

**THE MEDIA MAP PROJECT**  
**A RESOURCE ON THE IMPACT OF MEDIA DEVELOPMENT WORLDWIDE**

**Review of Literature**  
Amelia Arsenault & Shawn Powers

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This report explores the origins of media development research, outlines existing empirical measurements of the impact of media development projects, and examines relevant theories about the relationship between media modernization and societal progress.

In reviewing the literature, it lays the groundwork for The Media Map Project, a study on the impact of media development worldwide.

## Executive Summary

This review of the literature explores the origins of media development research, outlines existing empirical measurements of the impact of media development projects, and examines broader theories about the relationship between media and societal progress. It identifies a number of key themes:

### *Origins and Evolution of Media Development:*

- The Modernization paradigm, which posits that non-industrialized countries can develop into modernized societies through the same mechanisms as more developed (Western) countries, is an outmoded way of thinking about media development. Nonetheless, the roots of this paradigm are still evident in much current thinking about media development and implementation of media development interventions.
- There is not necessarily a simple causal relationship between changes in the media and economic and social development. Media can be an important piece of the overall development process, but successful media development is not possible without a supportive enabling environment.
- Effective media development assistance must take into account and respect local conditions, cultures, and attitudes and remain flexible enough to allow for authentic and continued local input.
- The agendas of donors and implementers should be weighed against the needs of local partners and intended beneficiaries in order for projects to become sustainable reform efforts.

### *Empirical Measurements of Impact:*

- Specific media development projects are, at times, over analyzed, while the broader empirical relationship between media modernization and development is far from understood. Current media development research typically focuses on specific media initiatives, lacking a contextual analysis of either other development interventions or of local conditions and culture. Moreover, studies have been ad hoc, dependent on limited funding, and inconsistent in terms of their scope, method and analytic strength.

- There is a clear disconnect between research conducted by media development practitioners, evaluating individual projects and the broader academic community of experts studying the relationship between media and society in the developing world. Bridging this disconnect can help create a balance between quality research at the micro, macro and meso levels of analysis that can help create a broader, empirically based understanding of the relationship between media and development.
- More audience reception and audience need studies are especially needed, because of their critical value in constructing effective and efficient media development initiatives.
- There is a need for a systematic evaluation of media development assistance, including the use of innovative, flexible and agreed upon methods, metrics and research questions. This will arguably allow for a more clear and accurate reflection of the success and importance of media development initiatives in the overall development process from around the world.

#### *Why develop the media?*

- A flourishing news media system may not propel democratic reforms, but broader democratization is unlikely to take place without them.
- News media are most likely to facilitate civil society and democratic culture when they represent a plurality of community opinions while remaining, in practice and reputation, independent from the influence of established government, corporate and political organizations.
- Over the long term, there appears to be a strong and positive relationship between independent and pluralistic media and economic progress, largely due to the role that an independent and pluralistic media can play in fostering greater accountability and transparency in public institutions, critical factors for generating public and international confidence in governments and the markets they oversee.
- In numerous contexts and in nuanced ways, media play a critical role in society, shaping political, economic, social and cultural structures, habits and norms. An important example is how television programming featuring locally contextualized yet progressive characters can significantly impact behavioral norms in similarly progressive ways in developing countries.

In addition, this review suggests that a number of questions require further attention from media development practitioners and researchers. Areas identified as particularly in need of research and analysis include:

- (1) Empirical studies on the impact of media development assistance on the media sector and on other development sectors; especially studies that use sources other than Freedom House's Freedom of the Press index to measure media development.
- (2) Identifying what types of interventions are effective and under what conditions.
- (3) Developing a way of looking at myriad factors at play that influence development, including but not isolating media as a key factor.
- (4) Focusing on the ultimate targets of media development assistance: the audience and/or media users. Analyzing media reach, the voice of the public, and the ways in which audience use media to make decisions that affect their lives.
- (5) Identifying how, why and how much media development funds are spent or misspent.
- (6) Paying greater attention to the current and potential role of women and other traditionally under-represented groups.
- (7) Measuring the interactions between global, regional, national, and local media systems in the specific contexts in which media development projects are taking place.
- (8) Investigating the roles of communication technology in society from a cross-cultural perspective.
- (9) Exploring the current and potential influence of new and mobile information communication technology development on media development and vice versa.
- (10) Developing indicators that can be used to assess the causal relationship between media development and changes at the individual, organizational, community, and societal levels. Improving short, intermediate, and long-term metrics.

## WHAT IS MEDIA DEVELOPMENT?

The Media Map Project defines media development simply:

The process of improving the media's ability to communicate with the public, and  
The process of improving the public's ability to communicate, using media

For the purposes of this paper, **media development** always refers to outsiders' participation in this process.

In this context, media development refers to **a host of activities designed to improve the capacity of private, community, public and/or state media and to promote media independence and pluralism**. Typically financed by international donors, activities include:

- Training in: journalism, content development, audience research, media monitoring
- Financial support to: news organizations, journalism schools, new media outlets
- Creation of professionalization programs
- Developing professional and trade associations and supporting NGOs
- Promoting better business and financial practices in the media sector
- Developing legal and regulatory frameworks to support media independence,
- Initiatives designed to improve media accountability, equality, and diversity.

While public diplomacy, international broadcasting, and strategic communication programs designed to alter the balance and content of media within a particular community or nation are at times complementary to these efforts, **media development refers specifically to those efforts that focus on strengthening and expanding indigenous media systems**.

(Kumar, 2006, Price & Krug, 2002)

## Introduction

Media development emerged as a significant component of international development aid in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Civil society and development workers attributed communism's end, at least in part, to the introduction of dissident voices via radio stations like Radio Free Europe (RFE) and the underground replication and distribution of restricted publications (*samizdat*).<sup>1</sup> As the Iron Curtain tumbled down, countless agencies and actors poured into Eastern Europe, contributing significant amounts of money to help develop independent media and encourage full democratic transitions.<sup>2</sup> In the ensuing years, media development activities have expanded both in area and scope. Concurrently, a number of reports, studies, articles, and books have come out that reflect on how and why the media should be developed. However, as of yet, media development remains a relatively little known and poorly understood component of international development, continuing to comprise a small fraction of over all donor spending. The following document chronicles existing theories, reports, and studies about the practice of media development. Together, this body of literature demonstrates medias' current and potential utility as a tool with which to achieve and facilitate broader economic, social, and political development aims and objectives.

Media development literature is as varied and disparate as the actors involved. In order to document this broad and diverse body of literature, the following review proceeds in three separate but interrelated sections. Part I outlines the early evolution of the field. While often overlooked in contemporary conversations, media development began much earlier than 1989, and many of the themes and assumptions developed during the post World War II period still color contemporary debates. Part II provides an overview of the literature concerned with the state of the practice of media development. Finally, Part III unpacks the bodies of literature concerned with the relationship between media development and political, economic, and societal transformations (or lack of). This literature review covers a diverse array of publications, in terms of authorship and approach, ranging from practitioner reflections, to conference proceedings, to academic studies. Thus, the three part structure of this narrative

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<sup>1</sup> Samizdat was a key form of dissident activity across the Soviet bloc in which individuals reproduced censored publications by hand and passed the documents from reader to reader, thus building a foundation for the successful resistance of the 1980s.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of this period see: Kumar (2006).

serves as an organizational tool to highlight differing approaches rather than an agreed upon intellectual or theoretical divisions.

