



Table of contents:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:	2
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. WHY RESTRICT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION?	5
3. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: HOW IMPORTANT DO PEOPLE REALLY THINK IT IS?	7
4. HOW WELL IS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION PROTECTED GLOBALLY?	10
5. WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION?	13
5.1 Religious conflicts, ethnic violence and genocides	14
5.2 Radicalization and terrorism	20
5.3 Human rights, corruption and democracy	25
5.4 Innovation and economic growth	28
6. CONCLUSION: IS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN CRISIS?	31
7. WORKS CITED	35

The authors:

Rasmus Fønnesbæk Andersen defended his PhD in political science from the University of Copenhagen in 2017. His research concerned democratization, state construction and elections on local and regional levels, as well as political culture. In 2012-2013 he was a Fulbright Fellow at the Department of Government at Harvard University. He has served as an election observer for international organizations in Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Armenia. He is also a member of the Electoral Management Research Network and ACE Electoral Knowledge Practitioners' Network and has previously been the vice president of the Danish Foreign Policy Society U35. He works as a consultant with a focus on international development.

Jacob Mchangama is CEO of the think-tank Justitia International, which he founded in 2014. He writes and narrates the podcast "Clear and Present Danger: A History of Free Speech" and is currently a Visiting Scholar at Columbia Global Freedom of Expression Center and a Visiting Fellow at FIRE. He holds an LL.M. from the University of Copenhagen and an E.M.A. from the European Inter-University Center for Human Rights and Democratization in Venice. He has worked as a lawyer in a major Danish law firm, in 2016 he was awarded a Marshall Memorial Fellowship. His work on freedom of expression and human rights has been featured in international media including Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Washington Post, and the Economist.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Beba Cibralic, Camilla Bier and Louise Stenstrup for editorial assistance and Susan Benesch, Faculty Associate of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University and director of the Dangerous Speech Project, Professor Svend-Erik Skaaning at the Department of Political Science, University of Aarhus, Associate Professor Asmus Leth Olsen at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, and Gordon Danning at FIRE for their insightful comments, which have substantially improved the analysis. The responsibility for the content of the analysis rests solely with the authors.



Jacob Mchangama
CEO, Justitia International
✉ Jacob@justitia-int.org
☎ +4524664220
@JMchangama



Rasmus Fønnesbæk Andersen
MSc, PhD in Political Science
✉ Rasmus.f.andersen@gmail.com
☎ +2217709297
@fonnesbaek

Executive summary:

Freedom of expression and its limits are topics of intense debate across countries, cultures and religions, and opinions are as varied as they are deeply held. By drawing from social science research, our analysis offers an empirical perspective on the debate. What are the attitudes of the world's citizens to freedom of expression, how widespread is freedom of expression globally, and what are the social, political, economic and cultural consequences of freedom of expression? Our approach is three-pronged. We investigate these issues through, first, a literature review of existing social science research in the field; second, original analysis of cross-national datasets of individuals' attitudes towards freedom of expression; and, third, original analysis of country-level datasets concerning freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and their societal consequences.

The salient findings of our research are as follows. First, our analysis used global and European surveys to demonstrate that people highly value freedom of expression as an important guarantor of good governance. However, we also found relatively widespread global support for speech restrictions targeting stigmatized minority groups or radical political and religious movements.

Moreover, our research found that while there has been a general increase in freedom of speech and of the press since the fall of the Berlin Wall, these improvements have recently come to a halt or, in some cases, have even been reversed. Even in western countries, certain freedoms of speech and press have been restricted in recent years, partly as a consequence of the War on Terror.

Lastly, we found stronger protections for freedom of expression to be highly correlated with a number of beneficial societal outcomes. Safeguards for freedom of speech were associated with better human rights standards, less corruption, and better conditions for democratically-minded opposition parties in non-democratic states. Likewise, we found a positive relationship between freedom of expression and innovation. This is consistent with the notion that restricting freedom of expression enables those in power, such as politicians, religious authorities, businesspeople, the military, or even figures with links to organized crime, to safeguard their own interests.

Our analysis also found that some of the most commonly expressed concerns regarding freedom of expression — such as its potential detrimental effects on social conflicts (including genocide), radicalization and terrorism — by and large are not supported by the evidence or the existing research literature. The only empirical support for the concern that freedom of expression is linked to social conflict and violence comes from the most closed societies in the world, where partial liberalization of speech codes can exacerbate the risk of aggravating existing conflicts. For the rest of world, we find a *negative* relationship between free speech protections and social conflict. Conflicts are less prevalent in societies with better protections for speech. The evidence suggests that the widespread narrative characterizing unbridled freedom of expression as a catalyst for religious conflict and genocide is lacking in nuance and, on our analysis, appears to be agenda-driven. On the contrary, protecting freedom of expression for minority views and independent media can be a bulwark against government and state propaganda.

As for radicalization and terrorism, our analysis found no relationship whatsoever between speech protections and the prevalence of terrorism across countries. The literature points to both possible positive and negative effects of freedom of expression on radicalization and terrorist attacks, which might cancel each other out. However, researchers' attempts to demonstrate causal links between freedom of expression and outcomes such as economic growth or terrorism are continuously frustrated by the inadequacy of existing data, measurement error, and the risk of omitted variables and reverse causality.

Our analysis concludes with a discussion of the challenges that the protection of freedom of expression faces over the next few years. These include declining support for freedom of speech and the press in the most influential western countries; terrorism and radicalization online; and the Janus-faced challenge of 'fake news' – on the one side, malicious production of fake news and on the other, the potentially dangerous implications of measures meant to counter fake news. We expect threats to freedom of expression from both governments and private actors to intensify in the years to come.

1. Introduction

With the collapse of communism and rise of liberal democracy, the world witnessed democratic revolutions that would have been impossible had independent journalists and ordinary people not used their freedom of expression. In recent years, new technologies like mobile phones and mobile cameras as well as broader internet access have made it easier and faster for ordinary citizens to express themselves and document abuses of power. In Tunisia and Ukraine, the proliferation of mobile phones and expansion of internet access enabled national, even global audiences to watch demonstrations as they unfolded – and witness police brutality against protesters in real time. These new communication channels helped to depose dictators and open the possibility for advances in democracy. Freedom of expression has also prompted social revolutions across the world: views on religion, women's rights and homosexuality are among those that have changed rapidly in the western countries through free, open and uncensored debate (in contrast to earlier times when discussion of these topics was suppressed or taboo).

Despite these strides, over the last few years freedom of expression has been continually challenged. According to the American NGO Freedom House, freedom of the press is at its lowest levels in 13 years. Russia and China are not satisfied with controlling the media within their own borders and are increasingly exporting propaganda and media control.¹ Of the 65 countries that Freedom House investigated in 2016, 15 had completely shut off access to the internet on various occasions. In 24 countries access to social media and communication apps like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, Telegram, etc. was restricted.² More widespread still is the use of new technologies by non-democratic states to spy on opposition figures and spread propaganda to bolster support for the government, among other goals.

Support for freedom of expression has also wavered. Even in western countries, many Muslim immigrants and other devout believers draw the line at criticism of religion – and conversely, terror-anxious populations and governments want to restrict Islamists' speech. Europe's democracies seem ready to take strong measures to deal with the threat from fake news and propaganda, which they fear will destabilize society and advance the geopolitical interests of hostile states. Certain intellectuals, politicians and business people look to the East and see more ordered societies in Singapore, China and Russia, where free debate does not stand in the way of firm political leadership.

This analysis aims to bring to the fore empirical evidence on the state of freedom of expression. How prevalent and deep-seated is public support for freedom of expression at the global level? How widespread is freedom of expression in the world today? And what does the existing research and data reveal about the consequences of different levels of protection for freedom of expression? During the course of our investigation, we will also touch upon the most common arguments for and against

¹ "Freedom of the Press 2017. Press Freedom's Dark Horizon." Freedom House 2017.

² "Freedom on the Net 2016. Silencing the Messenger: Communication Apps Under Pressure." Freedom House 2016.

freedom of expression, with the salient concerns including religious strife, terrorism and radicalization, and democratic breakdown.

2. Why restrict freedom of expression?

Why is freedom of expression restricted in the first place? In this section, we take a closer look at the arguments and rationales that often form the basis of desires for restricting freedom of expression.

A minimal theory of restrictions of freedom of expression sees these restrictions as a way of safeguarding the interests of those in power. Access to information sharing will often enable ordinary people to rein in the power of elite actors or groups power, for instance by coordinating demonstrations, publicizing abuses of power, or even ultimately removing them from their positions. In societies with poorly protected freedom of expression, mafia bosses will therefore try to kill snitches, drug smugglers will threaten the families of meddling journalists, while business owners will try to use personal connections to prosecute their competitors and critics. These curtailments of the freedom of expression are common both in non-democracies like China, Russia and Egypt, and in fragile democracies like the Philippines and Mexico.

Another rationale for restrictions on freedom of expression rests on popular and elite feelings around objects of veneration, such as religious symbols, national lore and heroic figures. The same applies to moral principles – from politeness, justice and protection of certain groups to cleanliness, hierarchy and tradition.³ Some values are considered to be so important that no criticism can be tolerated and, when posed, is often met with corporal or judicial retaliation. Thus, extremist Hindus kill beef-eating Muslims and Christians, while Islamists throw gay people to their deaths from tall buildings. In other contexts, punishment is left to agents of the state; politicians or other officials prohibit discussion of homosexuality, critique of religious dogma, derogatory speech toward protected groups, and so on. Protection of symbols has also stirred powerful emotions in Europe and North America around proposed bans on the burqa, the burning of flags or religious texts, and more.

