media is integral in connecting Wyoming community
7. members and University of Wyoming (UW) students to informative news and
8. programming; and,
9. WHEREAS, Wyoming Public Media has been the primary public news source in
10. Wyoming for nearly 60 years; and,
11. WHEREAS, Research has consistently found that Public Media improves voter turnout,
12. community literacy in local issues, and democratic integrity, as found in Addendums
13. B, C, D, and E; and,

WHEREAS, according to their own data, Wyoming Public Radio has between 50,000 and 70,000 weekly listeners, making up a significant portion of the state population; and,

WHEREAS, much of Wyoming is considered a news desert, with no daily statewide paper and diminishing local coverage; and,

WHEREAS, recent events, such as the temporary closure of eight newspapers, have demonstrated the impact that cuts to news media can have in Wyoming, even if temporary; and,

WHEREAS, other recent events such as reductions in printing by the Casper Star Tribune, have already exacerbated Wyomingites' struggles to access credible, local news; and,

WHEREAS, the defunding of Wyoming Public Media would significantly further these issues through a loss of Wyoming's only major statewide news broadcaster; and,

WHEREAS, National Public Radio and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting are separate entities from Wyoming Public Radio, with Wyoming Public Media only previously receiving 10% of their funding from these entities; and

WHEREAS, the proposed cuts would reduce Wyoming Public Media's budget by a further 17%; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed cuts would result in the loss of funding for eight employees salaries (Addendum F), dramatically reducing the staff and capacity of Wyoming Public Media; and,

WHEREAS, Wyoming Public Media operates under a Non-Commercial Education License (Addendum F) and therefore cannot offset state funding losses through advertising; and,

37. WHEREAS, given the lack of viable alternative funding sources, the proposed cuts
38. would likely result in the significant downsizing of or closure of Wyoming Public
39. Media.
40. THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Associated Students of the University of
41. Wyoming (ASUW) Student Government stands in opposition to the Joint Appropriation
42. Committee's (JAC) recommendation to cut all State funding from Wyoming Public
43. Media; and,
44. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that ASUW opposes any and all potential cuts to
45. Wyoming Public Media, even should a less significant cut be proposed; and,
46. THEREFORE, be it resolved that upon passage of this legislation, it be circulated to the
47. UW Vice President of Government and Community Affairs Mike Smith, UW President
48. Seidel, UW Board of Trustees, The Office of Governor Mark Gordon, Wyoming Public
49. Media, and the Wyoming State Legislature.

Referred to: Committee of the Whole

Date of Passage: 2/3/26 **Signed:** Aidan McGuire

(ASUW Chairperson)

"Being enacted on 2/3/26**, I do hereby sign my name hereto and approve this Senate action."** Payla Medina

ASUW President

Addendum A

https://www.uwyo.edu/asuw/about-us/legislative-branch/senate/legislation/2023-2024-legislation/sb-2912-freedom-of-expression-final.pdf

Passed 11-10-1

SENATE RESOLUTION #2912

TITLE:	Freedom of Expression
DATE INTRODUCED:	10/23/24
AUTHOR:	Senator Saint
SPONSORS:	Senators Bogani, Brown, Meester, Rzeszut, Relaford, Gomelsky, President Smith, Vice President Petri, First-Year Senators Fink and Harper, Young Americans for Liberty at University of Wyoming, Turning Point USA at University of Wyoming, Students for Life, National Student Speech and Language Association, Wyoming Spanish Club

1. WHEREAS, the purpose of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming
2. (ASUW) is to serve our fellow students in the best manner possible; and,
3. WHEREAS, freedom of expression has been a paramount, bedrock principle in
4. America and more specifically, Wyoming; and,
5. WHEREAS, it is the purpose of a university to provide a neutral forum for all
6. ideas to be freely expressed on campus without hinderance in pursuit of truth,
7. education, and knowledge; and,
8. WHEREAS, it is the duty of ASUW as the student government of the
9. University of Wyoming to assist in the pursuit of said values by protecting the
10. voices of all students regardless of background; and,
11. WHEREAS, the University of Wyoming has recently committed itself to upholding
12. the principles of freedom of expression which is stated in Addendum B.
13. THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Associated Students of the University of
14. Wyoming (ASUW) Student Government that the ASUW advocates for the free
15. expression of all students; and,

16. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that upon passage a copy be sent to the

17. Dean of Students office, the ASUW President's office, the ASUW Vice President's

18. office, the university president's office, Residence Life, the office of Student Affairs,

19. the Student Orgs office, the Branding Iron, the Board of Trustees, the DEI office, and

20. electronically circulated among the student body; and,

21. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that this resolution stands immediately upon

22. passage.

Referred to: **Steering, Outreach, Programming, and Elections , Advocacy, Diversity, and Policy**

Date of Passage: October 31st, 2023 **Signed:** Kameron Mufleh

(ASUW Chairperson)

"Being enacted on October 31st, 2023 **, I do hereby sign my name hereto and approve this Senate action."** SABER SMITH

ASUW President

Addendum B

https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/asc-public-media-can-improve-our-flawed-democracy#:~:text=Building%20on%20this%2C%20a%20new,at%20Annenberg%20School%20for%20Communication.

ARTS, HUMANITIES, & SOCIAL SCIENCES | MARCH 18, 2022

Public media can improve our 'flawed' democracy

A new study finds that countries with well-funded public media have healthier democracies, and explains why investment in U.S. public media is an investment in the future of journalism and democracy alike.

Thousands of newspapers across the U.S. have shuttered or downsized in recent years, leaving many communities without—or with highly diminished—local news outlets. The collapse of local journalism and rise of "news deserts," along with the spread of disinformation and misinformation, all point to a news industry in crisis.

Image: Fringer Cat via Unsplash

As commercial news continues experiencing structural and financial issues, media scholar Victor Pickard, the C. Edwin Baker Professor of Media Policy and Political Economy and Co-Director of the Media, Inequality & Change Center at the Annenberg School for Communication, advocates for a promising alternative: increased government investment in nonprofit and public media.

Scholarship by Pickard and others finds that public media has myriad social benefits, including more diverse news coverage, increased public knowledge about politics and public affairs, and lower levels of extremist views. Building on this, a new study co-authored by Pickard and Timothy Neff, reveals that countries with independent and well-funded public broadcasting systems also consistently have stronger democracies.

The study, "Funding Democracy: Public Media and Democratic Health in 33 Countries", shows that while other democracies have recognized the value of public media systems, America is a major outlier. Despite having the world's largest gross domestic product, America spends a comparatively miniscule fraction—less than half of a percent—on public media funding.

"According to *The Economist's Democracy Index*, the U.S. is now considered to be a 'flawed democracy.' In terms of its public media funding, it is almost literally off the chart for how little it allocates towards its public media compared to other democracies around the planet," says Pickard.

"While our research specifically shows the correlation between strong public media systems and strong democracies, there is a growing body of research that suggests substantial social benefits from strong public media systems, including well-informed political cultures, high levels of support for democratic processes, and increased levels of civic engagement."

Read more at Annenberg School for Communication.

Addendum C

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0167268124004840?ref=pdf_download&fr=RR-2&rr=9c42e79bbc13e671

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Research paper

Investigative journalism: Market failures and government intervention through public broadcasters☆

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Keywords:
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ABSTRACT

Investigative journalism plays a vital role in promoting democratic accountability and transparency. This paper surveys nearly 5,000 participants from the U.S., the U.K., and Norway, demonstrating that investigative journalism functions as a public good prone to underprovision. I explore how governments can address this potential market failure through the intervention of public broadcasters. A majority of participants are willing to pay higher taxes to support increased journalism through public broadcasters. However, in countries with well-established public broadcasters, subsidies to private media are preferred, largely due to perceived political non-neutrality. Public broadcasters may garner broader support by focusing their journalism on non-political contexts. A Coasian approach proves ineffective, as the willingness to pay rises with the broader sharing of output.

1. Introduction

A well-functioning media sector is crucial for the health of democratic societies, as extensive evidence demonstrates the importance of a free and critical press in ensuring political accountability (Snyder and Strömberg, 2010; Gentzkow et al., 2011; Eisensee and Strömberg, 2007; Finan and Ferraz, 2008; Enikolopov et al., 2011; Banerjee et al., 2011; Knight and Tribin, 2022). Investigative journalism can uncover accounting and corporate fraud, and hold private businesses, bureaucracies, and powerful societal forces accountable (Dyck et al., 2010; Dyck and Zingales, 2002; Miller, 2006). In recent decades, global newspaper advertising revenues have significantly declined, potentially reducing investment in journalist-intensive content (Angelucci and Cagé, 2019; Cagé, 2016). From 2008 to 2020, the U.S. newsroom industry lost over 30,000 jobs (Walker, 2021), compromising newspapers' ability to serve as government watchdogs (Casey, 2019). Moreover, the unprofitability of investigative journalism has prompted calls from global actors for increased public support to address this potential market failure (UNESCO, 2022; OECD, 2023). Stiglitz (2021) claims that "creating an effective media is one of the most important challenges of the time".

This paper explores strategies to enhance media effectiveness by addressing potential market failures in investigative journalism. I conduct a survey (Experiment 1) with over 2000 respondents in the U.S. and the U.K., finding that respondents are willing to pay an average of $3.7 to finance three days of investigative journalism.[1] This finding suggests that the societal value of a marginal increase in investigative journalism—measured by the total willingness to pay (WTP) of individuals—exceeds both the costs of production and the revenue private media firms can generate, leading to its underprovision.