## **Part I: Origins and Evolution**

While media assistance programs mushroomed after 1989, they were not born in a vacuum, but were indirectly shaped by theories and assumptions about media development formulated during and after World War II. The Axis and Allied powers' successful use of propaganda to mobilize entire populations behind war aims, not surprisingly, encouraged a healthy respect for the power of the media as a tool of nation building. Against the backdrop of post war reconstruction, revolutionary movements sweeping Latin America and Africa, the proliferation of radio and television around the world, and the reconfiguration of the international economics and trade system, a group of scholars sometimes described as the Bretton Woods School came to the fore.<sup>3</sup> Their work, at least at the time, commonly subscribed to a Modernization Theory of media development: that the introduction of modern media and communications systems and practices were critical prerequisites of modernity (e.g. development towards an American or European model).<sup>4</sup> Implied, and sometimes overtly stated, in their work was the presupposition that the goal of development should be to propel traditional or indigenous cultures towards modernity and that traditional practices and institutions that were not "modern" stood in the way of development.<sup>5</sup> Following these assumptions, donors moved to build media structures in developing countries with arguably little attention to local circumstances. In other words, these early efforts assumed that once introduced, modern media systems would function in identical ways in developing countries as they did in developed ones. While these specific studies have largely dropped from the discourse on media development, they established a paradigm for media development that many believe lingers into the present.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This group of scholars was named after the 1944 conference that created the IMF/WB. While they did not refer to themselves as the Bretton Woods school as the time, this term has been used to denote this body of works' close connection to the broader shifts in economic theory and institutions.

<sup>4</sup> For more on modernization theory see Park & Curran (2000), Melkote (1991), Melkote & Steeves (2001), and Rogers (2008).

<sup>5</sup> For example, see Fredrick S. Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm, (1956).

<sup>6</sup> In a detailed analysis of media development literature between 1960 and 1989, Fair (1989) found that by and large the modernization paradigm continued to dominate contemporary discourses on media's contribution to media development and media's ability to influence audiences in target countries.

Members of the Bretton Woods School authored several key foundational texts that would guide the practice of media development during the 1960s and 1970s. Sometimes called the bible of development communication studies, Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* in 1958 was an important force for encouraging the United Nations and its subsidiary organizations to adopt media development projects. In his study of Balgat, Turkey he argued that the media were key socializing institutions that encouraged indigenous populations to embrace modernity. Following the book's publication, the UN General Assembly called for a program to help developing countries expand their mass media systems and announced an initiative to encourage its member states to include media development as a fundamental component of their economic development (Hyden & Leslie 2002: 3). In 1960, Walter Rostow (advisor to both President John F. Kennedy and later Lyndon B. Johnson on national security issues) published *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, which highlighted the widespread adoption of ICTs and media platforms (mainly radio) as hallmarks of modernity. In 1963, Everett Rogers released the *Diffusion of Innovations*, which stressed the importance of the mass media as conduits for changing the work practices of the rural poor. In 1964, Wilbur Schramm<sup>7</sup>, in partnership with UNESCO, released *Mass Media and National Development*. Later that year he published a similar, but more academically-oriented text, *Mass Media and National Development: the Role of Information in Developing Countries*. Together, Schramm's two works went on to become core texts for generations of academics and practitioners interested in media development. While individual members of the Bretton Woods School later questioned many of the basic assumptions embedded in the Modernity paradigm, together, these works helped to shape scholarly research on social change and development for decades, and inspired the formulation and implementation of media development programs by international agencies such as UNESCO, UNDP, USAID, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), and later the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Often called the "father of communication studies," Schramm founded the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. He also co-authored the influential book *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*, a foundational text for those concerned with media, law, and policy and journalism studies for many years. He had also investigated the role of communications systems in the communist occupation of Seoul (Peterson, Seibert & Schramm 1956; Riley & Schramm 1951).

<sup>8</sup> See Melkote (1991) and Melkote & Steeves (2001) for a detailed analysis of the development of the media for modernization paradigm. Before 1990, the USIA (closed in 1999) was the principal US organization responsible for media development activities. During the 1990s, USAID began to take on greater responsibility in this area. USIA

Criticisms of the Modernization paradigm were almost immediate. By the mid-1960s, a wave of scholars emerged that pointed towards the flawed logic behind modernization theory, which argued that the process of modernizing media systems and practices in developing countries would necessarily result in broader political and economic development. Indeed, in practice, the mere introduction of media structures resembling those in the West did not automatically produce a flourishing Fourth Estate Press that successfully diffused progressive economic, political, and social innovations as so many practitioners had predicted. Scholars like Paulo Freire (1970), Elihu Katz and E. G. Wedell (1977), and others argued for a more nuanced examination of audience characteristics and agency that had been routinely discounted in media development programs steeped in the Modernization paradigm. Paulo Freire's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) helped to launch a series of studies into the importance of participatory communication, based on dialogue between indigenous populations and intervening parties rather than one-way flows. Katz and Wedell's *Broadcasting in the Third World* (1977) looked at broadcasting in 11 countries in the context of a broader debate about development and asked: is "development toward the type of industrialized and urbanized society that is thought to have brought enviable benefits to the countries of Western Europe and North America... what most countries of the Third World really need?" (p. 4).

Other critics were more concerned with structures of inequality vis-à-vis the media, and examined how the Modernization paradigm of media development unfairly favored so-called first world countries. A fundamental tenant of the post World War II reconstruction was a commitment to the free flow of information. During the 1960s and 1970s, an expanding array of scholars inspired by Dependency Theory,<sup>9</sup> pointed towards the fact that the "free flow of information" was in fact unidirectional and further privileged the richer nations, a relationship that represented a new form of colonial domination. Media development as practiced in the global south, was linked to: "cultural imperialism" (Schiller 1976), "media imperialism" (Boyd-Barrett 1977; Lee 1979), "structural imperialism" (Galtung 1971), "cultural dependency and

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and the BBG engaged in promoting journalistic training and free press in foreign countries, and they have also implemented projects that would fall under the category of "strategic communication" or "public diplomacy." These latter two areas are outside of the scope of media development as defined here.

<sup>9</sup> This refers to a body of theories that suggest that rich countries grow richer through relationships of production with poorer countries and that periphery countries would actually benefit from less not more integration into the international system. By extension, then, these theories suggested that developing countries should not work to build media and communication systems that were compatible with Western models.

domination" (Mohammadi 1995), "cultural synchronization" (Hamelink 1983), "electronic colonialism" (McPhail 1987), "communication imperialism" (Lee 1988), "ideological imperialism," and "economic imperialism"(Mattelart 1979, 1994).