Part of the explanation for the emotional facet of our opposition to freedom of expression could be evolutionary. Homo Sapiens' cognitive capacities evolved to survive in hunter-gatherer societies, which are composed of smaller groups connected by family bonds. With this way of life comes a tendency toward tribalism and intolerance of outsiders; this would explain why humans often struggle to tolerate opinions that deviate dramatically from the established norms of a given society.

As civilizations grew in size and complexity, it became necessary to overcome the reliance on family, and our intuitive sense of group solidarity was transferred onto much larger social units. This enabled humans to coordinate and cooperate with hundreds of thousands or millions of other people (whom they neither knew nor were related to) in countries and empires extending across huge geographical

³ The Righteous Mind, Haidt 2012

distances. As a result came the development of hierarchies and social structures based on what the Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari has dubbed the 'imagined order.'⁴ This concept applies to orders such as religion, for instance, which offers both a shared identity that ties people together as well as set of rules and taboos. As a way of protecting the given imagined order, there will often be severe punishments for questioning or blatantly rejecting its fundamental tenets. Hence, Christian states had a long history of imposing the death penalty for crimes of heresy and blasphemy, as is still the case today in a number of Muslim majority countries. Even in modern liberal democracies, where the imagined order is based on the ideas of popular sovereignty, human rights, and equality, it will often be a crime to refute fundamental certain tenets of the order, including by engaging in hate speech. The European Court of Human Rights for instance generally does not protect hate speech since:

"[T]olerance and respect for the equal dignity of all human beings constitute the foundations of a democratic, pluralistic society. That being so, as a matter of principle it may be considered necessary in certain democratic societies to sanction or even prevent all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance".⁵

Multiple reasons for restricting freedom of expression—from safeguarding the interests of the elite to pandering to popular loyalties — can coexist, as those in power often form alliances with particular social groups in their efforts to restrict freedom of expression. Elites can drape their self-interest in ideological, religious or moral garb, and the morally-motivated groups acquire a powerful ally that can help them implement their value agendas.

These coalitions of convenience between thugs and zealots are common. In Malaysia, the ban on homosexuality is in accordance with the values of devout local Muslims, but is also exploited by the ruling party to disqualify opposition politicians on false charges.⁶ In Russia, there is broad public support for laws against extremism which prohibit statements that attempt to subvert national security — but the 233 social media users who were convicted of extremism in 2016 had predominantly been criticizing the Russian government's policies on the war in Ukraine.⁷ The United Kingdom's far-reaching anti-terrorism legislation is popular with the public, but British police have also used the legislation to intimidate Glenn Greenwald, a Guardian journalist and noted critic of cyber-surveillance, whose boyfriend was detained for nine hours on a layover in Heathrow Airport in 2013 as a terrorist suspect.⁸ In Pakistan, blasphemy legislation is often used as a weapon in personal conflicts, such as conflicts over land ownership between neighbors — and in particular against religious minorities.⁹

⁴ Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, Harari 2014.

⁵ Erbakan v. Turkey judgment of 6 July 2006, § 56

⁶ "Malaysia: Anwar's Conviction Sets Back Rights." Human Rights Watch 2015.

⁷ "Dozens in Russia Imprisoned for Social Media Likes, Reposts." AP News 2016.

⁸ "Glenn Greenwald's Partner Detained at Heathrow Airport for Nine Hours." The Guardian 2013.

⁹ "Policing Belief: The Impact of Blasphemy Laws on Human Rights." Freedom House 2010.

3. Freedom of expression: How important do people really think it is?

As the previous section suggests, people sometimes display strong opposition to certain forms of expression or only tepidly support unpopular groups' right to free speech. People also differ in their judgment of the scale of danger posed when powerful people restrict free speech to secure privileges or advance other goals. In this section, we systematically analyze support for freedom of expression at the global level and explore certain trade-offs between freedom of expression and other values.

Polls and values surveys around the world have registered people's subjective assessments of the importance of freedom of expression for many years. Figure 1 below shows European citizens' opinions in 2012 on whether it is best for democracy if everyone has the right to express their views — even if these views are extreme.¹⁰

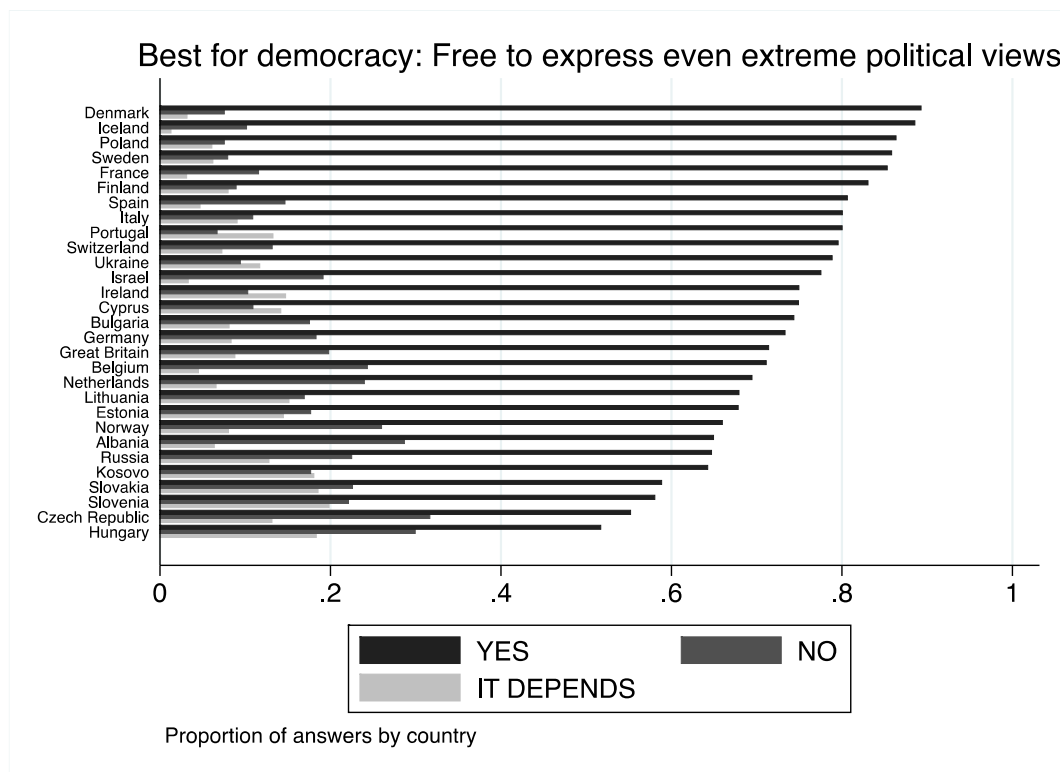


Figure 1: European citizens' opinion on protection of freedom of expression, including extreme views (data from European Social Survey, 2012)

¹⁰ Question wordings from European Social Survey, 2012: 'There are differing opinions on whether or not everyone should be free to express their political views openly in a democracy, even if they are extreme. Which one of the statements on this card describes what you think is best for democracy in general?

- Everyone should be free to express their political views openly, even if they are extreme.
- Those who hold extreme political views should be prevented from expressing them openly.
- It depends on the circumstances.'

The figure above depicts the relatively wide variation in opinion between European nations when it comes to free speech protections. In Hungary, just over half of the respondents believe that it is best for democracy that citizens have the right to express extreme views, while 30 percent disagree. Twenty percent believe that it depends on the circumstances. By contrast, almost 90 percent of the participants in Denmark and Iceland believe that far-reaching protection of freedom of expression is best for democracy.¹¹

Outside of Europe, support for protection of freedom of expression is greatest in North, Central, and South America as well as Australia and New Zealand. Conversely, East and South-East Asia, Africa and the Middle East show considerably lower levels of support for freedom of expression. Figure 2 is based on data from 38 countries in 2015 and illustrates the portion of participants in the relevant region's median country that have answered that freedom of expression for ordinary people, press and internet are 'very important' — as opposed to 'somewhat important,' 'not very important' or 'not important at all.'¹²