A notable finding is the presence of positive spillover effects, where the demand for investigative journalism increases as others consume it, potentially heightening the risk of market underprovision. One group was informed that the journalist's potential

☆ IRB approval was obtained from the NHH. Funding by the Norwegian Research Council (KULMEDIA) is greatly acknowledged.

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[1] While this figure provides a useful benchmark for understanding the societal value of investigative journalism, it should also be interpreted with caution given the abstract nature of the good being valued.

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findings would be disseminated as widely as possible, resulting in an average WTP of $4.5, significantly higher ($p = 0.046$) than the control group, which received no additional information. Additionally, a third group was explicitly informed that they would receive exclusive access to the journalist's findings, resulting in a WTP of $3.4, which is lower than that of the control group. However, because the individual WTP for three days of journalism is substantially lower than the marginal cost across all treatments, the outcome remains susceptible to free-riding and underprovision.

A key contribution of this paper is to investigate how, and under what circumstances, this market failure can be addressed by government intervention through a public broadcaster. In the second stage of the survey, I elicit respondents' demand for public investigative journalism. The study is further supplemented by an additional survey (Experiment 2) of a representative sample of 2800 respondents from Norway, a particularly relevant country in this context for several reasons. First, Norway's dominant public broadcaster focuses on broader topics, while a significant portion of investigative journalism occurs in private newspapers. This means that respondents are familiar with the public broadcaster, yet perceive a potential for it to play a larger role in investigative journalism.[2] Second, Norway's smaller population makes it easier to invoke consequentiality, which may be necessary for truthful WTP elicitation, by informing respondents that their answers could influence public broadcasters and policymakers regarding tax increases to fund more public investigative journalism (Vossler et al., 2012; Carson and Groves, 2007).

Overall, there is significant demand for more investigative journalism from public broadcasters, though the findings are nuanced. First, the demand for investigative journalism from public broadcasters is higher in the U.S. than in the U.K. and Norway. When given the choice between the government supporting a public broadcaster or providing subsidies to private media firms, 70% of U.S. respondents preferred public broadcasters, compared to only 35% in the U.K. and 40% in Norway. 54% of Norwegian survey respondents expressed a willingness to pay an additional $15 in taxes to fund more investigative journalism from the public broadcaster. Furthermore, 55% of U.S. respondents, but only 35% of U.K. respondents, were willing to increase their taxes to support more investigative journalism from the public broadcaster. Respondents with left-wing political preferences are significantly more likely to prefer investigative journalism provided by the public broadcaster.

A key mechanism for the relatively large opposition to public investigative journalism in the two countries with a prominent public broadcaster is concern about the broadcaster's political neutrality. Before eliciting their demand for public investigative journalism, some random respondents, referred to as the *Neutrality* treatment group, received an information text indicating that we aimed to ensure the public broadcaster's journalism would be politically neutral by focusing investigations on the business sector and bureaucracy, rather than political parties. Receiving this information increased the likelihood of respondents' willingness to pay additional taxes in Norway by 6 percentage points ($p = 0.033$), corresponding to an 11% increase relative to the control group. Receiving this information also increased the probability of preferring support for the public broadcaster over equally large subsidies to private media firms by 5 percentage points ($p = 0.075$). Consequently, the total demand for investigative journalism from the public broadcaster (measured as the sum of the two demand questions) is higher after receiving this information ($p = 0.018$). Receiving the *Neutrality* treatment makes the U.K. respondents 7 percentage points more willing to pay more in taxes ($p = 0.069$), 7 percentage points more likely to prefer public over private subsidies ($p = 0.057$), and hence also leads to a higher total demand for investigative journalism ($p = 0.016$). Interestingly, this treatment had no significant impact on the willingness of U.S. respondents to support more publicly funded investigative journalism, consistent with the concern that a large public broadcaster may compromise perceived neutrality among certain segments of the population.

Furthermore, several other potential mechanisms appear less relevant in understanding opposition to investigative journalism from the public broadcaster. A common argument against public broadcasters is their tendency to be centered around the capital city (Reuters, 2021; Pickard-Whitehead, 2022), but this paper finds no evidence suggesting that this is a major reason why many people are unwilling to support more public investigative journalism. Some respondents received information indicating that investigative journalism would target the local level and be distributed throughout the country, but this information did not impact demand. Public broadcasters may be exploited by leading politicians (Durante and Knight, 2012), but I find no evidence indicating that this is why many Norwegians are unwilling to pay for more public investigative journalism. In the Norwegian survey, a fourth treatment informed respondents that efforts would be made to ensure the broadcaster's independence from direct political involvement, but this treatment did not meaningfully impact demand.

An interesting form of opposition to investigative journalism arises from individuals who are willing to personally finance three days of journalism but are unwilling for *everyone* to contribute to government funding of journalism through the public broadcaster. 11% of Norwegian respondents and 14% of U.K. respondents, but only 4% of U.S. respondents, display such preferences. A key mechanism driving these preferences appears to be the perception that public investigative journalism is politically non-neutral, as respondents in the *Neutral* treatment group are nearly 30 percent less likely to display such preferences in both Norway and the U.K.

Overall, these findings suggest that while governments may implement investigative journalism that increases welfare for the majority, concerns about the political neutrality of public broadcasters hinder the ability to gain widespread support, particularly from those with opposing political views. A key takeaway for other countries considering increasing funding for their public broadcasters to the levels of the U.K. and Norway is that they may increase support by restricting journalism to politically neutral settings. However, this finding suggests a trade-off between achieving broad support (arguably necessary to classify investigative journalism as a public good) and maintaining political journalism (an important aspect of investigative journalism).

[2] Norway's public broadcaster receives approximately $700 million annually in government subsidies, a sum comparable to the combined user revenues of the country's 241 newspapers. Between 1991 and 2022, the public broadcaster won 19% of the national investigative journalism awards (SKUP) (Raabe, 2023).

Finally, this paper suggests that a market-based, or Coasian, solution to the underprovision of investigative journalism is unlikely to be effective. This conclusion is supported by the treatment in the survey where some participants were given exclusive, temporary access to investigative journalism outputs, which did not significantly increase their WTP compared to a control group. This suggests that strengthening property rights to investigative journalism findings does not adequately address the market failure.

This paper advances the public goods literature by examining the classification of investigative journalism as a public good. A public good, defined as non-rival and non-excludable, can be used by others at no additional cost, making it impossible to exclude anyone once produced (Samuelson, 1954). While journalism, in general, might not qualify as a public good due to paywalls, investigative journalism's case is more complex, since the product is not only accessing the news, but also creating the information (Walters, 2023; Pino, 2023). The experimental methodology in this paper constructs a scenario where information from investigative journalism becomes temporarily excludable. This setup enables testing whether access to investigative journalism is a rival or non-rival good. I demonstrate that access to investigative journalism is non-rivalrous, suggesting it qualifies as a public good due to the difficulty of excluding individuals from its information over time. Additionally, this paper contributes to the literature on network effects within media consumption. Bursztyn et al. (2023a) show that there are negative spillover effects from social media, where users of Instagram and TikTok are worse off than they would have been if the platforms did not exist.[3] I provide some evidence of a contrary effect in the context of investigative journalism.

I also contribute to a literature analyzing investigative journalism (Louis-Sidois and Mougin, 2023; Hamilton, 2016; Schiffrin, 2014; Shoemaker et al., 2009) and public broadcasting more specifically (Coase, 1950; Hargreaves Heap, 2005; Armstrong, 2005; Armstrong and Weeds, 2007). While much of this literature analyzes how the government can solve the market failures analyzed above (the public interest theory), Djankov et al. (2003) and Gehlbach and Sonin (2014) argue that government ownership also undermines political freedom by distorting information (public choice theory), which is supported by Durante and Knight (2012) finding a change in the bias of the Italian public broadcaster when Berlusconi was elected. My contribution to this literature is to provide some support to both theories. Despite support for public investigative journalism, a majority in both the U.K. and Norway prefers that the government subsidizes private firms rather than conducting the journalism through the public broadcaster, although I find that this relates more to concerns about the public broadcaster itself being non-neutral than concerns for political involvement.

I also contribute to a literature within journalism and communication studies analyzing public financing of media firms (Neff and Pickard, 2021; Murschetz, 2020; Sehl et al., 2020; Allern and Pollack, 2019; Latos et al., 2023), where Pickard (2019) argues for more government money to support journalism.

Furthermore, this paper enriches the broader literature that investigates media demand Gentzkow and Shapiro (2006), Mullainathan and Shleifer (2005), Ganguly and Tasoff (2017), Bursztyn et al. (2023b), Faia et al. (2022) and Bursztyn et al. (2023a). Chopra et al. (2022) document an overall muted demand for fact-checking, while Chopra et al. (2023) show that the demand for news depend on both accuracy concerns and belief confirmation. This paper measures demand for investigative journalism and shows how demand varies across different demographic groups, finding a positive correlation between demand and left-wing political preferences.

Overview of the paper. This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces Experiment 1, which surveys respondents in the U.S. and U.K to address two primary objectives. The first objective is to examine the WTP for investigative journalism in these countries. The second objective explores demand for increased investigative journalism from public broadcasters. A comparative analysis reveals that U.K. respondents, potentially influenced by their greater exposure to a dominant public broadcaster, demonstrate weaker support for investigative journalism from the public broadcaster than their U.S. counterparts. However, this finding is subject to a potential empirical limitation: the part of the survey which focuses on investigative journalism from the public broadcaster may be perceived as less consequential than the rest of the survey. To address these challenges, Section 3 describes Experiment 2, conducted with a representative sample from Norway. Similar to the U.K., Norway has a dominant public broadcaster, offering a comparable media environment. This experiment incorporates specific design choices, such as leveraging Norway's smaller population, to mitigate the perception of inconsequentiality and provide more robust insights into the support for public investigative journalism.