In the 1970s, inspired by this new skeptical take on the role of communication in development, members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) put forward a proposal for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) that would help to rectify the north/south imbalance of control over communication flows. In response to these calls, UNESCO formed the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems chaired by Irish Nobel laureate Seán MacBride. In 1980, the Commission released its report, *Many Voices, One World: Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow: Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order*, commonly referred to as the MacBride Report. The NWICO suggested many reforms including an equitable distribution of radio spectrum, the end of the dominance of Western news agencies,<sup>10</sup> and laws protecting the information sovereignty of individual states. Both the United States and the United Kingdom criticized the NWICO and the *MacBride Report* as anti-free press because it would empower states to restrict the free flow of information. In the aftermath of the report, both the UK and the US ultimately withdrew from UNESCO, not to rejoin until 1997 and 2003 respectively.

Even though the NWICO failed in its attempts at programmatic reform, countries throughout the developing world continued to push for reform in order to ameliorate the prevalence of American media products and Western control over communication infrastructures. The debate about appropriate models for media development and how to best empower citizens of the global south vis-à-vis those of the global north in terms of communication structures and practices has only intensified since the days of the NWICO and the MacBride Commission (e.g. Boyd-Barrett 2006, Chadha & Kavoori, 2000; Ya'u 2005). Many of the debates initiated during the Cold War period of media development, will thus be revisited in Part III, which details the more contemporary literature about the causal relationships between media and development goals. The following section deals more specifically with the literature on the state of media development in practice: texts that explore how and why to intervene in media.

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<sup>10</sup> As late as the 1980s, four Western news agencies -- the Associated Press (US), Reuters (UK), Associated French Press (AFP), and United Press International (UPI)—controlled approximately 80% of international news flowing in and out of newsrooms (Churchill 1991).

## **Part II: The Practice of Media Development**

Particularly during the last two decades, development donors and agencies and a host of private foundations and contractors have engaged in a number of activities designed to influence the form, structure, and practices of media in countries around the world in line with development goals. These include: journalism training and education; training in marketing, business management, and efforts to ensure financial independence; reform of state broadcasters into genuine public service networks; training in professional media ethics, accountability, and professionalism; material assistance (such as radio transmitters); assistance in developing networks of independent media including providing assistance in program sharing arrangements, linking production, distribution, and management of broadcast material; assistance and advice in building democratic legal and regulatory frameworks for media, trade and professional association development; legal defense; conflict prevention; security training; support for legal advocacy; social and cultural development; and new communications technologies, and assistance and training.<sup>11</sup> In recent years, attention has also turned towards calls for “information rights” and educating media consumers through media literacy training and broader campaigns designed to inform citizenry about the roles and responsibilities of the press and the need to think critically about media programming. While far from systematic, there is a host of available literature that investigates, when, why, and how practitioners engage in these activities. This literature can best be divided into three categories (1) literature that documents media assistance projects and reviews particular programs, (2) literature and indexes that empirically measure media and development projects, and (3) literature that explores philosophies of media intervention.

### *The State of Media Development*

There are a number of works that outline the depth and breadth of media development activities. These publications range from state of the field reports to more narrow publications that focus on efforts at the regional, national, and local level. “Mapping Media Assistance” by Monroe Price, Bethany Davis Noll and Daniel De Luce (2002), “The Media Missionaries” by

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<sup>11</sup> List is from: Price, Noll, & De Luce (2002)

Ellen Hume (2002), *Exporting Press Freedom* by Craig LaMay (2007), “U.S. Public and Private Funding of Independent Media Development Abroad” by Peter Graves (2007), and “Non-U.S. Funders of Media Assistance Programs,” by Lee B. Becker and Tudor Vlad (2005), are some of the most recognized attempts at taking stock of the range of practices, and documenting the size and scope of media assistance.

One of the most pressing questions under consideration, is who gets funded and why. Becker and Vlad (2005), in their analysis of non-US funders of media assistance commissioned by the Knight Foundation, estimated that at least 70 organizations in 25 donor countries outside the United States are involved in funding media assistance projects to the tune of \$750 million per year. And a 2007 survey by The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), found that public and private U.S. funding for international media development in 2006 exceeded \$142 million. However, there is a general consensus that complete documentation on the funding of media development programs is difficult if not impossible to achieve. Many donors do not provide fully disaggregated spending reports; moreover, media assistance programs are often part of larger economic and democracy promotion efforts that are rarely independently reported. For example, the US Government Accounting Office (GAO) (2005) estimated that the Department of State and USAID allocated at least “\$40 million in fiscal year 2004 for the development of independent media...however, precise funding levels are difficult to identify due to a lack of agency-wide budget codes to track media development obligations, differing definitions of independent media development, and complex funding patterns (p. 1).” Definitional disagreement about precisely what constitutes media development also presents a challenge in this regard. As the 2008 CIMA report *Empowering Independent Media: U.S. Efforts to Foster Free and Independent News Around the World* points out, how do you classify exchange programs for journalists conceived of as public diplomacy programs, but which might have implications for media development (Kaplan, 2008)? It is also difficult to account for more strategic efforts to bolster opposition media actors in closed societies, which for many reasons donors and implementers do not wish to publicize.

While there is a paucity of documentation on media development funding, there is a burgeoning literature on the programmatic activities of media development practitioners. CIMA, a project of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), maintains an online [database](#) of media assistance literature and has also produced numerous reports chronicling

different media development projects, although these reports tend to be more focused on USAID and other American-funded programs.<sup>12</sup> Multi-lateral organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO and UNDP have also regularly published accounts of their media development activities, as have national development agencies like America's USAID, Canada's IDRC, Britain's DFID.<sup>13</sup> In addition, a number of foundations include media development projects in their portfolios and have produced corresponding reports (e.g. the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the Ford Foundation, the Thompson Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation). NGOs dedicated to media assistance activities like Internews, Panos, IREX, ICFJ, the BBC World Service Trust, and the Institute for War and Peace Reporting regularly release accounts of their activities. There are also a number of regionally focused organizations producing regular research on media development in their respective locales.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, there are a number of publications, mainly produced by practitioners that focus more narrowly on certain facets of media development. The Knight Foundation for Journalism, Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA), CIMA, amongst others, have published extensively on the successes and failures of particular journalism training initiatives (e.g. Kaplan, 2007). Others have looked at the impact of the introduction or expansion of different media platforms.<sup>15</sup> Commissioned reports on the best practices in media, law, and policy are another important area of literature (e.g. Price & Krug, 2002; Djankov et. Al, 2001; Hollifield et. al, 2006; Horwitz, 2006). Advocacy organizations focused on promotion of a free press ethos also regularly release reports on the state of media and democracy and the successes and failures of specific campaigns (e.g. The Freedom of Expression Institute [FXI], MISA, South East Asia Press Alliance, Article 19, Reporters Sans Frontiers, and Media-Alliance).