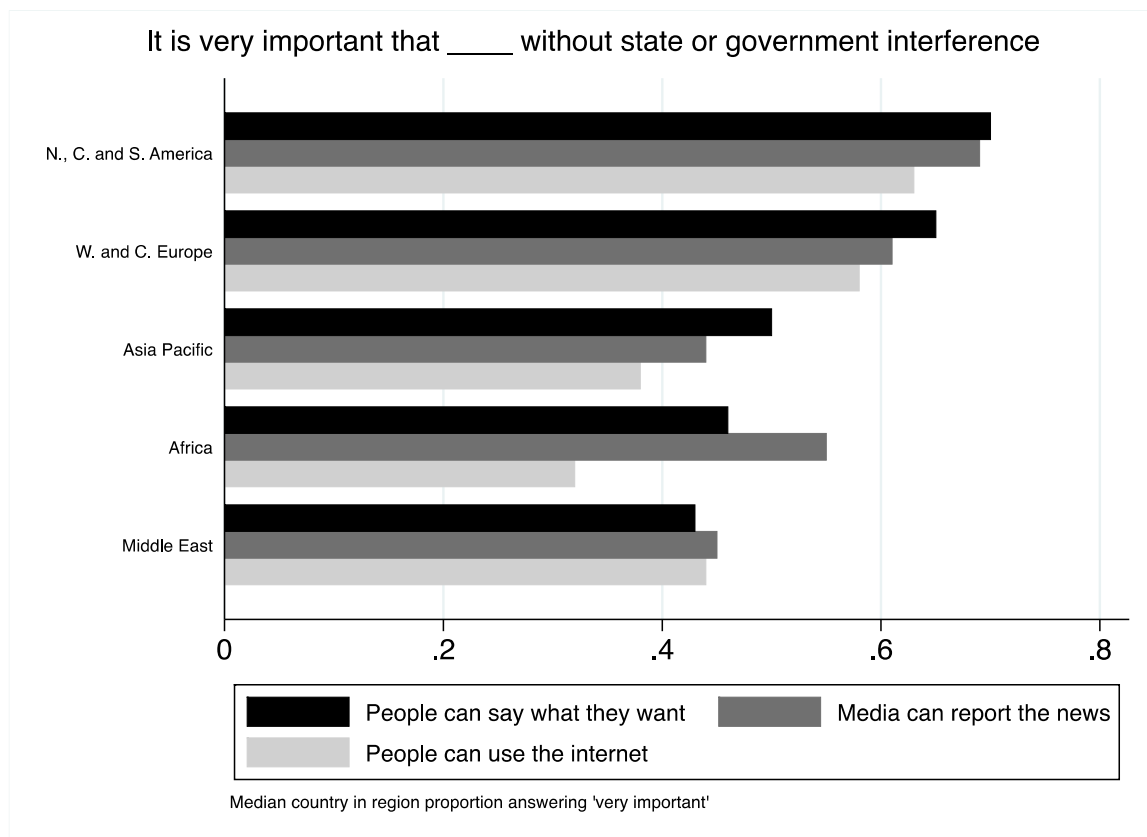


Figure 2: Citizens' views on protection of freedom of expression per worldwide region (data and wording from PEW Research Center, 2015)

¹¹ Data from: "ESS round 6: European Social Survey Round 6 Data." Norwegian Center for Research Data.

¹² The median country in the region refers to an ordering of the region's countries by share of a given response, where the median country's share is reported. PEW has published a large study with many different questions: "Global Support for Principle of Free Expression, but Opposition to Some Forms of Speech." PEW 2015.

These results show that, across cultures and religions, the world's citizens —generally tend to value freedom of expression highly. Even in the regions with the least support for freedom of expression, the base level is high. Of the 38 countries surveyed in PEW's study, more than 50 percent of the population in each country believe that it is very or somewhat important that people can say what they want, and that the media print the news without censorship. Only in a single country do we find *less* than 50 percent of the population who agree that it is very or somewhat important that people can use the internet without censorship.¹³

In the period following the Second World War, many social scientists put their faith in society's elites to be at the vanguard of defending democracy. Through their education and upbringing, these elites had been socialized to support liberal political principles including freedom of expression for everyone— including their rivals.¹⁴ On the contrary, it was clear that mass populations in even the most consolidated democracies of the post-war era did not support freedom of expression in a principled manner. In surveys, they did not believe it should be extended to groups such as communists and Nazis, who were regarded as serious political threats (the closest parallels in contemporary Europe and North America are Islamists and right-wing extremists, whose rights to freedom of expression are frequently questioned).

Even in countries with very high support for freedom of expression, ordinary people and politicians are nevertheless prone to being more skeptical of extending free speech to groups that they dislike.¹⁵ In Denmark, a highly consolidated democracy with some of the world's highest support for comprehensive freedom of expression, Danish center-left parties and their voters generally express high approval of the so-called 'racism provision' of the Danish Penal Code (s. 266b) that prohibits inflammatory speech. Equally, the current center-right coalition government has implemented an entry ban on 'hate preachers' who 'will pose a threat to the public order in Denmark,' which passed with broad political support.¹⁶

With those caveats, the depth of support in many European countries for a relatively expansive interpretation of the freedom of expression, which includes extreme views, is striking. Outside of Europe, we found a similar broad preference for freedom of expression. Importantly, the picture becomes muddier when it comes to topics that certain groups have strong feelings about, such as religion. This suggests that most people acknowledge the dangers of granting powerful people the right to silence others, and that tolerance of a pluralistic society is fairly strong in today's world.

¹³ In Burkina Faso, 21 percent thought it was very important, 19 percent that it was somewhat important, 23 percent that it was not important, and 25 percent said that they did not know. The proportion of Burkina Faso's population with access to the internet in 2015 was estimated to be around 10 percent according to Internet Live Stats.

¹⁴ "Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties." Stouffer 1955.

¹⁵ "Frihed for Loke såvel som for Thor," Petersen, Stubager & Togeby 2007. In this article, the authors show that there is relatively little tolerance in Denmark for neo-Nazis, biker gangs and Islamist fundamentalists, while the level of tolerance is higher for the extreme right, fundamentalist Christians, Muslims and the extreme left.

¹⁶ "Professor: Lov mod hadprædikanter er på kant med grundloven [Professor: Legislation against hate preachers potentially unconstitutional]." The Danish Broadcasting Company 2016 and "Racisme hører ikke fortiden til [Racism doesn't belong to the past]." Politiken 2014. The so-called blasphemy paragraph criminalizing blasphemy was abolished in June 2017 when all nine of the Danish Parliament's parties voted to end it.

4. How well is freedom of expression protected globally?

In this section, we survey the state of free speech and freedom of the press on a global scale by analyzing trends in cross-national datasets, including an examination of where freedom of expression has suffered and where it is stronger now than before. Our research is diachronic and incorporates data from 1980 until today.

Popular support is not always sufficient to safeguard freedom of expression. A common assumption is that citizens will vote for politicians who share their belief in freedom of expression, and, as a result of those politicians being elected, freedom of expression will remain politically and socially unchallenged.

But there are a number of issues with this line of reasoning. Firstly, many countries are not consolidated democracies, and thus experience unfree media, intimidation of political opposition, rigged elections, vote buying, misuse of administrative resources and generally 'uneven playing fields' for opposition parties against incumbent governments. In these countries, voters' preferences are not the primary determinant of the composition of parliaments and governments. In certain instances, it may even be the case that the incumbent government shapes voters' preferences rather than vice versa. Secondly, even in fully democratic countries, it can still be difficult for ordinary people to keep an eye on whether politicians and civil servants truly uphold and protect freedom of expression. This means that politicians can be tempted to restrict freedom of expression within certain domains or on certain topics if it serves their narrow self-interest — for instance, by making corruption easier to get away with.

Politicians, governments and security forces are not the only forces that can threaten freedom of expression. Terrorists or gang members can target people for their opinions or their statements on certain topics. When this type of vigilante punishment for the expression of certain opinions becomes predictable and publicly known, it can dampen the public debate as much as government censorship. Similarly, narrow ownership and funding of the media can distort the public debate and flow of information. It goes without saying that ordinary people lack a direct way to control terrorists, gang members and media bosses.

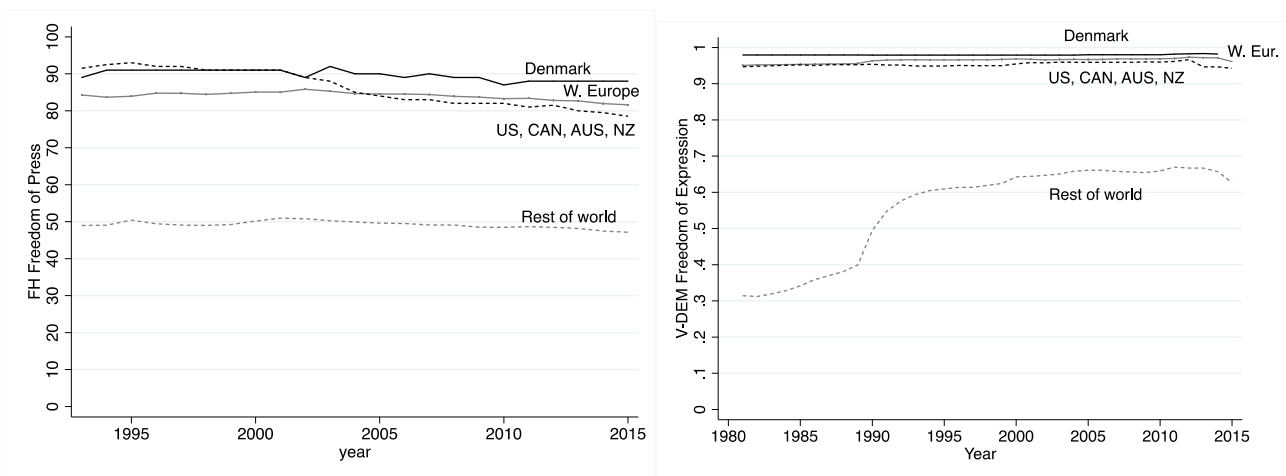
With these considerations in mind, it is clear that robust support for freedom of expression can easily coexist with significant restrictions on freedom of expression. And to give away the conclusion of this section, that is indeed the case in the vast majority of the world's countries.¹⁷ This is consistent with the minimal theory of freedom of expression in section 1: often, restrictions on freedom of expression

¹⁷ The country level is where by far the most data exists for the protection of freedom of expression. But it is obviously not the only relevant level of analysis. For instance, different people (men vs. women, Muslims vs. Christians, rightists vs. leftists) may have different practical freedom of expression in the same country, even for exactly the same statements. Equally, certain parts of some countries may exhibit particular restrictions on freedom of expression from either government or private citizens (as is for instance the case in Mexico's most drug-ridden states, India's territorially contested state Jammu & Kashmir or some North-eastern states in Brazil).

are due to society's most powerful people's wishes to limit sharing of information that threatens their interests.

The American NGO Freedom House has measured the degree of press freedom in the world by examining the legal, political and economic contexts for journalism in written and online media, radio and TV since the early 1990s.

In 2017, Norway is at the top with the best protection of press freedom; North Korea and Turkmenistan share the last place.¹⁸



Figures 3 and 4: Freedom of the press from 1990 to 2015 (data from Freedom House) and freedom of expression from 1980 to 2015 (data from Varieties of Democracy).