Section 4 evaluates the robustness of the findings from Experiment 1 through three additional experiments, labeled Experiment 3, 4 and 5. Experiment 3 replicates the WTP elicitation from Experiment 1 using more representative samples from the U.S. and U.K. populations, revealing a higher WTP for three days of investigative journalism. It also demonstrates that the WTP results are not sensitive to lowering WTP amounts. Experiment 4 addresses concerns related to social desirability bias and decisiveness, finding results indicating that neither issue poses a significant challenge in this context. Experiment 5 tests the credibility of the treatment described in Part 2 of Experiment 1 and examines the sensitivity of the results to income-level effects when considering funding for increased public investigative journalism. Section 5 provides a theoretical framework for interpreting the empirical findings, and Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. Experiment 1

2.1. Survey design

2.1.1. Sample

This survey was administered through Prolific, a platform known for yielding high-quality responses (Eyal et al., 2021). Detailed pre-registration information is available on AsPredicted as #166196. The survey took place in March 2024. Based on

[3] Acemoglu et al. (2022) and Choi et al. (2019) analyze information externalities related to sharing of data.

recommendations from current literature suggesting 700 observations per treatment arm (Haaland et al., 2023), I collected 2100 respondents from the U.S. and the U.K. The sample included an equal number of responses from both countries and was balanced by gender. Table 9 in the Online Appendix shows that the samples do not differ significantly from the populations in terms of age and income, although respondents tend to have higher education levels than the population averages. The full set of instructions is provided in Online Appendix D.

2.1.2. Part 1: Willingness to pay for three days of investigative journalism

Participants were asked to make a choice between two options that could have real-world consequences. In particular, they were asked to choose between having a journalist spend three days investigating potential political scandals or receiving a personal financial bonus. The amount of journalism was chosen to be large enough for respondents to perceive that the journalist could achieve something meaningful, but not so large that respondents would doubt the feasibility of the investigation. Thus, three days was chosen as a balance between these factors.

The choice of one randomly selected participant was implemented. Specifically, a single respondent was chosen at random to decide between receiving a personal bonus or funding three days of investigative journalism. This respondent's decision was decisive, determining whether the outcome would be a personal bonus or the financing of three days of investigative journalism by an external source (e.g., the researchers).[4]

Information treatments. To understand what drives the demand and willingness to pay (WTP) for financing a journalist, I split the participants into three groups, each receiving one of the following informational treatments:

1. *"Should any scandals be uncovered, we commit to disseminating the information widely and promptly, ensuring the public is informed of the journalist's findings".*(*Widespread* treatment).
2. *"You will be granted early access to the investigation's findings. These will be posted on the website investorsurvey.online, where you will have the privilege of exclusive access for a period before the information is released to the broader public".* (*Exclusive* treatment).
3. No additional information provided (*Control* treatment).

Measuring WTP. Respondents' WTP is elicited through a multiple price list approach. The Prolific platform allows for personal bonus disbursements, enabling the direct measurement of WTP for investigative journalism. Respondents face three binary choices between receiving personal bonuses ($5, $10, and $20) and paying for three days of investigative journalism, and the highest amount of dollars they are willing to give up is used as the WTP measure.[5]

2.1.3. Part 2: WTP for investigative journalism from a public broadcaster

The second part of the survey aims to explore U.S. and U.K. respondents' demand for investigative journalism funded through public broadcasting. The U.S. and U.K. vary greatly in their approach to public funding of broadcasting. According to Neff and Pickard (2021), the BBC is distinguished by a high level of public funding, receiving $81 per capita annually. In contrast, U.S. broadcasters (PBS, NPR, and CPB) collectively receive public funding of only $3 per capita annually. PBS operates as a non-profit network funded by government appropriations, donations, and corporate sponsorships, focusing primarily on educational and cultural programming for American audiences. The BBC, as the U.K.'s national public broadcaster, holds a significant role domestically and internationally through services like BBC World News. The BBC aims to provide educational, informative, and entertainment content, with an emphasis on unbiased reporting and cultural programming.

Treatments. Respondents are randomized into three groups before assessing their willingness to fund additional investigative journalism by the public broadcaster. Each group receives one of the following text treatments randomly:

1. *"Should PBS (BBC) expand its investigative journalism efforts, we aim to ensure such initiatives are approached with political neutrality. This might include investigating topics related to the business sector and bureaucracy, thereby avoiding focus on any single political party".* (*Neutral* treatment).
2. *"Should PBS (BBC) expand its investigative journalism efforts, we aim to direct these initiatives towards the local level, especially targeting areas suffering from a lack of news coverage".* (*Local* treatment).
3. No additional information provided (*Control* treatment).

The only differences between the U.S. and U.K. versions of the survey are that U.K. respondents see "BBC" as their public broadcaster and "British" as their nationality, while U.S. respondents see "PBS" and "American".

[4] Experiment 4, described in Section 4.2, confirms that participants understood the decisiveness of their choice in this context. The researcher later fulfilled the survey's commitment by financing and conducting three days of investigative journalism.

[5] When answering the first binary question, respondents are not informed that two additional valuation questions will follow.

Table 1
Experiment 1, Part 1: Demand for 3 days of investigative journalism.

WTP								
	Main		With controls		Full sample			
	(1) WTP	(2) WTP	(3) WTP	(4) WTP	(5) WTP	(6) WTP	(7) WTP	(8) WTP
Widespread	0.804**		0.790**		0.960***		0.926***	
	(1.99)		(1.98)		(2.73)		(2.67)	
Exclusive		−0.316		−0.332		−0.717**		−0.703**
		(−0.82)		(−0.88)		(−2.14)		(−2.13)
Observations	1414	1398	1414	1398	2104	2104	2104	2104
Controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Control group mean	3.74	3.74	3.74	3.74	3.58	4.14	3.58	4.14

Note: This table presents the results of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions with robust standard errors. The dependent variable, *WTP*, measures the amount respondents are willing to pay to finance three days of investigative journalism. Columns 1 and 2 display the treatment effects in U.S. dollars for the *Exclusive* and *Widespread* treatments, respectively, focusing on the pre-specified analysis that includes only observations assigned to the control group and the respective treatment. Columns 3 and 4 extend this analysis by incorporating a comprehensive set of control variables. Columns 5 to 8 replicate the analyses from Columns 1 to 4 but expand the sample to include observations from all three treatment groups.
t statistics in parentheses.
* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Outcome measures. Demand for investigative journalism funded by public broadcasters is assessed using two questions, resulting in four distinct outcome variables that capture different aspects of demand for public investigative journalism, as outlined below.

1. *"Would you support a budget increase for PBS (BBC) to fund investigative journalism if it resulted in an annual tax increase of approximately $15 for you?"*

   (a) Yes
   (b) No

2. *"Considering alternatives for supporting investigative journalism, which of the following options would you prefer?"*

   (a) Increase public support for PBS (BBC).
   (b) Increase public support for commercial media outlets engaged in investigative journalism, through subsidies or tax incentives.

The third outcome variable, *total demand for investigative journalism from the public broadcaster*, is measured by summing responses to the two outcome questions. Respondents who are both willing to pay for the public broadcaster and prefer it over private subsidies receive a score of 2, those who support the public broadcaster on only one of these questions receive a score of 1, and those who support neither receive a score of 0. The fourth outcome variable, *Low public-specific demand*, captures respondents who are willing to pay personally for investigative journalism (positive WTP in Part 1) but do not want that everyone pays $15 more in taxes for investigative journalism from the public broadcaster. Analyzing this outcome variable seeks to understand the factors driving such preferences.

2.2. Part 1: Results

2.2.1. WTP for three days of journalism: Descriptive results

Table 1, column 1, shows that the average WTP for three days of journalism in the control group is $3.74. Left-wing respondents have an average WTP that is almost 60% higher than others ($p < 0.001$), and U.K. respondents have significantly higher WTP than U.S. respondents. 75% of respondents are unwilling to give up any personal bonuses for journalism and are assigned a WTP of zero. 3% are willing to give up a maximum of $5, and 5% are willing to give up a maximum of $10; these respondents are assigned WTPs of $5 and $10, respectively. 16% of respondents are willing to give up $20, and these are assigned a WTP of $20.

Experiment 3, discussed in Section 4.1, demonstrates that the findings are robust to variations in both the WTP elicitation method and the sampling procedure. When using samples deliberately designed to be representative of the U.S. and U.K. populations in terms of gender, age, and political affiliation, the resulting WTP estimates are slightly higher. Experiment 4, presented in Section 4.2, provides evidence that social desirability biases and image concerns are not significant drivers of the results.

2.2.2. WTP for three days of journalism: Treatment effects

Empirical strategy. This section examines the treatment effects of the *Widespread* and *Exclusive* treatments. The main empirical specification is:

$$y_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \times \text{Treatment} + \epsilon_i$$

Here, y_i represents the outcome of interest (WTP), which is regressed on the randomized information treatment in a sample including only treated and control units, using OLS with robust standard errors. The term ϵ_i denotes the individual-specific error term. This empirical approach mirrors that used in Section 2.3.2 as well as in Experiment 2, described in Section 3.

Since the pre-specified analysis did not cluster standard errors, I primarily focus on heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors. However, the main regressions with various clustering strategies are presented in Appendix Table 6. Similarly, because the pre-specification did not include control variables, the main specification is reported without them. Nevertheless, I also report results including the following control variables: gender, urban residency, age, income, social media usage, nationality, political preferences (ranging from strongly right-wing to strongly left-wing), and education.