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<sup>12</sup> See for example: Kaplan (2008), Graves (2007).

<sup>13</sup> Each of these organizations maintains a media development publication archive online. See for example: Souter (2010) for documentation on UNESCO efforts and Hume (2003) and Kumar (2006) for USAID work. DFID reports as well as analysis on media development and media for development activities practiced by the UK government are available through its Research For Development online portal.

<sup>14</sup> For Africa, see for example: MISA and the Freedom of Expression Institute publications. For Eastern Europe, see for example: Stabilitypact.org and MediaCentar Sarajevo. For the Middle East, see for example: the Arab Women Media Center and the Kamal Adham Center for Journalism Training and Research. For South East Asia, see for example Panos South Asia.

<sup>15</sup> Horan (2010), for example, examines the influence of satellite television on the Arab World; and Berger (2007) investigates the implications of new media for journalism.

There are also a number of publications concerned with media pluralism and independence. One of the most remarked efforts in this area was a 2002 UNDP report by Pippa Norris and Dieter Zinnbauer, *Giving Voice to the Voiceless: Good Governance, Human Development & Mass Communications*, which found “that media systems characterized by widespread mass access and by an independent press are most closely associated with systematic indicators of good governance and human development.” (p.5) Gender and racial equity in media is also a growing area of concern. In 2002, MISA published the results of their [Gender and Media Baseline Study](#) (GMBS), a 12-country study of gender representations in the media in SADC countries. With funding from the UN and UNDP, MediaGlobal regularly produces reports on the state of development news. While each of these publications includes an evaluation component, there is a more specialized body of work that looks specifically at empirical measurements of media and development.

#### *Empirical Measurements of Media*

In recent years, there has been a growing consensus about the need to better refine efforts to assess the progress and evaluate the impact of media development. Media development stakeholders have used different types of approaches to determine impact. Some publications are concerned with how to measure changes at the macro (societal) level; how can we access the entire media system in a country or area and measure changes over time? Some of these macro resources were created for various different policy and research audiences; others specifically for media development. Other publications focus on the micro (i.e. individual or project) level, such as how many and how well journalists have been trained. Still others concentrate on meso (i.e. organizational) level changes, such as the extent to which recipient organizations achieve financial sustainability or adopt “better” news practices.

Several common indexes are often used for macro-level assessments of national media environments.

(1) Freedom House has published an assessment of the media landscape in 195 countries, *Freedom of the Press: A Global Survey of Media Independence* annually since 1980. Its 23 questions address the legal, political, and economic environments of countries. Individual country reports assesses the degree of print, broadcast, and internet freedom in all 195 countries each calendar

year and then rates the country's media as "Free," "Partly Free," or "Not Free." Beginning in 1995, Freedom House also introduced an annual Nations in Transit Survey evaluating democratic performance in 29 former Soviet countries in seven categories, including media independence. For each country, a panel of academic advisors for each country assigns a rating from 1-7 in .25 increments. A quarter point increment indicates moderate change and a full point or more indicates significant change.

(2) The IREX Media Sustainability Index (MSI) is a second index used to assess the whole media system of a country, though it is currently only available for 80 countries. Launched in 2000, the MSI relies on internal rather than external assessments of media environments. Countries are assessed by a local panel of media practitioners and related professionals who are asked to evaluate the media along five areas: "1. Legal and social norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information, 2. Journalism meets professional standards of quality, 3. Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable, objective news, 4. Independent media are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence, and 5. Supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media."

(3) Reporters Without Borders (RSF) publishes the Worldwide Press Freedom Index, which measures the degree of press freedom in more than 175 countries. RSF rankings are designed to measure press freedom not press quality in a particular country. The index is constructed from the results of a 40-question survey of RSF partner organizations, its network of 130 correspondents around the world, and to journalists, researchers, jurists and human rights activists about such issues as press freedom violations, media self-censorship, and funding restrictions.

There has been considerable debate about the utility of each of these indexes; and a number of researchers have explored their reliability and applicability (e.g. Burgess 2010, Becker & Vlad, 2005). Some scholars and practitioners have questioned the cultural relativity of Freedom House, an organization that receives 2/3 of its funding from the United States government, and of IREX, an organization with close financial and personal ties to USAID. Others feel that MSI and RSF indicators are not sufficient; because they rely on revolving teams of experts, some

critics argue, their results are not comparable from year to year, or from country to country. However, Becker and Vlad (2009) found that Freedom House, MSI, and RSF evaluations generally reach the same conclusions, and more importantly correlate with public opinion in a given society about media performance. In other words, citizen opinions about the relative performance of their media systems tend to coincide with the available indices, suggesting that the indicators are reliable.

As will be discussed in the next section, there have been several studies that examine the link between media development and democratization and economic development using these indicators (e.g. Norris & Zinnbauer 2002; Djankov, Islam, & McLiesh, 2002; and Guseva, Marina, Nakaa, Novel et. al, 2008). However, some argue that these studies rely on correlations with indicators representing a Western bias, and question their conclusions. Christina Holtz-Bacha (2004), for example, stresses that "press freedom is understood differently in the various parts of the world... even established democracies do not interpret press freedom in exactly the same way" (p. 2). Puddephat (2007) argues that "global indicators of media development drawn up in the West may lack the degree of customization required to reflect the local media 'ecology' in which they are being applied." In order to address a perceived need for cultural specificity, some organizations have developed regionally tailored national media environment indexes. Since 2002, the [Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance](#) has also incorporated press freedom measures. Beginning in 2005, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, in partnership with MISA, funded the production of the [African Media Barometer](#) and more recently, the Asian Media Barometer. Burgess (2010) argues that the African Media Barometer has some differences such as favoring a broadcast system with a mix of private, public, and community ownership. However, he notes that its method is modeled on that of IREX's MSI, and "it's hard to point to many assumptions and values in the African Media Barometer that are uniquely "African"" (p.23).

Debates about the assessing the impact of media development at the programmatic level are closely tied to the larger debates about the appropriate uses of macro-level indicators and assessments. The body of literature that focuses on how to measure and evaluate the success and failure of individual programs is commonly referred to as monitoring and evaluation (M&E) literature. M&E of media development programs typically rely on one or several evaluation techniques including: tabulating attendance at trainings and other activities; media monitoring;

content analysis of the relevant media texts, interviews, surveys, focus groups, and public opinion polls. There are also some databases and knowledge sharing sites aggregating M&E publications and methodologies across development sectors, including media and communications, such as: the [OECD-DAC Evaluation Resource Centre](#) (DEReC), [United Nations Evaluation Group](#) (UNEG), the [Australian Development Gateway](#), the [African Community of Practice on Managing for Development Results](#) (AfCop), and the [Asian Development Bank: Independent Evaluation](#). Rick Davies, an independent M&E consultant, also maintains an M&E developments [newsletter](#). There are also several journals dedicated to M&E research in general including: the *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, *Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, *Evaluation Review*, *American Journal of Evaluation*, *New Directions for Evaluation*, *Evaluation and Program Planning*, and *Evaluation Exchange*.