According to the data from Freedom House, western European countries have seen their press protections deteriorate since 2005. This is especially true in English-speaking world, where anti-terror legislation and distorted media coverage (due to the concentration of media ownership) have been especially pronounced. In the rest of the world, protections have also gradually eroded since 2001.

The major research initiative Varieties of Democracy has collected data for a wider measure of freedom of expression than just freedom of the press.¹⁹ In addition to measuring freedom of the press in a similar way to Freedom House, this dataset also adds measures for ordinary people's ability to express and discuss their opinions. The picture is broadly the same. However, figure 4 shows that the drop observed in the English-speaking world is less marked here and has a later onset date.

The data from Varieties of Democracy also extend further back in time. The end of communism in large parts of the world (with exceptions like North Korea) as well as the political liberalization of Africa and

¹⁸ Throughout the analysis we have 'reversed' the scores on data from Freedom House such that 100 is the highest protection of freedom of expression and 0 is the lowest because this makes them more intuitive to compare to other data sources in the report.

¹⁹ See the website <https://www.v-dem.net/en/> for more information.

Asia are saliently illustrated in the years after 1990 when the degree of freedom of expression outside of western Europe and the English-speaking world rises explosively. However, in recent years it has fallen marginally to a level last seen before the year 2000.

Which countries have seen advances and setbacks since 2000? Figure 5 shows the relationship between countries' freedom of expression as measured in 2000 and 2016. The countries above the grey line in Figure 5 have seen improvements in their protection of freedom of expression, whereas countries under the grey line have seen a deterioration in their protection of freedom of expression. Most countries have not experienced substantial change in the 16 years that have passed, but a few have experienced regime change. Countries where the protection of freedom of expression has changed considerably (more than 0.2 points on V-DEM's measure) are listed by name in Figure 5 and marked with a grey circle.

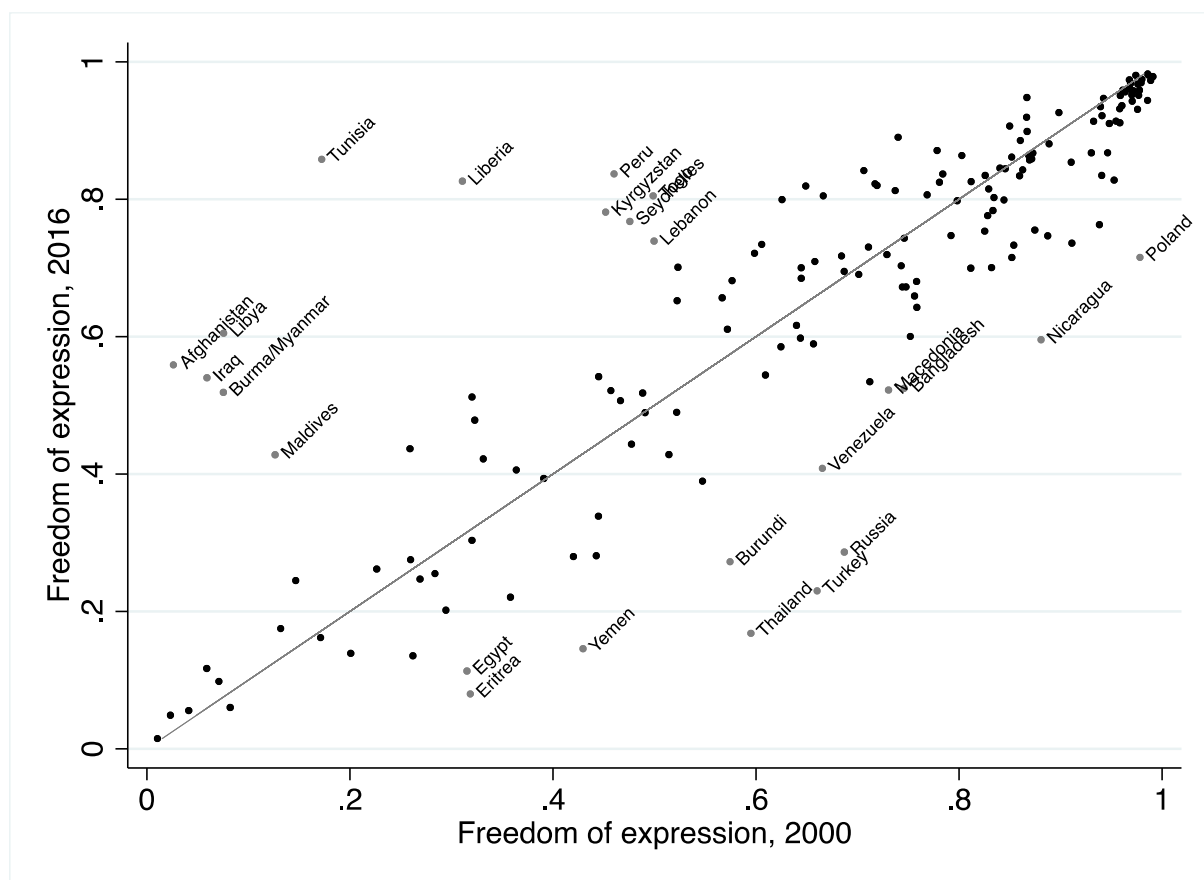


Figure 5: Increases and decreases in freedom of expression from 2000-2016 (data from *Varieties of Democracy*)

Geopolitically important and highly influential countries such as Russia, Turkey and Egypt, as well as very populous Thailand and Poland, are some of the countries where freedom of expression has deteriorated significantly. On the other hand, we find success stories in small countries such as Tunisia, Liberia and Peru, while other apparent improvements in the protection of freedom of expression instead reflect political instability and/or civil war after collapses of authoritarian regimes, e.g. in Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq.

5. What are the social, political, economic and cultural consequences of freedom of expression?

What has been the effect of having strong protections for freedom of expression in Europe and North America? And what influence have renewed speech and press protections had in the countries that transitioned to democracy after the fall of the Berlin Wall?

In this section, we begin by presenting the approach taken to the present survey of the state of free speech and then segue into a discussion of its findings and the findings of the wider research literature by topic.

In Antiquity, the Greek historians Herodotus and Thucydides drew a connection between freedom of speech and the growth and greatness of Athenian democracy. In his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides quotes the words of the Greek statesman Pericles, who in his famous funeral oration said, “We Athenians make our own decisions on policy or submit them to proper discussions: for we do not think that words and deeds are incompatible; the worst thing is to rush into action before the consequences have been properly debated.”²⁰

In our times, researchers have continued to examine the link between freedom of expression and other important social outcomes, such as tolerance, social and religious conflict, terrorism, democratic collapse and economic growth. Notably, they have also explored whether freedom of expression has played a causal role in catalyzing these phenomena. The most common arguments against freedom of expression, to which we will respond specifically, are that unbridled freedom of expression can exacerbate religious conflicts, cause radicalization and terrorism, and lead to democratic collapse. On the other end of the spectrum, some of the most common arguments for freedom of expression are that it *does* in fact strengthen democracy, that it reduces abuses of power and corruption, that it strengthens minority rights, and that it fosters innovation and economic growth.

One way to analyze these arguments is by examining datasets collected by organizations such as Freedom House and the Varieties of Democracy project. Researchers can deduce and isolate relationships between variables by examining average correlations in large datasets, using statistical techniques to keep other factors as constant as possible. However, researchers face difficulties in conducting controlled lab or field experiments at the scale of whole societies. ‘Observational’ (as opposed to ‘experimental’) studies are unfortunately less reliable: Sometimes posited causal relationships do not hold true because they are inverted (for instance, the economic growth leading to greater freedom of expression instead of the

²⁰ “The Peloponnesian War.” Thucydides.

opposite). At other times, they are skewed by omitted variables that affect the freedom of expression and the other given variable (for instance, the level of economic growth or ethnic fragmentation). Nonetheless, the statistical results from large datasets are more reliable than narrowly anecdotal or purely theoretical arguments for the effect of freedom of expression, e.g. on ethnic conflict or democratic collapse.

Detailed historical studies are another way in which researchers attempt to understand the effects of freedom of expression. Rather than the average and general effect of freedom of expression on ethnic conflict or democratic collapse, these studies will often seek to explain a single case outcome – for instance, the genocide in Rwanda or the rise of Nazism in Germany.

In this section we will examine both types of studies to clarify the effects of freedom of expression. We will pay special attention to some of the more controversial factors. We have also conducted our own analysis by combining datasets to uncover empirical relationships across the world's countries in order to determine the connection between freedom of expression and the other phenomena often said to be influenced by freedom of expression. The analysis has been visualized through country-level correlations with the most up-to-date data available. We have not conducted further multivariate analysis.

5.1 Religious conflicts, ethnic violence and genocides

One of the most common arguments against having far-reaching protections of freedom of expression is that these protections would allow citizens and politicians to discuss topics such as religion, race and ethnicity in terms that are likely to incite social conflicts.

These arguments often seek to defend bans on “hate speech” aimed at racial, national, ethnic, religious or sexual groups or minorities. The UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights includes an exemption on the freedom of expression, whereby “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.” The UN’s International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination equally obliges states to “declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination.” Laws have also been passed against hate speech at the EU level and as mentioned above the European Court of Human Rights does not protect hate speech.

According to the standard versions of the argument, speech restrictions of this nature are necessary because humans are easily manipulated, because speech leads to action, or because words can cause a form of harm on their own that the law should try to prevent. Supporting arguments often claim that religious and ethnic tension can be exacerbated by sensationalist media, sparking hate crimes or even genocide.