Widespread treatment. Table 1, column 1, shows that the *Widespread* treatment increases WTP by $0.80, or 21%, relative to the control group ($p = 0.046$) in the pre-specified regression. Column 3 indicates that adding control variables does not alter the findings, while columns 5 and 7 demonstrate that the treatment effect is stronger when comparing this treatment with both of the other treatment groups.

Exclusive treatment. Table 1, column 2, indicates that the *Exclusive* treatment has a non-significant *negative* impact on WTP, reducing it by 8% compared to the control group.[6]

2.3. Part 2: Results

2.3.1. WTP for public broadcaster: Descriptive results

55% of U.S. respondents in the control group were willing to pay $15 more in taxes to fund additional investigative journalism from the public broadcaster, while 35% of U.K. respondents were willing to do the same. Table 2 provides more details. The willingness to pay for public broadcasting correlates strongly with political preferences. Among U.S. respondents, 70% of left-wing respondents expressed a willingness to pay, compared to only 40% of respondents with other political views. In the U.K., 50% of left-wing respondents and 26% of others were willing to pay more in taxes for public broadcasting. Additionally, 70% of U.S. respondents preferred public support for journalism from the public broadcaster over public support for private media firms, while only 35% of U.K. respondents agreed. Figure 1 in the Online Appendix shows how preferences for public broadcasting correlate with demographic factors, also including demographic correlations from Experiment 2 described in Section 3.

The fourth panel of Table 2 shows that 14% of U.K. respondents and 4% of U.S. respondents have *Low public-specific demand* for investigative journalism, defined as being willing to give up personal money to pay for investigative journalism but not supporting additional public investigative journalism.

To explore whether some of the observed differences could be attributed to higher income levels in the U.S. compared to the U.K., I conducted Experiment 5, described in Section 4.3. This experiment involved randomizing a subset of U.K. respondents to contribute a lower amount of $12. The results indicate that this treatment has no significant effect on support for public investigative journalism.[7]

2.3.2. WTP for public broadcaster: Treatment effects

Neutral treatment. The first panel of Table 2, column 1, shows a positive but non-significant effect of 3 percentage points on the willingness to pay $15 in taxes for more public investigative journalism.[8] However, this overall effect masks interesting heterogeneity between the two countries. Column 3 shows that U.K. respondents assigned to the *Neutral* treatment are 7 percentage points more willing to pay more in taxes for public broadcasting ($p = 0.069$), which implies an 19 percent increase in support relative to the control group. U.K. respondents assigned to this treatment are also 7 percentage points more likely to prefer public over private subsidies ($p = 0.057$), as shown in the second panel, column 3. The third panel, column 3, then shows that total demand for public journalism among U.K. respondents is also higher after receiving the *Neutral* treatment ($p = 0.016$). The fourth panel shows that the share of U.K. respondents displaying *Low public-specific demand* is 4 percentage points lower for respondents assigned to the *Neutral* treatment.[9] For U.S. respondents, there are no significant or meaningful treatment effects from this treatment on the demand for public investigative journalism.

Local treatment. There is no significant or meaningful impact of the *Local* treatment in either the U.S. or the U.K.

Noticeability and credibility of the treatments. To assess whether the public broadcaster's focus was noticed and perceived as credible, I conducted a robustness test in Experiment 5, detailed in Section 4.3. In this test, Part 2 of the experiment was repeated, after which respondents were asked if they noticed the focus of the treatment and found it credible. The results indicate that respondents both noticed the treatment and regarded it as credible.

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[6] Columns 6 and 8 show that the *Exclusive* treatment has a significantly negative effect when compared with both of the other treatment groups, reflecting that WTP in the *Widespread* treatment is higher than in the control group.

[7] *Ex ante*, it is not obvious that this adjustment should result in lower support, as contributing a smaller amount reduces both the individual's personal payment and the additional revenue generated for the public broadcaster.

[8] This is the pre-specified main dependent variable. As I did not specify anything about excluding control variables in this regression, I included the set of control variables in the regression.

[9] This effect indicates that concerns about neutrality contribute to the lower support for increased public investigative journalism in the U.K. However, other factors, such as diminishing marginal returns from public broadcasting, may also play a role. Exploring these additional factors lies beyond the scope of this paper.

Table 2
Experiment 1&2, Part 2: Demand for public investigative journalism.

WTP
Willing to pay more taxes for public investigative journalism

	Full sample (UK and US)		UK		US		Norway	
	(1) WTPp	(2) WTPp	(3) WTPp	(4) WTPp	(5) WTPp	(6) WTPp	(7) WTPp	(8) WTPp
Neutral	0.0336		0.0653*		0.00340		0.0564**	
	(1.32)		(1.82)		(0.10)		(2.14)	
Local		0.0203		0.00970		0.0231		0.0363
		(0.80)		(0.27)		(0.67)		(1.36)
Observations	1404	1422	688	682	716	740	1363	1363
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control group mean	0.45	0.45	0.35	0.35	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.54

Preferences for public broadcaster over private subsidies

	Full sample (UK and US)		UK		US		Norway	
	(1) PublPref	(2) PublPref	(3) PublPref	(4) PublPref	(5) PublPref	(6) PublPref	(7) PublPref	(8) PublPref
Neutral	0.00759		0.0691*		−0.0489		0.0470*	
	(0.29)		(1.90)		(−1.45)		(1.78)	
Local		0.0305		0.0535		−0.00297		−0.00413
		(1.17)		(1.47)		(−0.09)		(−0.16)
Observations	1405	1422	688	682	717	740	1363	1363
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control group mean	0.53	0.53	0.35	0.35	0.70	0.70	0.40	0.40

Total demand for public investigative journalism

	Full sample (UK and US)		UK		US		Norway	
	(1) TotPub	(2) TotPub	(3) TotPub	(4) TotPub	(5) TotPub	(6) TotPub	(7) TotPub	(8) TotPub
Neutral	0.0406		0.134**		−0.0463		0.103**	
	(1.00)		(2.40)		(−0.87)		(2.37)	
Local		0.0508		0.0632		0.0202		0.0322
		(1.29)		(1.20)		(0.39)		(0.73)
Observations	1404	1422	688	682	716	740	1363	1363
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control group mean	0.98	0.98	0.70	0.70	1.25	1.25	0.94	0.94

Low public-specific demand

	Full sample (UK and US)		UK		US		Norway	
	(1) LowPub	(2) LowPub	(3) LowPub	(4) LowPub	(5) LowPub	(6) LowPub	(7) LowPub	(8) LowPub
Neutral	−0.0196		−0.0426*		0.000551		−0.0328**	
	(−1.34)		(−1.70)		(0.04)		(−2.13)	
Local		−0.0134		−0.00993		−0.0133		−0.0313**
		(−0.91)		(−0.37)		(−0.98)		(−2.03)
Observations	1405	1422	688	682	717	740	1363	1363
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control group mean	0.091	0.091	0.14	0.14	0.043	0.043	0.11	0.11

Note: This table displays OLS regression results with robust standard errors. For each of the four panels, column 1 and 2 display the results for the full sample in the U.S. and U.K. experiment, while column 3 and 4 separate the effect for U.K. respondents and column 5 and 6 separate the effect for U.S. respondents. Column 7 and 8 display the results from the Norwegian experiment. The odd column numbers display the effect of the *Neutral* treatment, while the even column numbers display the effect of the *Local* treatment. In the first panel, the outcome variable is *WTPp*, which takes the value 1 if respondents are willing to pay $15 to pay for more public investigative journalism and 0 otherwise. In the second panel, the outcome variable *PublPref*, which takes the value 1 if respondents prefer investigative journalism from the public broadcaster over subsidies to private media firms and 0 otherwise. In the third panel, the outcome variable *TotPub* is measured as the sum of the two previous variables, hence taking values between 0 and 2. In the fourth panel, the outcome variable *LowPub* is a binary variable taking value 1 if $WTPp = 0$ and $WTP > 0$ for three days of journalism and 0 otherwise.
t statistics in parentheses.
$p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Addendum D

https://mediafreedomcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/MFC-Final-Report.pdf

Image: Getty

Democracy and participation

Democratic backsliding and the rise of authoritarian tendencies constitute a deeply concerning trend. Space for civil society is shrinking, misinformation is on the rise and public trust in political institutions is hovering around an all-time low. A free and independent media cannot single-handedly stem these trends. But where it flourishes, the evidence suggests that it provides an important bulwark against these dynamics.

That said, establishing the relationship between media freedom and democracy is not without its challenges. A 2024 UNESCO issue brief[7] notes the difficulty in determining the direction of causation between quality journalism and improved democratic or governance outcomes, as well as ruling out a separate, common cause. However, taking into account state-of-the-art research, it concludes that, "while much research remains to be done to clarify why, when, and in what contexts media and journalism can fulfil its mission, there is little doubt that democracy suffers when high quality media is weakened." The linkages between a free press and a functioning democracy are outlined below on several levels.

Building political knowledge, encouraging participation and political contestation

Good journalism is key in helping citizens understand how government works, who is representing them to what effect and how they can get involved. Citizens of countries with media systems that are less controlled and censored by government have better political knowledge and are more likely to vote[8].

A considerable number of studies have established these linkages, often taking advantage of contexts where news coverage or media availability varies across otherwise similar communities. In US communities where local media outlets are covering politics less vigorously, citizens are less likely to know who is representing them in Congress, less able to evaluate their performance and less


Image: Unsplash

likely to vote[9]. Even the closure of a single cherished local newspaper can depress voter turnout[10] and historically the opening of new newspapers in the early 1900s in the US went hand-in-hand with higher voter turnout[11].