In recent years, there have been increased calls in the development world for showing compelling evidence of the impact of foreign interventions. Thus, donors have begun to provide more funding for M&E and require an M&E plan in the project proposal phase. As a sign of this trend, donor organizations have published handbooks on how their employees and collaborators can better incorporate M&E into projects from the proposal phase on down (e.g. Danida, 2007; DFID, 2005). Other publications have highlighted the difficulties with implementing donor demands. Mosher (2009) presents the results of a series of interviews with M&E professionals discussing the major hurdles, including: lack of baseline data, the expense of proper M&E, and the problem of identifying appropriate metrics.

Indeed, a significant portion of M&E literature addresses the question of when and how metrics for assessing national media environments should be applied to specific programs. While the designers of the MSI and Freedom House indices have asserted the fact that they were not designed as assessment tools for individual projects, they continue to be used as such. USAID requests for proposals, for example, cite the MSI rankings as the main metrics used to evaluate the success of projects. And GAO (2005) found that USAID and the State Department

“often selected media indexes, such as the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) and Freedom House’s Press Freedom survey, to measure the results of their independent media development efforts. The MSI and the Press Freedom survey assess the freedom of media in a country; however, when used alone as performance indicators, media indexes are of limited utility in

measuring the specific contributions of specific activities or combined U.S. efforts toward developing independent media in particular countries.”

Partially in response for calls for program level indicators, in 2008, UNESCO published *Media Development Indicators: A Framework for Assessing Media Development*, which suggested five categories for assessment.<sup>16</sup> These categories include five macro-level categories subdivided into sub-categories that can be used as metrics for specific programs.<sup>17</sup> They represented a break from previous indices because they were “not designed to provide a longitudinal analysis over time, or a means for comparing different countries,” but rather “they are an analytic tool designed to help stakeholders assess the state of the media and measure the impact of media development programmes.” UNESCO’s report served to intensify debate about the role of indicators rather than to provide any agreed upon standard of measurement

More recently, USAID conducted an *Indicator Gap Analysis*, an evaluation of existing metrics that concluded that extant indicators serve as media environment tracking tools, but that operational measures for media development are still in demand (Wanchek & Carter, 2010). One of the central problems pointed towards in the literature on indicators is the lack of research into how to measure cross-level impact of media development. In other words, how do individual programs or sets of programs influence macro and meso level changes in the media environment? And what sort of operational metrics can be used to evaluate this influence? This leads to the need for better means of assessing what exactly constitutes a national media environment, an increasingly challenging endeavor given rapid changes in the available communication technologies and the rise of new media.

Several organizations have held conferences and published papers about the need to develop standardized monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for media development at the programmatic level, including UNESCO and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the Catholic Media Council (CAMECO), the Global

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<sup>16</sup> 1. A system of regulation and control conducive to freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity of the media. 2. Plurality and diversity of media, a level economic playing field and transparency of ownership. 3. Media as a platform for democratic discourse. 4. Professional capacity building and supporting institutions that underpins freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity; and 5. Infrastructural capacity is sufficient to support independent and pluralistic media.

<sup>17</sup> For more about indicators, see: Becker et. al (2007), Becker and Vlad (2009), Davis (2005, 2009), Wanchek & Carter (2010).

Forum for Media Development (GFMD), and CIMA. Individual organizations have also turned their attention to how to refine existing assessment tools, develop new ones, and collect data designed to better guide project planning and implementation. The IAM Institute for Applied Media Studies in Zurich and the BBC World Service Trust have been working on developing new content analysis tools. The United States Institute for Peace (USIP) has designed a new computer program for assessing media landscapes that will take evaluators step-by-step from taking baseline media environment measurements through to post-program assessments. CAMECO is also currently working on a [Wiki site](#) as a resource for media development M&E. InterMedia has developed a new online resource tool for media and communications development practitioners called [AudienceScapes](#), which catalogues in-depth interviews with policy makers, national surveys on communication usage, coupled with tailored research on how audiences receive information about specific topics like personal finance and health. The website is designed to provide background for project planning and pre and post program audience behavior measures, although it currently only offers such data for a select group of pilot countries.

### *Philosophies About Intervention*

There is also a large body of literature concerned with examining how and if media development, historically defined, should continue to take place. These works center on questions of priority, best practices, and the importance of the development context. First, some accounts rank or highlight the importance of certain interventions under certain conditions. Orme (2010), for instance, concludes that peacekeeping radio efforts such as those established by the UN, “contributed more to media development in certain post-conflict countries than any other concurrent media assistance programs” (p. 8).

Second, another important debate centers on questions of best practices. The principal countries deploying media assistance programs are home to very different media systems. These differences are reflected in the debates about best practices and policies. One such debate surrounds whether free market, public service models, or a hybrid model is best. Curran (2000) argues that the corruption of media through reliance on the free market makes it impossible to argue that the media is performing appropriately. Moreover, transitional societies may be exceptionally vulnerable to this threat in that a particular group of social or

cultural elites who control a majority of the resources and wealth of a country may have an opportunity to control the content and form of the newly liberalized media. Hackett and Zhao (2005) contend that the essence of media independence and freedom lies in its non-monopolization, whether by the government, the market, or by dominant social forces. Thus, it is not so much the modernization of societies as much as the ways in which development and resources are distributed between different social groups that leads to democracy. Other authors focus on how best practices for media development are shaped by corresponding governments' attitudes towards information sovereignty<sup>18</sup> (Price 2002).

Third, one of the principal criticisms of modernization theory was that it assumed a uniform linear relationship between the presence of media structures and movements towards "modernity" – that all countries would follow the same trajectory regardless of geography, culture, or history. A side effect of this linear assumption was that theories about how to influence the media developed by researchers in the West, about the West, were applied in other locations with little alteration. Several writers have investigated the importance of context when planning and assessing media development projects. Alluding to the lingering modernity paradigm, Berger (2005) and others refer to the prevalence of a "communicationalist modernist" approach, that presents communication infrastructure and a robust media environment as a necessary precondition for political and developmental messages to reach people, who would otherwise be in the "dark." This approach assumes a one-way flow of communication from development and donor organizations and/or politicians and public opinion leaders. Looking specifically at the shortcomings of this approach in the African context, Kivikuru points out that when examining media development: there is a role for the media and a role for the "so-called man-on-the-street ... or in the African situation, rather, the man-in-the-village. A Northerner recognizes the significance of the first factor, while the second easily escapes attention, because some of the 'ancient' social structures are not easily visible to an outsider (2006: 6)."

One response to the unidirectional approach to media development has been a renewed focus on incorporating local, disadvantaged voices in media development efforts. By focusing on giving public space and recognition to groups that are in most need of improved

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<sup>18</sup> In the international context, information sovereignty refers to every nation-state's right to be free from external efforts at controlling the production and use of information inside its sovereign jurisdiction.

governance, such projects aim at making governments and communities more accountable and responsive to human needs. Projects that emphasize disenfranchised voices are grounded in a pluralistic understanding of the different roles media can play in different contexts and allow for the evolution of a generation of media industries embedded in local media cultures, thus increasing their ability to connect with and impact society. (Norris and Zinnbauer, 2002; Servaes, 1999).