These arguments are regularly advanced by intellectuals and politicians in the West; to reprise the example of Denmark, MPs such as Zenia Stampe and the Institute for Human Rights have used them when discussing hate speech against women and Muslims.²¹ Bertel Haarder, then a center-right government minister of Denmark, used the same rationale with respect to hate speech by Islamic preachers.²² Similar lines of reasoning are echoed by representatives of non-democratic regimes, such as Singapore's former president Lee Kuan Yew or former Malaysian president Mahathir Mohamed. Like many other leaders from non-democracies, they have argued that freedom of expression and democracy would cause tension between groups and do not represent the right trajectory for their respective societies — not to forget, of course, that democracy and freedom of expression would threaten the leaders' positions of power. After arresting twenty-two Catholic social workers in 1987 for criticizing the regime, Lee Kuan Yew commented: "We have to lock up people, without trial, whether they are communists, whether they are language chauvinists, whether they are religious extremists. If you don't do that, the country would be in ruins."²³ From time to time, advocates of speech restrictions also bring up the genocide in Rwanda and Holocaust in Nazi Germany as examples of disasters that hate speech restrictions should counter.

Many discussions on the freedom of expression and hate speech mischaracterize the issue, however. Advocates of expansive speech rights are sometimes accused of protecting and approving hate speech. Conversely, opponents of hate speech are sometimes accused of being opponents of freedom of expression as such. But it does not follow that countries with broad protection of freedom of expression will have more hate speech, or that hate speech does not exist in countries without freedom of expression. It could equally be the case that the freedom of expression *simultaneously* gives the right to express hate speech *and* reduces hate speech by enhancing tolerance. Likewise, it is possible that political movements that restrict freedom of expression can subsequently turn to hate speech themselves.

What can we conclude from the available data? Is it really the case that freedom of expression always comes with greater risks of social conflicts and ethnic strife? What do the evidence and literature tell us about the correlation between freedom of expression, hate speech and incidents of genocide?

The best dataset regarding religious tension in various societies around the world is the American research institution PEW Research Center's dataset *Social Hostilities Involving Religion Index*. The index measures the presence of violence between religious groups, attacks on religious institutions and religiously-based terrorist groups in any given country. According to this index, from 2007 and 2014 (when data is available) Pakistan, Iraq and India were most intensely marked by incidents of religious conflict, while countries such as Luxembourg and Panama saw almost no religious conflicts.

²¹ "Højrefløj vil have fri hetz" ("The right are demanding an unbridled right to mock"), Politiken 2010, and "Hædefulde ytringer i den offentlige debat online" ("Hate speech in public debates online), Institut for Menneskerettigheder 2017.

²² "Regering vil kunne straffe religiøse forkyndere med 2 års fængsel" ("Government calls for two-sentences for religious preachers"), Politiken 2016.

²³ "Lee Kuann Yew, founding father of modern Singapore, dies at 91." Reuters 2015.

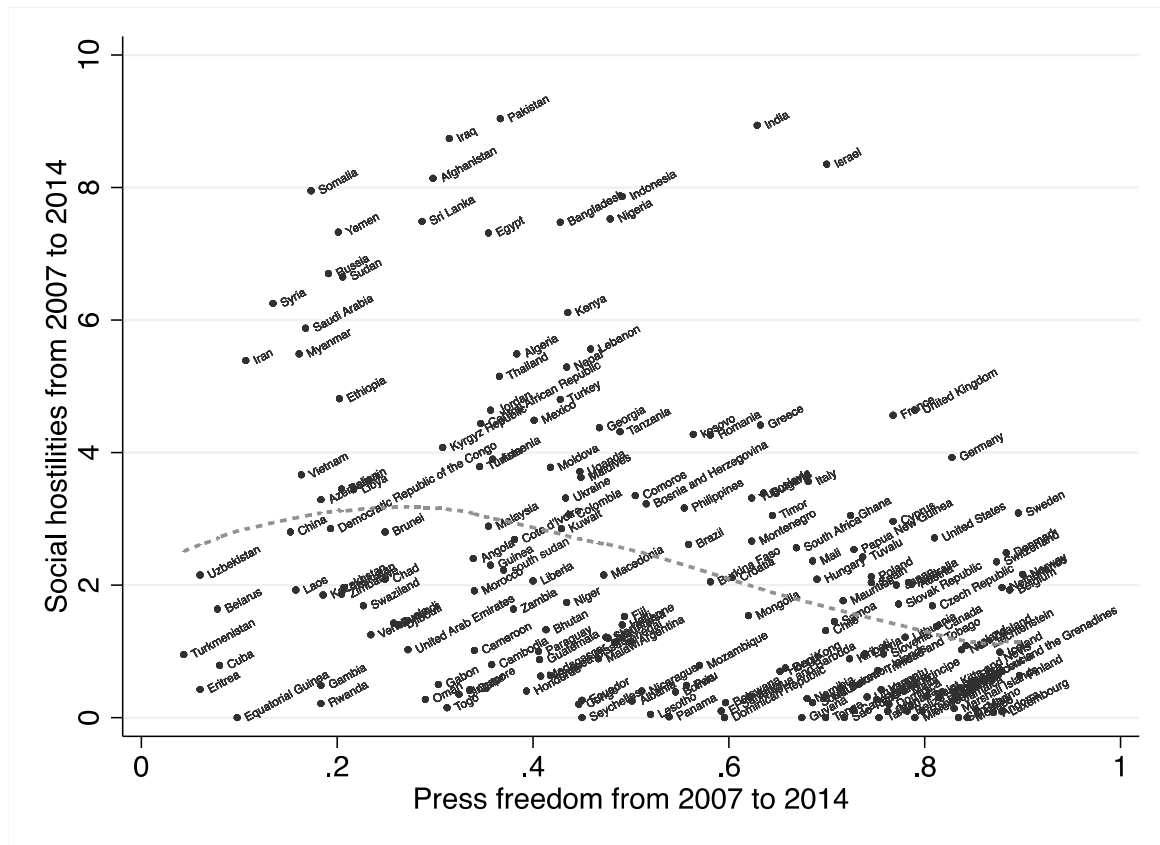


Figure 6: Freedom of expression and religious conflicts from 2007 to 2014 (data from Freedom House and PEW Research Center).

The dotted grey trend line in Figure 6 shows that religious conflict are least pronounced in the countries that have the most extensive press freedoms.²⁴ Nonetheless, we can note that religious conflicts do become more intense under low levels of free speech. From a score of zero up to 0.25 on the index of press freedom (where the latter is approximately equivalent to the level of freedom in Russia, Venezuela and Zimbabwe), we see more religious conflict. Conversely, as we move up the scale, the intensity of religious conflicts decreases again. Put succinctly, there are more religious conflicts in partially liberalized non-democracies than in fully closed authoritarian states, but consolidated liberal democracies have the least religious conflict of all regime types. The same results apply if we use other comparable measurements of social, ethnic and religious conflicts (not reported).²⁵

It is important to assess critically whether this relationship is causal. That is, would religious conflicts in a country with very little press freedom escalate if the first steps toward media liberalization were taken? And would the conflicts then tend to deescalate with further liberalizations? We cannot immediately and directly investigate the purported causal relationship because of the limited access to (as well as existence of) pertinent data; we only have access to data from a very short period of time,

²⁴ As in the rest of the paper, these are LOWESS curves (locally weighted scatterplot smoothing), which estimate local variations in the data.

²⁵ Cf. Bertelsman Transformation Index data on conflict intensity, which yields the same results. Data available upon request.

and because there are no countries with major variations in press freedom and in religious conflicts over the period, we cannot immediately investigate the relationship dynamically over time with empirical analysis.

Another approach would be to attempt to control for any omitted variables that could conceivably be affecting both the freedom of expression *and* the level of social conflict, thereby distorting the relationship seen in Figure 5.

A set of researchers did this by examining the same question and V-DEM measure of freedom of expression but using a somewhat different outcome measure (armed conflicts with more than 25 deaths, rather than ethnic and religious tensions per se). Krishnarajan et al. (2016) found that the probability of conflict is higher in societies with moderately regulated speech than in those with the most heavily regulated speech (going from scores of 0 to 0.4, societies experience more conflict).²⁶ After controlling for GDP per capita, number of years since the previous conflict, and population size, the results aligned with the graph in Figure 5. They also found the risk of conflict declines going from scores of 0.4 up to 1, where 1 represents very highly protected freedom of expression. Again, there are more armed conflicts in moderately liberalized non-democracies than in fully closed authoritarian states, but least in consolidated liberal democracies.

Freedom of expression may counteract religious and other conflict because legitimate criticisms and protests can be expressed and in turn resolved and addressed, which makes recruitment of radicalized religious or ethnic extremists more difficult. Amichai Magen provides an explanation for this result by highlighting that regimes with only moderately liberalized freedom of expression “provide greater political space within which terrorists and their ideological and financial supporters can organize and mobilize, yet lack the avenues for meaningful political access and expression that even bare-bones democracies have.”²⁷

The data do *not* support the general contention that greater freedom of the press will exacerbate societal conflicts and spark violence and social unrest. That argument only applies (and only to a limited extent) in the countries that have the least press freedom. In Europe and North America we should instead expect greater freedom of the press to *ease*, rather than heighten, religious tensions. Additionally, research carried out by the Dangerous Speech project suggests that the most effective tool to counter hate speech is not censorship, but rather engagement in 'counterspeech' by politicians, civil society and ordinary people: empathetic and civil counter-arguments to hate speech have been shown to make proponents of on-line hate speech back down and apologize (whereas more confrontational communication marked by aggression, insults, and harassment has generally not had this result).²⁸

²⁶ “Democracy, Democratization and Civil War.” Krishnarajan et al. 2016, p. 10.