This effect has been evidenced elsewhere. In Mozambique, voter turnout rose and citizens were more prepared to contact policymakers when they gained access to a free, independent newspaper[12]. In Uganda, communities with better access to radio were found to be more politically activex[13], while in Liberia, media coverage helped to significantly amplify the positive impact of local public debates on voter knowledge and turnout[14] .

The positive effect of free media on political knowledge and participation also enhances political competition. Evidence from the US suggests that independent press coverage supports voter turnout and makes incumbents more likely to be voted out of office[15]. It also makes elected representatives more responsive to their constituencies[16]. Survey evidence concerning two radio programmes in Tanzania, which enabled citizens to put questions to government officials and receive information on policy issues, suggested that the programmes supported greater knowledge of various issues among listeners, alongside greater confidence to participate in decision-making processes[17]. Overall, this results in a very close relationship between media and democracy that holds across many countries. The more independent and more available the media, the higher the quality of democracy[18].

Against this backdrop, it is also not surprising that the media is one of the first sectors that aspiring authoritarians take aim at and seek to bring under their control. Curtailment of media freedoms are often the first sign – a "canary in the coalmine" – when it comes to democratic backsliding[19].

Inclusiveness and empowerment: gaining a collective voice, recognition, and public platform

Beyond individualistic effects on political knowledge and the likelihood to vote, a free media can also promote democracy by diversifying the range of perspectives and issues under public consideration. It can give a platform to marginalised voices and under-represented groups, broaching topics that the mainstream of society might not be familiar with or that are burdened by adverse social norms or active political suppression.

An important example of this is the way in which a free media contributes to addressing gender disparities and discrimination.

Image: Three women journalists in Bangladesh discussing gender equity in the media in 2023, on national TV show Tritiyo Matra.
Credit: Tritiyo Matra/Channel i

Experimental media campaigns that mix hard news with soap opera formats have been found to be effective in reducing the tolerance for violence against women and/or enhancing the willingness to report such incidences in Nigeria[20], Uganda[21], Tanzania[22] and Mexico[23]. Women's empowerment in the social, economic and political spheres is closely linked to mass media exposure in India[24] and social media access across 45 African countries[25].

Groups marginalised on the basis of specific health issues have also had their experiences amplified through journalistic coverage, enabling contact with a broader audience which in turn allows those impacted to discover that many others share their condition. This has provided the basis for networking and collective action to claim stronger recognition of their rights and shape policies (for more, see the below section on health). A pluralistic, free media can serve a similar function for other under-represented segments of society such as Indigenous peoples[26].

Novel, smaller-scale media initiatives, often propelled by digital networking and publishing platforms, further diversify the spectrum of voices that receive exposure within society, as well as increase the

scope of their representation. Community media – locally-oriented and often locally-owned media outlets – provide the communicative tissue for underserved communities to be represented in pluralistic discourse and engagement[27]. Citizen journalism, the reporting and dissemination of news by people who are not professional journalists, has demonstrated its potential to enhance reporting in crisis situations, bring overlooked issues and concerns to the attention of a broader public and revitalise civic engagement, often in places where conventional media face repression[28].

In the longer term, an independent media sector that hosts a robust public discourse on economic and political issues can even support nation-building. From a historical perspective, the growing diffusion of newspapers has been credited with helping to birth political communities and the nation state. Newspapers were retrospectively recognised as instrumental in organizing a nation-wide public debate that made it possible for disparate and diverse groups of people with different backgrounds and ethnicities to conceive of themselves as part of a whole – an "imagined community"[29].

Combatting fake news and supporting integrity of elections

There is now significant concern that mis- and disinformation have the potential to compromise the integrity of elections and democratic processes. For example, citizens across the EU single out the spread of fake news and misinformation as the most serious threat to democracy in their country, with two thirds reporting that they have encountered such content within seven days of being surveyed[30]. Although partisan media can further amplify these dynamics[31], there is a growing recognition that a well-balanced, independent media landscape can serve as a bulwark against misinformation[32].

In particular, sufficiently independent public service media commands a level of trust and broad availability that can be leveraged to boost fair, high-quality journalism, uphold standards of factual accuracy and provide a platform for reasoned debate. It also contributes to developing a shared understanding and common ground for negotiating difficult policy issues. Tracing direct linkages or causation is difficult, yet there is a growing body of evidence that confirms the role played by public service media. In the US, for example, more local media coverage was found to have a dampening effect on extreme or polarizing ideologies of contenders for political office[33].

To help stem the tide of misinformation, many media outlets have established dedicated fact-checking functions. By 2023, more than 400 fact-checking initiatives – many run by or directly integrated into existing media – were active in more than 100 countries around the world[34]. Some of these initiatives are joint efforts by multiple media houses working together, such as **Propastop** in Estonia[35], which works alongside media literacy programmes and training for journalists. In Colombia, the **RedCheq** initiative organised local fact-checking trainings and partnerships with academics and civic leaders to help expand and locally root the effort. Extensive alliances with local and national media were also essential to disseminate accurate counter-information[36].

But the role of the media in election integrity goes well beyond the countering of foreign or domestic misinformation. Media outlets and their coverage of elections have played an important role in protecting elections against conventional attempts at fraud, ballot-stuffing, and other illicit means to distort electoral outcomes, and empirical evidence shows a strong positive relationship between media freedom and the observed integrity and legitimacy of elections. This relationship is even stronger in countries where electoral management bodies – the conventional guardians of free and fair elections – are compromised and lack independence[37]. Strikingly, even where such electoral bodies are autonomous, they are only associated with more public trust in elections when a free media is also present[38].

Countering corruption, holding power to account

An independent and vigorous media sphere plays a crucial role in detecting and combatting corruption – abuse of entrusted power for private gain – making contributions to this on several levels.

Tailored media programming can help shift individual attitudes and norms about corruption and enhance the willingness to condemn and report corrupt behaviour or act with more integrity. Such interventions are not always successful and can even backfire[39]. However, when carefully designed and tested, they can make a significant positive difference, particularly when role-modelling or encouraging positive behaviour and norms. In Nigeria, for example, a movie with a plotline that included citizens reporting acts of corruption led to a significant increase in such reporting among communities where the film had been shown[40].

Independent investigative journalism also plays a key role in exposing corruption and the failings of anti-corruption controls. Case studies of how persistent and courageous journalists bring to light all kinds of abuses of power abound, covering issues such as large-scale human rights violations[41], transnational corruption networks[42] and irreversible environmental harms[43].

There is also evidence of the impressive impact footprint of investigative journalism. A detailed analysis of three investigative journalism projects in the US found that a total of USD 600,000 invested in these projects helped generate more than USD 120 million in value to society through – for example – reducing hospital admissions for food poisoning and reducing the number of murders committed by people on parole[44]. Similarly, the investigative journalism organisation OCCRP estimates that during

15 years of its work, its reporting has led to or contributed to more than USD 10 billion in levied fines, 400 official investigations, 600 indictments, arrests and sentences, 130 resignations, and 740 official and 130 corporate actions[45].

The impact of the Panama Papers, meanwhile, is still being felt. This prominent leak of more than 11 million documents from offshore tax service providers spawned a collaboration between more than 400 journalists from over 100 media organisations across 80 countries. 40 percent of 76 countries mentioned in the leak have initiated formal inquiries or hearings, and nearly a fifth have so far passed substantive regulatory or policy measures to bring more transparency and accountability into the financial system[46]. The market valuations of the companies mentioned in the media stories were also affected[47].

The big picture: Media freedom and good governance – inseparable and reinforcing each other

Given the multiple roles that a free media plays in disciplining public power and exposing its abuse, it is not surprising that the empirical connection between media freedom and good governance is strong: across countries and time, and irrespective of how good governance and media freedom are defined.

A freer media goes hand in hand with lower levels of perceived corruption, a link that grows stronger the more widespread media access is[48]. It is associated with more accurate public perceptions of government corruption[49], fewer bribes to public officials and fewer reported bribery requests by businesses[50]. This positive link persists even when different measurements are used for both media freedom and corruption[51]. A set of studies that document negative repercussions when media freedom and independence are curtailed convey a similar message. More state ownership of media, for example, is strongly linked to poor governance performance[52], while evidence from Mexico shows that corruption receives less media attention in states that have more repressive defamation laws[53].

In addition to direct effects, a free media amplifies the impact of other anti-corruption and good governance mechanisms. A study of more than 160 countries identifies free media as a critical ingredient on the path towards controlling corruption, protection of human rights and establishing good governance mechanisms[54]. Evidence from Brazil and Mexico shows that media coverage can help augment the efficacy of audits – the more media attention that is paid to local audits, the greater the impact on incumbents' electoral performance[55]. And even the impact of democracy on reducing corruption is found to take effect only in the presence of a free press[56]. In essence, a free media works best in the service of anti-corruption when operating in concert with other related integrity mechanisms. It amplifies audits and democratic controls and it activates what some call the *monitorial citizen*, a particularly engaged citizenry that takes a close interest in government performance and pursues accountability[57]. Empirical stock-takes of corruption interventions – assessing which interventions work best as part of corruption control – also confirm this pivotal role of a free independent media[58].

In light of this evidence, a free media deserves to be viewed as a site of essential, additional checks and balances alongside the interrelated controls that aim to prevent the abuse of public power.