A growing, but still relatively modest number of scholars have examined the problems with and solutions to applying media development policies developed in one region or country to those in another. Audience research has been particularly important in this regard. Liebes and Katz's (1990) investigation of differing reactions to the TV show *Dallas* was a landmark study illustrating that cultures interpret and utilize media products differently. Studies that focus on community radio projects also emphasize the importance of audience attributes (Teer-Tomaselli, 2001; Teer-Tomaselli and Mjwacu, 2003), finding highly varying levels of participation in and satisfaction with community radio as an alternative to mainstream radio. There are a number of publications that highlight the importance of audience research in planning, implementing, and assessing media development programs. These include seminal publications such as Graham Mytton's (1992) *Handbook on Radio and Television Audience Research* and books such as Bella Mody's (1991) *Designing Messages for Development Communication: An Audience Participation-Based Approach*.

The majority of publications discussed in this section focus narrowly on media development, and have been produced outside the walls of academia or with non-academic audiences in mind. While academics often serve as consultants and implementers for media development projects, there is infrequent overlap between academic explorations with relevance to media development and professional publications focused on more programmatic issues. These works examining approaches to media development are embedded within a larger literature dedicated to exploring how and why the media is important.

### **Part III: Why Develop the Media?**

The previous section focused on literature more concerned with the how of media development. In this section, we return to the why. Lerner and Schramm's early works left a lasting legacy. Modernization theory linked with economic development dominated ideas about the role of the media in development for decades. Some complain that the modernization approach is deeply entrenched in broader development paradigms, and that many media development programs are deployed with little attention to how and why the media are important in particular societies (e.g. Fair, 1989; Melkote, 1991; Putzel & van der Zwann, 2006). However, while assumptions about the linear relationship between media and development may linger in some circles, there is a growing and diverse body of literature investigating the implications of evolutions in media systems. These works may not deal directly with media development programs per se, but have current and potential relevance for practitioners of media development. They speak to the question: why develop the media? There are many answers.

### *Economic Development*

While early media development literature highlighted the importance of media and communications structures as important infrastructure for economic development, in formal literature social scientists, particularly economists, largely assumed rather than explored the relationships between information and economic progress until well into the 1970s (Stiglitz, 1985). The first wave of media development efforts coincided with a broader period in foreign assistance focused on economic development, which in turn was supposed to foster democratic development.<sup>19</sup> Researchers have quantitatively identified a link between media development and economic development since the early 1960s (e.g. Nixon, 1960; Lowenstein, 1970). More recently, scholars have argued that successful economic development is, at its core, characterized by widespread coordination, and that effective coordination between various political and social actors is best facilitated through a free media. Put another way, "development of a free media is critical for shifting games of conflict to games of coordination" (Coyne and Leeson, 2004: 40).

For example, research points to the critical role that an independent and robust media played in fostering the transition of Hungary and Poland, after the collapse of the USSR, from

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<sup>19</sup> For an overview of the history of development aid see Carothers (1999).

economic stagnation and poverty to sustainable and systematic economic growth. In both cases the media played a key role in coordinating discourse among policymakers, the public, and other stakeholders in establishing policies that were mutually viable for all parties. In both cases, open and free media fostered greater transparency and inclusion in the economic policymaking process, thus resulting in better economic policies. The same research also found that Ukraine—a country that gained its independence from the USSR around the same time as Poland and Hungary—failed to achieve sustainable and robust economic growth in part due to the lack of an independently organized and operated media (Coyne and Leeson, 2008). Broadly speaking, case studies from around the world demonstrate that, over the long term, there is a strong and positive relationship between independent and free media and economic growth, largely due to the role that an independent and free media can have in fostering greater accountability and transparency in public institutions, critical factors for generating public and international confidence in governments and the markets they oversee (Islam, 2003).

In *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen (2001) suggests that expanding human freedoms is both the means and the goal of development. This “human capacity” paradigm has been very influential in the evolution of approaches to development, including media development. Media is important to human capacity approaches, because a society’s media system is directly related to its degree of freedom of expression, and provides a necessary platform through which the public and governments negotiate inclusive development. Further, Sen has repeatedly emphasized that any country that has had a free press and multi-party democracy has never experienced a famine. These findings have generated support amongst development stakeholders for the importance of a free press in all societies. Therefore, following Sen, the media have a key role to play in expanding human capabilities and overall development.

In 2002, the World Bank released *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development* (Islam, 2002), an edited volume with contributions by major thinkers in media development which built upon the chapter on media development in the *2002 World Development Report: Building Institutions for Markets*. Several of the contributors evaluate how the media as an economic sector should be structured to better achieve media pluralism and independence, which in turn improves economic governance. Djankov et. al (2002), for

instance, found that state ownership of media correlated to weaker security of property and higher likelihood of seizure of assets (p. 161).

### *Democratization*

Modernization theory pre-supposed that a robust media would facilitate a robust democracy. In the ensuing decades, literature on the links between media and democratization has become increasingly sophisticated. This work can be divided into three categories: (1) What can the media do in terms of democratization?; (2) How should the media be structured for democracy?; and (3) How should media development projects intervene in this equation?

The first question for those concerned with media and democracy is: how can media improve processes of governance and accountability? As little as a decade ago, it seemed that experts agreed upon the conventional wisdom relating democratic governance to media. Taken as given was that a well-functioning press and an institutional commitment to the freedom of expression is essential to a healthy democracy. Therefore, the presence or absence of a democratic mass media could serve as an index for the political, cultural and ideological leanings of entire nations and regions of the world. This wisdom – echoing beliefs going back at least as far as the East-West divisions of the Cold War – was used both to categorize various nations and regions and to craft democratization policies. However, the proliferation of new media and ICTs and a movement away from the modernization paradigm has called traditional relationships into question. Scholars (e.g. Bennett et al 2007; Huntington, 1993; Inglehart, 1998) and advocacy organizations alike (e.g.; Index on Censorship; International Freedom of Expression Exchange, Reporters Without Borders, and The World Press Freedom Committee) point out that, contrary to the liberal communication narrative, the internationalization of communications has largely failed to spark global democratic transitions that so many predicted at the end of the Cold War.

Other researchers have focused on when and where the media may impede democratic transition. Stiglitz (2008) identifies several areas where the media negatively influence public policy. When individual journalists have economic or career incentives to publish high profile stories, they sometimes sacrifice reporting standards for personal gain. Similarly, politicians, particularly those involved in corruption, have personal incentives to put forward distorted

information. Stiglitz argues that the only viable check and balance on these incentives to distort the role of the press are through the diversification of media platforms and sources.