²⁷ “Fighting Terrorism: The Democracy Advantage.” Magen 2018, p. 114.

²⁸ “Counterspeech on Twitter: A Field Study” Benesch et al. 2016.

The Rwandan Genocide and the Holocaust in Nazi Germany are often cited as cases that demonstrate why bans against hate speech are necessary, but also here the research suggests that the relationship between hate speech, freedom of expression, and genocide is far from clear-cut. Rwanda, for one, had very limited freedoms of the press and expression (between 0.28 and 0.36 on a scale from 0 to 1 in the V-DEM dataset) in the time between 1991 and 1994, when the genocide was committed.

The Rwandan tragedy took place in the context of the radio station Radio-Television Libre des Mille Collines and its broadcasts of propaganda with the support and financial backing of the political leadership. This propaganda played a decisive and deadly role in the genocide.²⁹ However, it is important to note that the station's calls for genocide should under no circumstance be protected under freedom of expression. Open, immediate incitement of violence and murder that could directly incite violence does not qualify as legally protected speech in conventional human rights thinking or even under constitutions with robust protections of freedom of speech, such as the First Amendment of the American constitution.³⁰ Furthermore, research on local political factors in the Rwandan Genocide suggests that political propaganda was a more immediate causal factor in the genocide than freedom of the press *per se*. In a similar vein, the experience from Germany shows that publicly owned, pro-democratic media can indeed reduce support for extremist political movements — but also that media can fall into the hands of extremists if they come to power, and be put to entirely different ends.

In his study of radio propaganda in Rwanda, David Yanagizawa-Drott in found that propaganda from Radio-Television Libre des Mille Collines had an identifiable, contributing effect on the genocidal killing of 800,000 Tutsis by Hutu machetes in 1994 (he estimates the independent effect of the radio to be 50,000 of the 800,000 deaths). Based on the geography of Rwanda's hilly landscape and the location of radio masts, he shows that more Tutsis were killed in areas that had better radio reception. Conversely, areas where hills blocked Hutus from receiving propaganda broadcasts saw fewer Tutsis killed.³¹ The radio station itself was not formally owned by the state, but was nevertheless financed by the president's wife and family, and enjoyed the explicit support of the prime minister. The station's management consisted of Hutu extremists who actively backed the incumbent Hutu government. Bonnier et al. similarly found that participation in forced labor under the direction of local politicians before 1994 had contributed to higher rates of murder of Tutsis — but only in those areas where the Hutus and other non-Tutsis were in power.³²

The contemporary ethnic cleansing in Myanmar of the Muslim Rohingya ethnic group committed by the primarily Buddhist Burmese army has been marked by inflammatory social media posts vilifying the Rohingyas.³³ The displacement of more than 500,000 Rohingyas to Bangladesh could be seen as an instance of new-found freedom of expression leading to violence: According to Varieties of Democracy

²⁹ "The Media and the Rwanda Genocide." Thompson 2007, pp. 44-46.

³⁰ *Brandenburg v. Ohio* 395 US 444 (1969).

³¹ "Propaganda vs. Education: A Case Study of Hate Radio in Rwanda." Yanagizawa-Drott 2013 and "Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from The Rwandan Genocide." Yanagizawa-Drott 2014.

³² "Preparing for Genocide: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Rwanda." Bonnier et al. 2016.

³³ See for instance the documentary "Weaponizing Social Media: The Rohingya Crisis," CBSN Originals 2018, and "A War of Words Puts Facebook at the Center of Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis." New York Times 2017.

data Myanmar experienced a significant media liberalization beginning in 2010, when freedom of expression rose from being almost non-existent (0.08/1 on the V-DEM scale) and rose in only three years to 0.5 out of 1 on the V-DEM scale.

However, other factors point against the interpretation that freedom of expression spurred ethnic cleansing: Journalists and social media users were arrested for defending the Rohingya, reporting on army activities in Rakhine State, and criticizing aggressively nationalist Buddhists both before and after the conflict began in earnest in September 2016.³⁴ Myanmar's online media are particularly restricted, and Myanmar in 2017 was still considered as 'Not Free' in Freedom House's Annual *Freedom on The Net* report.³⁵ Furthermore, the genocide has been perpetrated not primarily by regular Burmese citizens egged on by radio, TV and social media, but instead by the army itself. The Burmese army has been engaged in internal conflicts in Myanmar since 1948 that have claimed at least 130,000 lives, and other crackdowns on the Rohingya took place in 1978 (200,000 displaced) and in 1991–1992 (250,000 displaced), both when Myanmar was one of the world's most closed societies.³⁶ Together, the evidence suggests that unrestricted freedom of expression itself is not the driver of state-sponsored violence in Myanmar.

Studies of the effect of hate speech and radio broadcasting on support for the Nazis and endorsement of anti-Semitism are particularly interesting given that control of Germany's radio stations passed from political faction to faction: from neutral centrists, to anti-Nazi control, and finally to the hands of the Nazi authorities. Adolf Hitler had himself been banned from speaking in public in 1927, only to impose massive restrictions on freedom of the press and speech in turn when he came into power. Other leading Nazis, such as Julius Streicher, editor of the anti-Semitic magazine *Der Stürmer*, had been prosecuted for their public statements under the Weimar republic.³⁷ Again, the research can help us isolate the effects of the media and propaganda. Just as in Rwanda in 1994, the quality of radio reception in Germany at the time varied depending on the local geography.

In 1930, when coverage was highly critical of the Nazis, local areas that had access to the radio were *less* inclined to vote for the Nazis. In 1933, after only five weeks of strongly pro-Nazi propaganda, they were *more* inclined to vote for them. And finally, once the Nazis had established full control of the airwaves, areas reached by Nazi radio were *more* inclined to report Jews, who were subsequently sent to concentration camps.³⁸

Should we be concerned that freedom of expression will 'run amok' and fan conflict between social groups? By and large, the best available quantitative data point in the opposite direction (with the exception of the world's most closed societies). In consolidated liberal democracies, such as those in

³⁴ "Myanmar journalists take fight for freedom of speech to court." Reuters 2017, and "Freedom of Speech Remains Illusory in the New Burma." Human Rights Watch 2016.

³⁵ "Freedom on The Net: Myanmar 2017." Freedom House 2017.

³⁶ "Major Episodes of Political Violence, 1946-2016." Center for Systemic peace 2016.

³⁷ "Jews, Nazis, and the Law: The Case of Julius Streicher." Showalter 1989.

³⁸ "Radio and the Rise of The Nazis in Prewar Germany." Adena et al. 2015. The pro-Nazi effect was only found in German areas with a history of anti-Semitism, whereas the few without it actually saw decreased levels of anti-Semitic activity after the Nazis took over radio broadcasts, i.e. the propaganda was counter-productive where it did not build on existing hatreds.

the West, we find that stronger protections for freedom of the press are associated with fewer religious and ethnic tensions. But research shows that propaganda and hate speech causally contributed to the genocide in Rwanda and the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. The experience from Germany illustrates that media control can be used to both the advantage and disadvantage of democratic forces. In the case of Germany, Nazi propaganda was disproportionately effective because the authorities were able to shut down competing sources of impartial information that would otherwise have counteracted pro-Nazi propaganda. And propaganda in Rwanda, Myanmar and Nazi Germany enjoyed state sponsorship.

Observed holistically, our analysis then suggests that claims about the links between hate speech and freedom of the press suffer from one-sidedness. It is not hate speech as one voice among many in the public sphere, but hate speech *as state propaganda* that poses the greatest threat of ethnic and religious violence, including genocide. An alternative to polarizing conflict escalation is other types of 'counterspeech.'

5.2 Radicalization and terrorism

Another more recent concern about expansive free speech rights is that they would allow socially subversive ideas, such as expressing terrorist sympathies, to spread unchecked in society. With unconstrained free speech, ideological 'entrepreneurs' from the radical right-wing, left-wing or Islamist movements are able to radicalize and recruit susceptible people to terrorism. Worse still, the concern is that expansive speech rights would enable those with socially subversive ideas to communicate, radicalize and ultimately plan terror attacks — or resort to other radical actions such as harassment, registering political opponents, forming extremist political movements and so on.

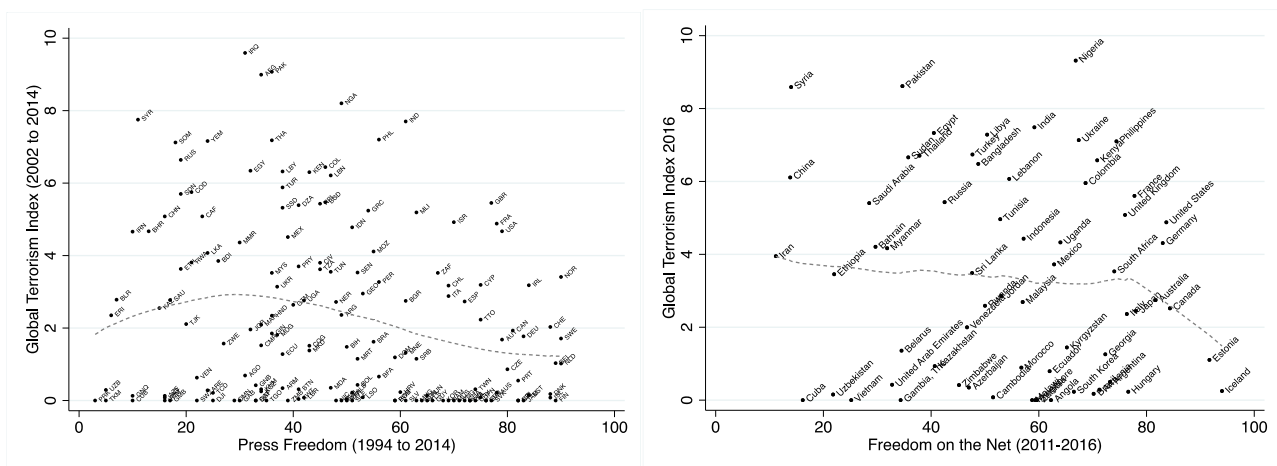
This concern especially relates to the internet and social media, where freedom of information is broad and traditional gatekeepers — editors of conventional media and similar outlets — lack the power to choose what information people can and cannot access. When it comes to bringing like-minded people together, the Internet and social media do not care if those people share an obsession over vintage cars or the eradication of Jews.