Addendum E

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Article

Funding Democracy: Public Media and Democratic Health in 33 Countries

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Abstract

This study examines whether and how public media systems contribute to the health of democracies in 33 countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, the Middle East, Latin America, and South America. We gather national economic data and public media funding levels, audience shares, and regulatory data, primarily for 2018 and 2019 but in some cases earlier, due to lack of available data. We then assess correlations with strength of democracy indices and extend Hallin and Mancini's typology of North American and European media systems through hierarchical cluster analysis of these 33 countries. We find five models of public media systems around the world, ranging from "state-administered" systems with low levels of independence (Botswana and Tunisia) to systems aligning with Hallin and Mancini's "Democratic Corporatist" model, with strong and secure (multiyear) funding, large audience shares, and strong regulatory protection for their independence. In between, we identify three mixed models: a "Liberal-Pluralist" model, a "Direct Funding" model, and a "Commercial–Public" model. Correlations and cluster analyses show that high levels of secure funding for public media systems and strong structural protections for the political and economic independence of those systems are consistently and positively correlated with healthy democracies.

Keywords

Public media, media systems, political communication, democracy, journalism

As questions about journalism's future rise to the fore and mounting media-related challenges face democratic societies—from the proliferation of dis/misinformation to

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the collapse of local journalism and growing news deserts—attention has increasingly turned to the potential of publicly funded media for meeting information needs (Allern and Pollack 2019; Aufderheide 2020; Benson et al. 2017; Pickard 2020). Yet despite public media systems continuing to receive high levels of trust (Ali et al. 2021; Saurwein et al. 2019), the idea that governments should help fund media is still controversial (Overholser 2006; Nordenson 2007; Sehl et al. 2020). Suspicions toward media subsidies are especially pronounced in the U.S., where public media historically have faced various economic and political pressures (Aufderheide 1996; Pickard 2020).

A growing body of academic literature links strong public media (also known as "public service media") to a range of social benefits. Public media systems have been shown to enhance public knowledge of public affairs, reduce inequalities in news provision, and produce more diverse and critical news coverage than commercial news outlets, particularly when these public systems are well-funded and protected from political interference (Aalberg and Curran 2012; Benson et al. 2017; Curran et al. 2009; Iyengar et al. 2010). Less is known about how specific dimensions of public media—such as funding levels, regulatory structures, and audience shares—strengthen crucial components of democracies, including levels of political participation, public attitudes about democracy (political cultures), and the free and open functioning of governments.

In this article, we correlate public media (1) funding levels, (2) audience shares, (3) funding structures, and (4) regulatory structures with the strength of democracy indices (Economist Intelligence Unit [EIU] 2020a) and economic activity (gross domestic product [GDP][1]) in 33 countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, the Middle East, Latin America, and South America. Our comprehensive analysis of these 33 public media systems shows that funding mechanisms that deliver high levels of secure (multiyear) funding and regulatory structures that establish "arm's-length" relationships between public media and governments consistently go hand in hand with strong support for and engagement with democratic processes.

What the Research Tells us

The relationship between media and democracy is a central concern of a large body of normative theories proposing diverse roles for mass media, from fulfilling a basic need for information about public affairs to empowering democratic publics to express their views and mobilize for political action (Christians et al. 2009; Ferree et al. 2002). Given a large number of intervening variables, direct causal links between media and the strength of democracies are difficult to prove, though researchers have argued that significant correlations indicate "virtuous circle" relationships between the health of media and democracies (Holtz-Bacha and Norris 2001: 138).

In support of a virtuous circle between specifically *public* media and the health of their democracies, research shows that public media produce news with more

breadth (diversity) and depth (substance) than their commercial counterparts.[2] Public media tend to produce programming that more broadly serves poorer households, communities of color, linguistic and ethnic minorities, and other groups and regions that for-profit media often neglect (Picard and Pickard 2017). Public media also have been shown to focus more on international news and public affairs, with less sensationalism than their commercial counterparts (Aalberg and Curran 2012; Curran et al. 2009; Cushion 2012; de Vreese et al. 2006). This higher volume of substantial news fosters greater public knowledge in these areas, encourages higher levels of news consumption, and shrinks the knowledge gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged citizens (Curran et al. 2009; Holtz-Bacha and Norris 2001; Iyengar et al. 2010). Public television also correlates with less extremist views, as shown in a study finding that those who consume more commercial news hold more negative views toward immigrants (Jacobs et al. 2016).

However, relationships between media and democracy vary from one country to another and from one region to another, as shown by an expanding body of comparative research drawing on Hallin and Mancini's (2004) typology of Western media systems. This research indicates that large-scale democratic benefits most often are found among the world's best-funded public media systems, which also tend to have higher audience shares (Saurwein et al. 2019). People living in countries with strong public media systems have high levels of political knowledge, voting, and democratic engagement (Aarts and Semetko 2003; Albæk et al. 2014; Esser et al. 2012). Such effects remain after controlling for the possibility that more knowledge of current affairs leads to more public media consumption, rather than public media consumption increasing current affairs knowledge (Soroka et al. 2013).

As independence is considered a "core" requirement for any public media system (Council of Europe 2012), researchers have explored how an "arm's-length" relationship can be established between public media and governments through specific regulatory frameworks. The European Broadcasting Union (2015) has argued that public media must exist within legal frameworks that establish them as independent institutions; supervisory bodies must be separate from management and executive functions; and supervisory boards must be appointed in pluralistic processes, such as parliamentary proceedings that assure directors are not unilaterally appointed by elected officials. While critics often claim that public media are likely to be government mouthpieces, research shows that public media and government-subsidized private media are actually no less critical of government than nonsubsidized, privately owned media (Benson 2011; Benson and Powers 2011; Benson et al. 2017; Hallin and Mancini 2004). The Nordic public media model in particular has demonstrated a high degree of political autonomy (Carlsson 2013; Syvertsen et al. 2014).

Funding mechanisms, typically specified in laws establishing public media as independent institutions, also are important regulatory frameworks. Secure streams of multiyear funding, rather than annual appropriations, enhance public media systems' independence, enabling them to strategically plan for

future years without being compelled to plead their cases for funding each year in processes that can be highly politicized (Benson et al. 2017; Warner 2019). Direct funding linkages to the public through license fees or equivalent taxes also have been shown to enhance the independence of public media (Klimkiewicz 2015).

Among these correlations between funding and regulatory frameworks, national economic activity is an important intervening variable. Large public media audience shares and high levels of funding, commonly composed of both public and private revenue sources, are positively correlated with strong economies (Saurwein et al. 2019). Recent proposals for addressing journalism's crisis have foregrounded the importance of this variable by advocating the allocation of 0.1 percent of a country's GDP to fund media (Forum on Information and Democracy 2021).

Despite this growing literature, important questions remain. First, research is weighted toward Western European public media systems and rarely puts findings in relationship to democracy indices or ratings. One partial exception is a European Broadcasting Union (2019) report including EIU democracy indices for European, North African, and Middle Eastern nation-states, finding that well-funded public media with large audience shares are correlated with higher levels of political participation, political stability, and government oversight. Correlations with public media in other regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America, and South America have remained largely unexamined.

Second, there has been little attempt to flesh out the nature of correlations between strong democracies and strong public media in a systematic fashion that not only includes a broader set of countries but also includes the broad array of key variables identified in prior research: funding levels, funding mixes, audience shares, regulatory and funding frameworks, and national economic strength.

Third, though media system typologies are prevalent in international comparative research, they generally assess public and commercial media together despite research demonstrating that these types of media have important differences. A comparative typology specific to public media systems can aid the development of new configurations of public support—both in terms of funding and regulatory frameworks—that can effectively address journalism's present crisis.

With these gaps in mind, our research questions (RQs) are:

RQ1: How do funding levels, funding mix (public vs. private funding), and audience shares correlate with the strength of democracies?
RQ2: How does GDP correlate with public media funding levels and with the strength of democracies?
RQ3: How do regulatory frameworks correlate with the strength of democracies?
RQ4: Do these correlations suggest a typology of public media systems around the world?

Methods and Data Selection

To address these questions, we conduct a comparative analysis of public media systems in 33 countries. Comparative analysis recognizes that variations in studied phenomena occur across different media, political, economic, and cultural systems, and therefore observations within any single system are inadequate for generalization beyond that system (Aalberg and Curran 2012; Esser and Pfetsch 2004: Hallin and Mancini 2004).

We also acknowledge that our comparative analysis of public media systems and democracies cannot show clear causal relationships. However, comparative analysis enables us to find patterns across public media systems that are deserving, at a minimum, of further research. Furthermore, we agree with other researchers that correlations allow for "interpretations on the basis of plausibility," and when correlations are found it is plausible to argue that a "virtuous circle" exists between aspects of media and democratic health (Holtz-Bacha and Norris 2001: 138).

Our analysis builds on Benson et al.'s (2017) research comparing public media in 12 democracies by examining connections between funding, audience shares, and regulation of public media and the healthy functioning of democracies in 33 countries spanning each of the seven global regions in the EIU's 2019 Democracy Index (EIU 2020a): Asia and Australasia; Eastern Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; the Middle East and North Africa; North America; sub-Saharan Africa; and Western Europe. The EIU Democracy Index is a recent arrival among a large number of indices that take different approaches to assess democratic health such as Freedom House's freedom scale emphasizing rights and liberties (Freedom House 2021); Polity rankings emphasizing democratic versus autocratic authority (Center for Systemic Peace 2020); University of Zurich's "Democracy Barometer" emphasizing freedom, equality, and control (Bühlmann et al. 2012); and University of Gothenberg's Varieties of Democracy Project emphasizing freedom of elections, association, and expression (Alizada et al. 2021).