In an effort to shift away from the modernity paradigm a number of scholars have looked at the relationship between media and democracy across different models of governance. Norris (2002) conducted a comparative statistical analysis of 135 nations to evaluate under what conditions the media positively influenced democratic governance. The initial impetus for the study came from the observation that, while most liberal theorists argue that media liberalization necessarily results in democratization, since the fall of the Soviet Union, the processes of global democratization have seemingly slowed down. Norris suggests that the globalization of media sources, in and of itself, has not increased the strength of democracies, and in some cases semi-authoritarian regimes (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Columbia, Egypt, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Iran and China) have cracked down on media freedoms in an effort to combat the influence of the seemingly ubiquitous foreign media, thus weakening democracy. Yet, Norris found two clear indicators that are helpful in understanding how media systems can positively impact democratic governance: media “systems strengthen good governance...most effectively under two outcomes: (1) where channels of mass communications are free and independent of established interests and (2) where there is widespread diffusion and public access to these media. Both independence *and* [sic] access are required” (p. 116).

In *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Phillip Howard (2010) analyses data documenting patterns of media ownership and technology use in 74 countries with significant Muslim populations between 1990-2008. Suggesting that while new information technologies many not cause democratic revolutions, Howard argues that in the Muslim world, democratization does not occur without them. He argues that, since the mid 1990's, information technologies have had an integral role in political transformation: many young democracies have become more entrenched and durable; some authoritarian regimes made significant transitions towards democratic institutions and practices; and other regimes became more of a hybrid, where information technologies supported the work of particular actors such as state, political parties, journalists, or civil society groups. Across the 74 cases studied, having a comparatively active online civil society proved to be both a necessary and sufficient cause of transitions out of authoritarianism. Moreover, having a state with a well-developed information

and communication infrastructure facilitated institutional entrenchment in countries that were already emerging democracies.

Democratic transition commonly corresponds to a flurry of media development efforts. Thus, it is no surprise that a body of literature focuses on the influence of media development on the successful transition to fully-fledged democracy. Price, Rozumilowicz, & Verhulst (2002) published an edited volume comprised of country case studies on the reciprocal relationship between media reform and political democratization of former dictatorships in the post-Cold War period. Its geographic focus was broad—most notably, post-Communist “transition societies” (e.g. China, Uzbekistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ukraine, Poland), and other countries of the South struggling to emerge from authoritarian rule (e.g. Indonesia, Jordan, Uganda, India, Uruguay). In summarizing the results of the case studies, they identify two important macro-level variables that substantially affect the nature of the relationship between the media and democratization: the structure of the media system in each country and the pattern of government regulation. Moreover, while Price et al. (2002) found that there was a causal link between liberalized media and democratic society, they argue that it was difficult to determine causality: “Is media reform a necessary condition of democratization or are free and independent media merely attractive, superb and even justifying products of an already liberalized society?” (p. 254). The compilation concludes with a cautionary note, emphasizing that there is little evidence that “an active and involved media system” will directly lead to changes in political structures. Political reforms are more likely to generate change in the media system than vice versa. The “enabling environment” for responsible and effective media takes time to develop, and involves changes in the professional practices and ethos of journalism and in the broader culture, not just legal and structural reforms (Price et. al. 2002: 260).

In another quantitative attempt at understanding the relationship between democracy and media, McMahan and Chesebro (2003) analyzed the relationship between a country’s media culture and its structure of governance. The study was premised on the idea that “media technology affects the organization of knowledge defining and governing a cultural system,” and correspondingly, “the construction of a cultural system, including the association among the individuals who comprise it, is altered in accordance with the dominant mode of communication” (p. 127). The fundamental argument is that there is a relationship between

certain cultures and certain types of technologies, and thus particular media technologies are best suited for democratic governance. They suggest, “the configuration of a political system may vary accordingly with the primary communicative technology of a culture” (p. 128).<sup>20</sup> Harold Innis (1951) described this as the “bias” of particular communication mediums, and argued in *Empire and Communication* that the introduction of new mediums of communications and/or new technologies historically has resulted in a restructuring of power relations in any given society.

While some studies focus on developing domestic media systems, others focus on how external media might influence democracy and development. The ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and confrontations with states such as Iran, North Korea, Zimbabwe have invigorated discussions about the role of media in opening up closed societies. Moreover, the introduction of new communication technologies like mobile internet and satellite television—easily able to supersede traditional geographic boundaries—have provided new fodder for discussions on the role that external actors can and should take in developing media spaces through external efforts. Many scholars and practitioners argue that these developments have a tremendous impact on the potential for political change, particularly in authoritarian systems. Recently, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2010) spoke on the growing role of ICTs in authoritarian countries, where “new information networks are helping people discover new facts and making governments more accountable.”<sup>21</sup>

Several authors have explored historical instances in which externally generated information slipped through the cracks of authoritarian governance, facilitating a groundswell of alternative opinions and ideas. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), established early in the Cold War by the U.S. government (CIA), broadcast dissident opinions from exiled opinion leaders through the Iron Curtain in order to generate, encourage and organize political

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<sup>20</sup> Bertelsen (1992) has suggested that media form and government are related insofar as “the structural and formal features of communication technologies privilege perceptual modes that encourage some forms of government and discourage others” (p. 332). Accordingly, “a culture’s controlling political framework and government system are likely to conform to the formatting tendencies of the media...” (p. 331). Furthermore, “... changes in political participation and government form will reflect emerging communication technologies” (p. 332).

<sup>21</sup> Clinton’s (2010) speech evokes the previously discussed definitional problems of separating media development activities from strategic communication and public diplomacy. Programs following out of Clinton’s call for promoting the “right to connect” are closely linked to promoting a specific foreign policy agenda abroad (i.e. public diplomacy) but are in actuality programmatically speaking also communications development initiatives.

opposition. Nelson (1997) found that RFE/RL was, in fact, essential to the early development of political opposition groups in Poland, Hungary and Romania, and fostered the creation of a robust civil society that has been important in each country's transition to democracy since their independence.

The proliferation of media and mobile connectivity has challenged, though not made impossible, the ability of closed states to control the content and flow of information within their borders. Indeed, efforts at Internet censorship and control continue, though it has become increasingly politically and economically costly for states to monitor and restrict the increasing multitude of communication channels (Chan, 1994, p. 131; Nisbet et al., 2004; Gilboa, 2002). Some scholars (e.g. Winston, 2004; Lagerkvist, 2005) remain optimistic about the ability of new communications technologies, and the Internet in particular to open up closed societies and facilitate greater challenges to authoritarian and dictatorial regimes.