So, should expressing terrorist sympathies — jihadist, neo-Nazi or otherwise — be banned? Would it even be feasible for authorities and content platforms (like search engines or social media) to remove such statement consistently? And how would ordinary citizens hold authorities accountable and ensure they were regulating the Internet for the common good and not for their own benefit, especially in less democratic contexts?

The potential consequences of attempting to rein in freedom of expression to prevent radicalization and terrorism have been insufficiently researched to provide any definite answers. The research on radicalization is extensive and multifaceted, and this report does not purport to give an exhaustive account of its findings; we will solely touch upon the questions and conclusions that are relevant to answering the more limited question of whether there is a link between freedom of expression, radicalization, and terrorism.

Figure 7 shows the correlation between freedom of the press and the severity of terrorist attacks as measured by the Global Terrorism Index (GTI). The GTI includes deaths, number of injured people, value of property damages, and the total amount of attacks in a given year (using terror attacks from the past five years) and on that basis calculates a value between 0 and 10 indicating the burden of terrorist attacks in a country.³⁹ The correlation in Figure 7 is slightly hill-shaped, with a minor rise from 0 to 30 and a small drop from 30 to 90. As the dotted grey line indicates, countries with the strongest protections for the media are the least affected by terrorism, and better protection of freedom of speech is statistically associated with a lower exposure to terrorism for countries with index scores from 30 to 100. However, in societies with scores of 0 to 30 (approximately the level of Egypt and Thailand), liberalization is associated with a slightly higher risk of terrorism.

Homing in on the number of deaths, the superior performance of societies with the highest levels of freedom of expression is even clearer – it surpasses both the most closed societies and those with intermediate levels of freedom of expression. Using regime categories that overlap very closely with freedom of expression, Magen shows that since 2001, the annual number of fatalities in terror attacks has averaged 6.7 among liberal democracies and 17.8 in slightly less consolidated democracies with generally weaker protection of freedom of expression. Meanwhile, in closed autocracies with little to no protection of free speech, the average annual number killed in terrorist attacks is 57.2 (while regimes with low to medium levels of freedom of expression show much higher death tolls from terrorism). It is possible that technologies such as cell phones, communications encryption, virtual currencies and more are eroding the advantage that societies with little to no freedom of expression or of the press formerly had over liberal democracies when combating and/or eradicating terrorist threats.⁴⁰



Figures 7 and 8: Press Freedom, Freedom on the Net and Global Terrorism Index (data from Freedom House and National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START))

³⁹ See more in the Global Terrorism Index 2016 report. It can be discussed whether the target should be standardized for a country's population size – however, the original measurement has been utilized in this analysis.
⁴⁰ "Fighting Terrorism. The Democracy Advantage." Magen 2018.

The correlation between press freedom and terrorist attacks closely resembles the correlation between freedom of the press and religious conflicts in Figure 6 (see previous section). Religious conflicts can often fuel terrorist attacks, whether the disputes are rooted in sectarian differences between Christians in Northern Ireland, Buddhist and Hindus in Sri Lanka, or Sunni and Shia Muslims in large parts of the Muslim world.

Figure 8 visualizes the relationship between internet regulation and terrorist attacks from 2011 to 2016, where the internet has become increasingly important (and when we have data on freedom and censorship online).

In their *Freedom on the Net* report, Freedom House measures three types of restrictions on online freedom: (1) internet barriers to accessing the internet (such as judicial restrictions on internet service providers), (2) content constraints (such as blocked websites, restrictions on communication, etc.), and (3) infringement of user rights (such as surveillance, punishment for statements made online, etc.). While the data are derived from a limited set of 65 countries, they nevertheless cover the entire range of countries in terms of online freedoms, from very low levels of internet freedom such as China (12/100 in 2016) to Iceland (94/100 in 2016).

The limited nature of the sample means that we cannot be sure that the results are representative of every country in the world. Compared to the wider sample in Figure 7, we see that these 65 countries experience far more terrorism than the world as a whole. With these limitations, however, the data suggests an *almost total absence* of a statistical correlation between freedom online and the prevalence of terrorism. The two countries with the most freedom online – Estonia and Iceland – also have very low incidences of terrorism. which accounts for the declining trend line from approximately 80 to 100. Excluding these two data points, the trend is almost flat and the correlation entirely non-existent.

This implies – as opposed to many other outcomes we have considered in this report – that having strong protections in place for freedom of expression and information online *does not* seem to counteract terrorism. On the other hand, it equally does not seem that freedom of expression and information exacerbate terrorism. The most likely interpretation is that the negative and positive effects of freedom of expression and information on terrorism roughly balance each other out.

The potential negative effects of freedom of expression that may further radicalization (and which may support the case for banning open support for terrorism, or similar speech in favor of violent ideologies) relate to media exposure, terrorist recruitment and the experience of discrimination. The strategic importance of terrorism comes predominantly from its ability to influence populations, and a free press ensures the broadest possible audience for terrorist attacks.⁴¹ Peter Neumann has demonstrated that certain preachers are extremely popular among foreign fighters in Syria. These preachers presumably play a part in encouraging, justifying (including by religious arguments) and motivating jihad and terrorist

⁴¹ "Does Democracy Encourage Terrorism?" Eubank & Weinberg 1994.

attacks.⁴² In a similar vein, Thomas Hegghammer has documented how jihadists spend large amounts of time writing poetry and songs, painting and making videos that all share a characteristic aesthetic that plays a significant role in their religious and cultural self-image — as well in radicalizing and recruiting other young Muslims.⁴³

The other argument in favor of speech restrictions relates to perceived discrimination. Muslims in western countries who feel discriminated against in society (including in the media) are more inclined to believe that suicide bombings can be justified.⁴⁴ This is a core argument for extensive restrictions on hate speech points: that hate speech creates a hateful political climate, and that it increases discrimination as well as minorities' sense of discrimination.

Conversely, there are potential positive outcomes of freedom of expression that go against banning extremist speech, since bans have the effect of "hiding" or, worse still, driving extremist attitudes underground, where they are more difficult to detect and counter. The adverse outcomes would be the radicalizing effect of targeted legislation; impeding the ability to anticipate attacks due to weaker community cooperation and fewer opportunities to counter terrorist propaganda with alternative narratives on the relevant platforms.

Hate speech bans also come with the risk of directly radicalizing those who are punished for their public statements, as well as indirectly radicalizing people who sympathize with those convicted and/or their opinions. This applies equally to Islamists and right-wing radicals; convictions are prime opportunities for all radicals to portray themselves as martyrs for the cause. Adolf Hitler's public speaking ban from 1927 was used to great effect to stoke feelings of self-righteous indignation. In a major study by the UNDP on volunteers in violent groups such as Al-Shabab and Boko Haram, 71 percent indicated that an action by a public authority — such as the arrest of a family member or friend — had pushed them over the edge into violence and extremism.⁴⁵ Saiya (2016) also finds that blasphemy bans in Muslim countries, rather than reducing radicalization and terrorism, were actually associated with more frequent terrorist attacks.⁴⁶

Further arguments against restrictions are that broad-based interventions against extremism affect innocent people and violate their free speech rights through privacy violations and speech restrictions. These approaches carry the risk of alienating intelligence agencies from exactly those persons and groups (such as a local Muslim community or peripheral members of the radical left or right) that have access to information that could be crucial in thwarting an attack. They have sometimes meant that

⁴² "#Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks." Carter, Maher & Neumann 2014.

⁴³ "Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists." Hegghammer 2017.

⁴⁴ "Psychological Factors Associated with Support for Suicide Bombing in the Muslim Diaspora." Victoroff, Adelman & Matthews 2012.

⁴⁵ Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment. UNDP 2017.

⁴⁶ "Blasphemy and Terrorism in the Muslim World." Saiya 2016.

efforts to give extremists tools to solve problems peacefully have been outlawed.⁴⁷ Finally, some researchers are skeptical of the prevailing radicalization theories, which posit a strong correlation between religiosity and radicalization.⁴⁸ This skepticism is supported by a recent review of radicalization processes, which showed high heterogeneity in the processes that lead to radicalization.⁴⁹

With increased pressure from governments and recent technological breakthroughs in data analysis, social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook have begun making concerted efforts to limit extremist groups' use of social media for propaganda or terror activity.⁵⁰ Intelligence services already monitor the online activities of many citizens. That raises questions about how ordinary citizens can hold private and public authorities to account and ensure that restrictions on terrorist propaganda and extremism are in place to benefit the common good and not the interests of state agents who may have hidden agendas and/or engage in arbitrary censorship.