Since its debut in 2006, the EIU index has increasingly been adopted by researchers examining correlations with data of interest to different fields, such as public media, health care, and international relations (Brusis 2008; European Broadcasting Union 2019; Walker et al. 2015). We use the EIU index because it aims to provide "thick" measures of democracy encompassing many dimensions of democratic processes, including the functioning of government, political engagement and cultures, and civil liberties (EIU 2020a: 51).

As with other rankings of democratic health, the EIU Democracy Index is based on expert assessment (EIU 2020a). These assessments are supplemented by results of public surveys, in particular the Word Values Survey. Survey data are particularly important for EIU's political participation and political culture subcategories. The main EIU index (referred to in this study as the "Democracy Index") is a number between 1 and 10 that is calculated from five subcategories, each with its own set of markers (60 in total) of the strength of democratic processes, cultures, and freedoms: (1) electoral process and pluralism, assessing the freeness and fairness of electoral

systems; (2) functioning of government, assessing the degree to which freely elected leaders to determine policy without undue influence by other powers and corruption; (3) political participation, assessing the degree to which citizens are engaged and active in political processes; (4) political culture, assessing the degree of public support for democracy; (5) civil liberties, assessing freedom of media systems, citizens' ability to freely associate, and support for human rights. EIU aggregates the results of these five indices to produce the overall Democracy Index for each country. In this article, we focus on countries ranked as "full democracies" (Democracy Index scores of 8.1 to 10) and countries ranked as "flawed democracies" (Democracy Index scores of 6.1 to 8). Lower ranked countries are classified as either hybrid authoritarian–democratic regimes or fully authoritarian regimes.

We gather from annual reports, news reports, and academic literature the most recently available data on the funding levels (public, commercial, and other revenue), funding composition (percent of funding from public vs. private/commercial sources), and audience market shares (see Supplemental Information file for a complete list of sources). Most data are from 2018 and 2019, though lack of availability in some cases prompted us to include funding data as old as 2012 and audience share data as old as 2007. Much of our data is used to produce proportions, which aids comparability between years (e.g., populations and funding levels tend to rise over time, and so proportions such as per capita funding levels show less variation than absolute values). Using data from different time periods is a potential limitation in our analysis, but it enables us to include a large variety of countries from around the globe. We conduct bivariate correlations using this data and the EIU's 2019 Democracy Index and its five subcategories to assess the strength of relationships between the health of each country's democracy and the public media system's funding and market footprint (RQ1).

Prior research recognizes a country's economic strength may affect the functioning of its public media (Saurwein et al. 2019) and recent analyses peg public media to proportions of GDP (Forum on Information and Democracy 2021). Accordingly, we take per capita GDP for each country for the year corresponding to our funding data and divide it by per capita overall revenue for each public media system to create a ratio of GDP per capita to overall revenue per capita (GDP–funding ratio). The higher the GDP–funding ratio, the larger the disparity between the level of a country's economic activity, as measured by GDP per capita, and the funding level for its public media, as measured by total revenue per capita. We also assess bivariate correlations between GDP per capita and per capita public funding to assess correlations between economic activity and public funding of media, and between GDP per capita and the EIU democracy indices (RQ2).

All funding level and GDP data are adjusted by purchasing power parity (PPP) calculations, which account for the fact that a dollar goes further (has more purchasing power) in some countries than in others. PPP calculations for funding are done by taking the amount of funding in each nation's local currency and dividing it by that country's PPP factor, giving the funding level in international dollars (Eurostat and OECD 2012: 30). For most countries, PPP factors

and PPP-adjusted GDP data are from the World Bank (see Supplementary Information file for all sources).

Because testing showed that variables for funding, audience, and GDP are not normally distributed, we use Spearman's coefficients, which provide accepted measurements of the significance of correlations for such variables (Dellinger 2017). Positive and negative correlations of 0.2 to 0.39 are considered "weak"; correlations of 0.4 to 0.59 are considered "fair"; correlations of 0.6 to 0.79 are considered "moderate"; correlations of 0.8 to 1 are considered "strong" (Chao 2017: 270).

We also comb through annual reports, charters, and other legislative decrees to gather data on the regulatory and funding frameworks for each public media system. We use this regulatory data to produce five dichotomous variables that mark the presence or absence of these positive dimensions of regulatory frameworks: (1) the existence of a license fee or equivalent funding source that directly ties the funding of public media to the public; (2) multiyear funding allotments that provide stable revenue streams largely immune from yearly interventions from governments in the form of annual appropriations; (3) the existence of a legal decree or charter that establishes the public media system as an independent institution with its own funding mechanisms and oversight structures; (4) the legal separation of supervisory bodies, such as boards of directors, from direct executive management of the public media system, typically through legal provisions for appointing executives by boards of directors; (5) the existence of legal frameworks that mandate at least nominally collective, pluralistic selection of all members of a public media system's board of directors and executive (management) officers (i.e., no unilateral appointment by executive power of a member of the system's board of directors or executive officers).[3] These are *minimal* formal requirements for independence drawn from published guidelines for public media systems and regulatory bodies (Council of Europe 2012; European Broadcasting Union 2015; European Commission 2011; Thatcher 2002), and we acknowledge that meeting these criteria, which reflect a primarily European perspective on regulatory frameworks, does not alone guarantee autonomy.

Because these are minimal formal regulatory requirements, we do not expect that any one of them is sufficient to enhance the contributions of public media to democratic health. We therefore combine all five regulatory variables in multiple regression analyses that take the EIU's Democratic Index and its five subcategories as separate dependent variables (i.e., each analyzed individually in separate multiple regression analyses) to assess how regulatory structures may strengthen democracies (RQ3).

Finally, we conduct a hierarchical cluster analysis of these 33 public media systems to develop a comparative typology of funding and regulatory arrangements that can help inform policy debates about strengthening public media and democracies (RQ4). Following procedures in prior analyses (see Brüggemann et al. 2014), we z-standardize our variables for overall funding per capita, percentage of revenue from public sources, audience shares, and our five dichotomous regulatory variables. We include these variables in a cluster analysis using Ward's method and squared Euclidean distances and descriptively label the resulting groups of public media systems.

Our selection criteria for countries are designed to produce a broad geographic spread while favoring the inclusion of higher functioning democracies, as well as countries that enable a comparative analysis that aligns with research on national media systems (Hallin and Mancini 2004). The bias toward stronger democracies is intended to exclude, to the largest possible extent, public media that primarily are organs of government communication, often referred to as "state-administered" media (Bermejo et al. 2014). Our criteria for selecting a country's public media for analysis are (1) strength of democracy: the country must be ranked as a "full" or "flawed" democracy in the EIU's 2019 Democracy Index; (2) geographic spread: up to four of the highest-ranked countries selected per region, except Western Europe, where we include the U.K. as a fifth country due to the strength of the BBC as an exemplar of public media systems, and Asia and Australasia, where we include Taiwan and India as fifth and sixth countries due to the vast geographic and geopolitical sweep of this region and due to India's large international footprint in terms of population and economy; (3) indication that quality data is available: the country must be included among prior public media research produced by Benson et al. (2017), Benson and Powers (2011), Bermejo et al. (2014), or the Public Media Alliance (Warner 2019).[4]

We also include stronger democracies included in each of Hallin and Mancini's three media system typologies: Democratic Corporatist (blending commercial and state/civic logics, high journalistic professionalism, media parallelism with civic groups); Polarized Pluralist (higher state intervention in media markets, lower journalistic professionalism, strong parallelism among media and political parties); and Liberal (strong commercial logics, limited state intervention, high journalistic professionalism, low political parallelism).

Our final selection includes the following countries spanning EIU's seven defined geographic regions and Hallin and Mancini's (2004) three media system models: New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and India (Asia and Australasia); Estonia, Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Latvia (Eastern Europe); Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, and Argentina (Latin America and the Caribbean); Israel and Tunisia (Middle East and North Africa); Canada and United States (North America; Liberal model); Mauritius, Botswana, Cabo Verde, and South Africa (sub-Saharan Africa); Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, and Germany (Western Europe; Democratic Corporatist model); France, Spain, and Italy (Western Europe; Polarized Pluralist model); and the United Kingdom and Ireland (Western Europe; Liberal model).

Correlations in Public Media Systems Around the World

We run bivariate correlation and multiple regression analyses on our variables to determine whether there are any notable (weak, fair, moderate, or strong) relationships between EIU's 2019 democracy indices for our 33 countries and our data on funding levels, the mix of public and commercial funding sources, audience shares, GDP per capita, and multiple dimensions of regulatory frameworks.

Funding Levels, Audience Shares, and GDP per Capita

Table 1 shows data on each of our 33 public media systems' overall funding level, per capita funding level (both overall funding per capita and public funding per capita), television market audience share, and GDP per capita, as well as each country's overall EIU Democracy Index score and ranking.

Western European nations, and in particular Nordic countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Finland, lead the EIU's democracy ratings, and public media in these countries also enjoy high levels of per capita funding and large audience shares. Countries in EIU's Latin America and Caribbean region tend to have public media that heavily rely on commercial revenue, either in the form of advertising on public channels or in the form of revenues from commercial broadcasters that the state gathers and disburses to public media. These countries have very low proportions of public funding (6 percent in both Chile and Colombia).

Average per capita funding is $55.86, while average per capita public funding is $41.62. Western European countries tend to greatly exceed these averages (e.g., $115.12 per capita funding overall for Norway and $129.90 per capita funding in the U.K.), while countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, and the Caribbean tend to have much lower per capita funding levels (e.g., $18.38 in Botswana; $16.43 in South Africa; $5.80 in Chile; and $2.37 in Colombia).