However, others point out that the recent actions by the Iranian, Chinese and Burmese governments demonstrate that closed states still have the desire, resources and technological wherewithal to control their information spaces (Goldsmith & Wu, 2006; Movius, 2009). China has perhaps been the most successful at controlling its online information space, deploying an extensive monitoring of online content and the creation of a widely used and locally run Mandarin-language Internet that operates separately from the global World Wide Web. China's ability to closely monitor, regulate, and control online information flows is significantly strengthened by its ability to negotiate favorable business agreements with Western communications corporations, such as Google, Microsoft, Cisco and News Corporation. Each corporation's ability to operate within China—and thus access the hugely profitable Chinese market—is dependent on its strict compliance with Chinese law. In another example, the ruling Burmese Junta deployed the so-called “nuclear option,” effectively disabling almost all Internet access throughout the entire country during the 200 pro-democracy protests. And in the aftermath of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's controversial re-election of in June 2009, the government tracked Internet usage and websites in order to more quickly crackdown on dissident protests and opinion (Morozov, 2009; Morozov, 2010).

There is a consensus that access to the Internet is not in and of itself sufficient to drive transitions to democratic governance. Yet many scholars agree that the Internet will have a profound impact on society, especially in developing countries moving forward. Noting that

authoritarian governments have quickly adapted to today's new information ecology, Zuckerman (2010) argues that the real impact of the World Wide Web in closed and transitioning societies has less to do with its immediate political uses, but rather with its long-term impact on how citizens see themselves vis-à-vis other groups, and in its ability to foster alternative communities, social habits, communicative patterns and norms uninhibited by geographical borders or national regulations.

### *Media & Social Change*

Some authors focus on the ability of the media to promote society-wide (macro) changes while others examine how media can serve as a tool for effecting individual level (micro) behavioral changes. There have been a number of studies that examine the relationships between media development and social change. These studies explore the media, especially television's ability to influence individual opinions and behaviors. They find that the media may not change fundamental political attitudes and behaviors directly, but they do have more subtle, indirect effects that nonetheless influence political persuasion (Ansolabehere et al., 1993).

Three such effects are particularly germane to discussions about the powers of the media in the context of media development. The first is agenda setting, which is best encapsulated by the following statement: "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (Cohen, 1963, p. 13; see also McCombs & Shaw, 1972; and Weaver et al., 1981). Second, in addition to the macro agenda setting function of the media, the media can also operate at a more individual, psychological level by "priming" the responses of citizens to those agenda items by changing the criteria that people use to evaluate issues (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Scheufele, 2000). A third type of media effect that has been extensively explored in the literature is called "framing," and refers to "the manner in which news stories or other media stories and information allocate responsibility for action or inaction on issues and problems that concern them" (Iyengar, 1991, p. 6).

In addition to these works on indirect effects, other theorists have examined the longitudinal influence of media on individuals and society. Cultivation theory posits that

television and other mass media platforms cultivate normative standards of behavior and that the relative diversity of media messages both in form and content have important consequences. Gerbner et. al (1991) conducted a comparative analysis of television cultivation in the Soviet Union and the United States in 1989 and 1991, finding that despite the presence of more platforms in the United States, Soviet television stations were more diverse in terms of content and cultural messaging. They posited that this diversity may have contributed to the socio-cultural fragmentation of the Soviet Union. In this particular case, media's most identifiable effect was not observed through the examination of individual programs and news stories but rather in the "overall pattern of programming . . . which cultivate stable and common conceptions of reality" over heterogeneous publics (Gerbner et. al., 1994, p. 36).

More recent research demonstrates the relevance and importance of cultivation theory in contemporary development communication initiatives. In a study of the influence of cable and digital television in rural India, Jensen and Oster (2009) found that when cable access reached villages, women were more likely to go to the market without their husbands' permission. They were also less likely to want a boy rather than a girl child, more likely to be making decisions over child health care, and less likely to think that men had the right to beat their wives, a view that resulted in a decrease in domestic violence. Moreover, a cable or satellite connection reaching a village had the same impact on average fertility rates for every woman in that village as more than doubling the time that the average mother had spent in school, long considered one of the most foolproof methods for reducing fertility worldwide. Cable access was also associated with a rapid rise in girls' school enrollment in villages. Jensen and Oster (2009) argued that these dramatic changes in social behaviors could be attributed to the introduction of progressive female role models in popular soap opera programs. These new role models help cultivate more progressive and emancipatory normative standards of behavior, facilitating a redefinition of socially acceptable behavior among women in much of rural India. Similarly, La Ferrara et. al (2008) documented dramatic changes in attitudes towards women's roles in Brazil with the mass adoption of television punctuated by the popularity of soap operas featuring prominent, progressive female role models (La Ferrara, Chong and Duryea, 2008).

While some scholars focus on the broad implications of the media for society, others focus more specifically on how the media can be used as a tool to achieve very specific development goals. Media for development refers to programs that use the media as a

communication channel to influence audience behaviors surrounding a particular development goal such as water sanitation, condom use, or women's voting rights. There has been disagreement about the precise line between media for development and media development efforts. This debate has become more heated as available funding streams have shrunk due to economic downturn. Media development programs build in media for development components and vice versa in order to qualify for funding streams (see Nelson, 2009). However, as noted in point four of the 2005, Global Forum for Media Development Amman Conference, "Media development and media for development are complementary and interlinked strategies, and media engagement in development issues works best within the context of a strong independent media environment."

Several media for development studies have illustrated that radio and television campaigns can improve public health behaviors (e.g. Singhal and Rogers, 1999; Singhal et al., 2004; Vaughan et al., 2000). Yoder et al. (1996) found that an AIDS radio drama in Zambia increased assessment of risk, knowledge about AIDS transmission and condom use. Vaughan et al. (2000) found that listeners of a radio entertainment program about AIDS in Tanzania reduced their number of partners and increased their use of condoms. Walker et. al (1999) found that 46% of African pupils and 44% of white pupils cited television and the other media as their source of information about cancer. Media for development initiatives are among the most promising in terms of their ability to document and achieve specific, tangible goals, though it is unclear how they compliment or interrelate with broader efforts at developing pluralistic, sustainable civil society and democratic discourse in developing societies more broadly.

### **Conclusion: Lingering Debates and Future Directions**

Over 50 years of research suggests that the relationship between media and development is neither straightforward nor axiomatic but heavily conditional and heterogeneous. There is no agreement about when, how, and under what conditions media development can or should be practiced. This in part stems from debates about media's ideal role in society, the importance or irrelevance of a state's ability to control its national media system, and the diversity of countries, societies, and cultures that bring different experiences, norms and habits to the conversation.

Given rapid changes in the available communication technologies and quickly changing domestic and international political and economic systems, no final conclusions about how media can and should function are possible. Rather, there is a continuing need for studies that identify and evaluate how media development operates under different conditions. Moreover, more cross-level research is needed. How do individual media development programs effect macro-level changes in the national media environment? Conversely, how can we create more nuanced models of national media environments in order to better plan and implement media development programs at the micro-level?

Regardless of these lingering questions and debates, one thing is clear, perhaps more so than ever before: media matter. Governments, donors, private institutions, corporations, and advocacy organizations around the world are dedicating more time and resources than ever before in efforts to shape the flow, design, and influence of communications. Media development, as a diverse field of research and practice is an important source of research and information, providing insights into how the media might promote and/or undermine democracy, good governance, and social and economic development.