The U.S. is a clear outlier in having the world's largest GDP (Worldometer 2020) while its public media receives a well-below-average of $9.87 in per capita funding and $3.16 in per capita public funding. Figure 1 shows how countries compare in their support for public media as a proportion of GDP. Higher ratios show larger disparities between public media funding per capita and GDP per capita.

Only Taiwan's GDP–funding ratio (7,089; Table 1) exceeds the U.S. ratio (6,380). Figure 1 also shows that countries in Latin America and South America have exceptionally large ratios. Two of these countries—Chile and Colombia—have primarily commercial-funded public media systems. Most ratios in other countries in our study remain within a narrow range (Cabo Verde's 306 and Israel's 1,670).

Audience share data also show great disparities among the world's public media, with shares again tending to be higher in Western European countries (e.g., 40 percent in Norway and 35 percent in Sweden) but also in sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., 35.6 percent in Botswana, 38 percent in Cabo Verde, and 38 percent in South Africa). Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have public media with far lower market shares (e.g., 0.4 percent in Uruguay and 2 percent in Argentina). North American public media also are outliers (5.1 percent share in Canada and 2 percent share in the U.S.).

Bivariate Correlation Findings

Our bivariate correlation analyses of relationships between EIU's democracy indices and the data in Table 1 consistently show positive correlations.

Table 1. Democracy Indices, Public Media Funding Levels, GDP, and Audience Shares.

Country (broadcasters)	EIU 2019 Dem. rank	EIU 2019 Dem. Index	Total revenue (millions Intl $)[6]	% of revenue from public funding	Overall funding per capita	Public funding per capita	GDP per capita	GDP/ funding per capita ratio	Aud. share[7] (%)
Norway (NRK)	1	9.87	$616	96	$115.12	$110.73	$66,832	581	40
Iceland (RÚV)	2	9.58	$46	68	$131.40	$89.15	$57,742	439	59
Sweden (SVT, SR)	3	9.39	$901	94	$87.58	$82.75	$55,820	637	35
New Zealand (NZ on Air, TVNZ, RNZ)	4	9.26	$346	38	$70.40	$26.86	$43,953	624	11.7
Finland (YLE)	5	9.25	$569	98	$103.15	$101.29	$51,426	499	43.6
Ireland (RTÉ)	6	9.24	$429	56	$88.74	$49.48	$84,460	952	24.9
Canada (CBC)	7	9.22	$1,412	71	$37.56	$26.51	$51,342	1367	5.1
Denmark (DR, TV2/ Denmark A/S)	7	9.22	$1,059	51	$182.47	$93.16	$60,179	330	75.9
Australia (ABC, SBS)	9	9.09	$1,028	88	$40.79	$35.78	$51,000	1250	18
Germany (ARD, ZDF, Deutschlandradio, DW)	13	8.68	$13,244	86	$165.50	$142.42	$56,278	340	45.2
United Kingdom (BBC, Ch. 4)	14	8.52	$8,579	63	$129.20	$81.30	$46,901	363	31
Uruguay (SODRE, TNU)	15	8.38	$59	88	$16.90	$14.88	$22,515	1333	0.4
Spain (RTVE, FORTE, EFE)	16	8.29	$3,392	80	$72.70	$58.25	$40,552	558	16.5
Mauritius (MBC)	18	8.22	$52	60	$41.43	24.86	$18,488	446	100
France[8]	20	8.12	$5,946	86	$88.67	$75.89	$49,435	558	28.8
Chile (TVN)	21	8.08	$110	6	$5.80	$0.35	$25,155	4337	20
South Korea (KBS)	23	8.00	$1,568	49	$30.33	$14.93	$43,143	1423	10.4

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Country (broadcasters)	EIU 2019 Dem. rank	EIU 2019 Dem. Index	Total revenue (millions Intl $)[6]	% of revenue from public funding	Overall funding per capita	Public funding per capita	GDP per capita	GDP/ funding per capita ratio	Aud. share[7] (%)
Japan (NHK)	24	7.99	$6,913	97	$54.75	$53.15	$43,236	790	25.1
United States (CPB, PBS, NPR)	25	7.96	$3,230	32	$9.87	$3.16	$62,997	6380	2
Estonia (ERR)	27	7.90	$89	83	$66.96	$55.70	$38,915	581	19.5
Israel (IPBC)	28	7.86	$213	88	$24.11	$21.23	$40,261	1670	5
Botswana (BTV, Radio Botswana)	29	7.81	$41	100	$18.38	$18.38	$18,064	983	35.6
Cabo Verde (RTC)	30	7.78	$13	66	$23.01	$15.22	$7,031	306	38
Taiwan (PTS)	31	7.73	$169	70	$7.15	$5.03	$50,716	7089	0.29
Czech Republic (CT, CRo)	32	7.69	$718	89	$67.31	$60.08	$43,300	643	4
Italy (Rai)	35	7.52	$3,972	68	$65.81	$44.58	$44,248	672	35.7
Lithuania (LRT)	36	7.50	$97	94	$34.73	$32.71	$38,502	1109	14.9
Latvia (LTV, LR)	38	7.49	$61	75	$31.61	$23.81	$30,736	972	13.6
South Africa (SABC)	40	7.24	$962	13	$16.43	$2.05	$13,034	793	38
Colombia (RTVC)	45	7.13	$114	6	$2.37	$0.14	$13,951	5884	13
Argentina (RTA)	48	7.02	$324	79	$7.35	$5.78	$23,597	3210	2
India (Prasar Bharati)	51	6.90	$2,302	65	$1.72	$1.12	$6,186	3598	8
Tunisia (ETT)	53	6.72	$44	64	$4.07	$2.61	$10,217	2513	23.4

Note. GDP=gross domestic product; EIU=Economist Intelligence Unit.

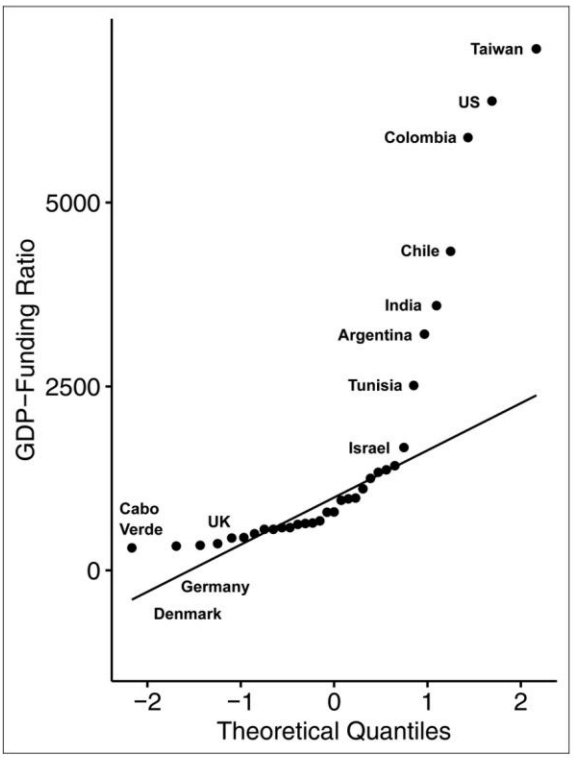

Figure 1. Distribution of countries by gross domestic product (GDP)–funding ratios.

Among variables specific to public media, funding levels produce the strongest positive correlations, often rising to the moderate level (RQ1). The EIU's overall Democracy Index has a nearly strong positive correlation with overall funding per capita (0.75) and a moderate correlation with public funding per capita (0.683), which is a portion of overall funding per capita.[5] EIU's political participation and political culture indices are moderately and positively correlated with funding per capita (0.67 and 0.634, respectively). Fair or moderate correlations are found for funding per capita and electoral process (0.641), functioning of government (0.503), and

civil liberties (0.514). Finally, weak positive correlations are noted for audience share for most of EIU's democracy indices, with the exception of the negligible correlation with the electoral process. The mix of public and private funding (percent of funding from public funds) shows negligible or weak positive correlations with EIU's democracy indices.

GDP per capita (2019) shows fair to moderate positive correlations with all of the democracy indices (RQ2). We also conduct bivariate correlations for GDP per capita and per capita public funding levels (government sources only; correlated according to years for which data was gathered), finding a moderate positive correlation (0.692, not in Table 2).

Table 2. Correlations Between EIU Democracy Indices and Public Media Funding Levels, Audience Shares, and GDP per Capita (2019) in 33 Countries.

EIU variable	Funding/audience variables	Spearman's coefficient
Democracy Index	Percent of funding from public funds	0.175
	Overall funding per capita	0.75
	Public funding per capita	0.683
	Audience share	0.384
	GDP per capita (2019)	0.732
Electoral process	Percent of funding from public funds	0.204
	Overall funding per capita	0.641
	Public funding per capita	0.608
	Audience share	0.159
	GDP per capita (2019)	0.642
Functioning of government	Percent of funding from public funds	0.145
	Overall funding per capita	0.503
	Public funding per capita	0.465
	Audience share	0.305
	GDP per capita (2019)	0.578
Political participation	Percent of funding from public funds	0.078
	Overall funding per capita	0.67
	Public funding per capita	0.614
	Audience share	0.361
	GDP per capita (2019)	0.625
Political culture	Percent of funding from public funds	0.165
	Overall funding per capita	0.634
	Public funding per capita	0.575
	Audience share	0.364
	GDP per capita (2019)	0.646
Civil liberties	Percent of funding from public funds	0.218
	Overall funding per capita	0.514
	Public funding per capita	0.467
	Audience share	0.265
	GDP per capita (2019)	0.514

Note. GDP=gross domestic product; EIU=Economist Intelligence Unit.

Addendum F

https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/federal-funding-responses-to-questions