We know that arguments about the danger of extremism and terrorism are used to undermine freedom of expression through persecutions of political opponents, and are used by undemocratic regimes to stay in power. In Ethiopia, the government shut down access to the internet in October 2016 to limit awareness of violent protests under the pretext that social media (in the prime minister's own words) spread "hate and racism."⁵¹ In Turkey, human rights organizations have documented how the Erdogan government systematically uses very broad interpretations of the concept of terrorism to prosecute journalists for crimes including "terrorist propaganda," which is often no more than critical journalism.⁵²

Countries such as Russia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt also abuse anti-extremism laws as a way of silencing dissidents. They are met with minimal national and international repercussions by tapping into the general fear of terrorism. In 2014, Saudi Arabia implemented anti-terror legislation that includes a ban on the promotion of atheism among its many provisions.⁵³ Anti-terror laws in western countries such as France and Denmark have infringed on freedom of expression through sweeping new laws against 'glorification of terrorism,' which have already led to the closure of a TV-station and prosecutions for caricatures — even a smiley in a Facebook status update.⁵⁴ In Britain, the home secretary recently proposed that streaming terrorist videos on social media should be punishable with

⁴⁷ See *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*, 561 U.S. 1 (2010) on peacemaking organizations working with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to

⁴⁸ Others are more sceptical towards radicalization theories, e.g. "Q&A: The myth of 'Radicalization'" ACLU online and "Rethinking Radicalization." Patel 2011.

⁴⁹ "The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism." Hafez & Mullins 2015.

⁵⁰ See for instance: "Twitter's Spam Tools Helped Shut down 376,890 Terrorist Accounts in 6 Months." Wired 2017.

⁵¹ "Kapløb mod ytringsfriheden" ("The race against freedom of speech"), Udvikling 2017.

⁵² "Silencing Turkey's Media." Human Rights Watch 2016.

⁵³ "Saudi Arabia: New Terrorism Regulations Assault Rights." Human Rights Watch 2014.

⁵⁴ "Sagen mod Roj TV" [The case against Roj TV], Politiken 2012; "The Threat of 'Glorifying Terrorism' Laws", IFEX 2017 and "Smiley om terror koster ung iraker betinget udvisning" [Smiley about terrorist attack leads to conditional expulsion for young Iraqi], TV2 News 2016.

up to 15 years in prison⁵⁵, and several people have been jailed for possession of publications such as magazines published by the Al Qaeda.⁵⁶

These developments raise the crucial question of whether severe restrictions on freedom of expression are a necessary and effective means of combating terrorism, or do these constraints themselves promote radicalization? It should be stressed that we do not yet have solid comparative evidence on the relationship between freedom of expression, radicalization, and terrorism. Many studies are speculative and solely based on secondary sources; many of the quantitative sources only have limited generalizability.⁵⁷ By scientific standards, even the best individual-level studies of radicalization and participation in terrorist activities are hampered by the fact that they only explore positive instances of radicalization.⁵⁸ Because characteristics that are typical of terrorists are often shared by non-terrorists, this type of research cannot deliver final conclusions – and is broadly acknowledged as insufficient in methodological textbooks and texts.⁵⁹ When studies do include control or reference groups, they are often unreliable because the control groups differ from those who were radicalized on a range of criteria besides radicalization.⁶⁰

The connections between radicalization, terrorism and the regulation of information technology will be an ongoing question for many years to come, whatever the answers the research ultimately reaches. It will remain one of the most important questions for the protection of freedom of expression – both from abuse by public authorities, as well as from terrorists' limitations on freedom of expression through targeted attacks on those who speak out.

5.3 Human rights, corruption and democracy

Despite concerns about the role of freedom of expression in religious and ethnic tensions, there is more widespread agreement on the role of freedom of speech and the free press in maintaining and defending human rights, reducing corruption and promoting democracy.

Journalists are often subjected to threats and physical attacks when they report on human rights violations; precisely, it would seem, because their work challenges the ability of the powerful to carry on violating human rights. Because exposing corruption is a widespread trigger of intimidation and harassment of journalists, freedom of the press appears to be an important source of protection of

⁵⁵ "Amber Rudd: viewers of online terrorist material face 15 years in jail." The Guardian 2017.

⁵⁶ "Longer Jail terms for Viewing Terror Content Online" BBC News 2017 and "Woman Jailed after Al-Qaida Terrorist Material Found on Her Phone." The Guardian 2012.

⁵⁷ "How Rigorous Is Radicalization Research?" Neumann & Kleinmann 2013.

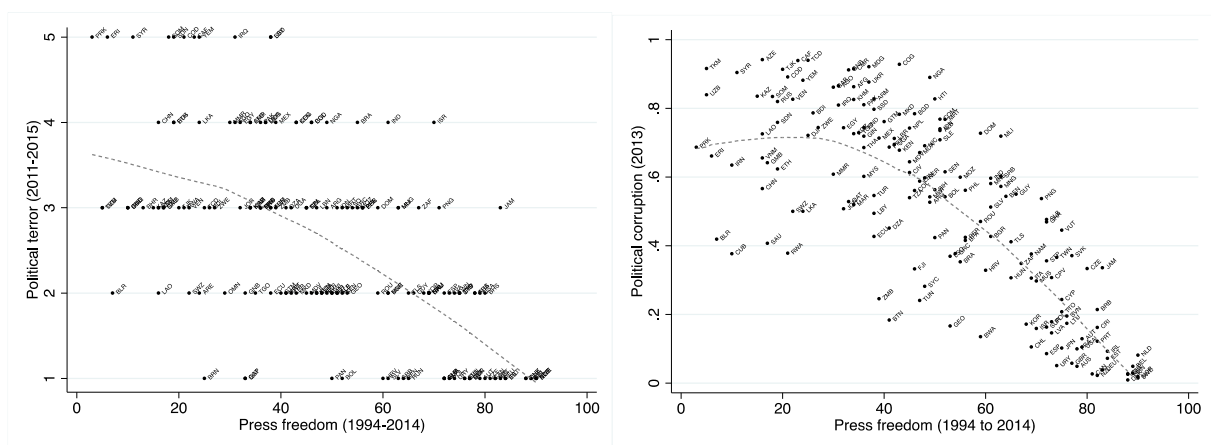
⁵⁸ "The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism." Hafez & Mullins 2015.

⁵⁹ "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," Geddes 1990, "Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research," King, Keohane & Verba 1994 and "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research." Seawright & Gerring 2008.

⁶⁰ See for instance UNDP Africa's study Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment, where the 138 participants in the reference group differ highly from the radicalized group and there is no credible identification strategy to ensure comparability.

human rights as well as a check against corruption. Does this then also mean that a greater freedom of the press goes hand in hand with better protection of human rights and freedom of expression? Generally speaking, it does.

Figures 9 and 10 show the strongly negative correlation between freedom of the press and human rights violations and corruption in politics: the stronger the protection of press freedom, the lower the incidence of human rights violations and corruption in politics. The same goes for women's political power in society, which is also associated with higher levels of freedom of expression (diagram not featured here).⁶¹ For corruption, we especially see the impact in countries with a level of press freedom similar to or above the level in countries like Thailand, Ukraine and Egypt.



Figures 9 and 10: Press Freedom and respectively violations of human rights and corruption in politics (data from Freedom House, Political Terror Scale and V-DEM).

The index above of human rights protections comes from the Political Terror Scale, which is based on Amnesty International's annual report on the state of human rights. Countries with ratings of '1' have a secure rule of law where torture is rare or exceptional, while '5' refers to a society with endemic civil and political rights violations. The index of political corruption was drawn from the V-DEM dataset and is an average value of six different corruption measures, including corruption within the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government, as well as corruption in the broader public sector (so-called 'petty corruption') and the political or administrative elite (so-called 'grand corruption').

As with the analysis of the impact of freedom of the press on religious conflict, it is important to stress that we cannot be certain that the correlations observed are causal. Will human rights violations and corruption actually decrease in frequency if a society implements political reforms and increases the freedom of the press? Societies with different levels of press freedom also tend to differ on other

⁶¹ Data from V-DEM and Freedom House.

parameters, many of which presumably influence the prevalence of human rights violations and corruption.

In the case of corruption, we do have more indications than mere cross-country evidence that the link between greater freedom of the press and lower corruption is in fact causal. In a recent study, Stanig (2014) takes advantage of the fact that Mexico is a federal state where individual states vary greatly with regard to legal protections for the press and the level of corruption, but where many other factors are constant across the country. Stanig manually coded coverage of corruption in local newspapers and Mexican states' libel laws, some of which offer public employees and politicians much greater leeway than others to sue journalists for libel.⁶² Stanig finds that media in states with less *de facto* press protections because of the risk of libel suits had much less coverage of corruption. This indicates a possible causal mechanism that can explain why less stringent protection of freedom of the press increases the amount of corruption.

Do free media also promote democracy in non-democratic contexts? Again the answer seems to be yes. Because of overlap between how democracy indexes and measurements of press freedom are calculated, quantitative measurements (as in Figures 9 and 10) will show artificially high correlations. Instead, this section is based on detailed case studies that separate freedom of the press and non-press related aspects of democracy. Our aim is to assess the independent contribution of press freedoms in two cases: resisting authoritarian consolidation in Russia and advancing political liberalization in Malaysia.

In 1996, NTV launched as the first private television channel in Russia not controlled by the government. In 1999, two thirds of the population could access the channel, which had an immediately apparent geographic impact on that year's election results — even though they were marred by manipulation and fraud.⁶³ In the 1999 parliamentary election, districts that had access to NTV showed considerably lower support for Putin's government and had better results for the opposition. Heavy TV viewers in these areas were particularly unsupportive of the governing party.⁶⁴

It should be recalled that Vladimir Putin at the time of his appointment as prime minister from his position as chief of the Russian intelligence agency FSB in August 1999 only had the support of around 2 percent of the population. At the parliamentary election in December 1999, his new party won about 24 percent of the votes. In the first round of the March 2000 presidential election, Putin received 53 percent of the votes. Beyond just vote rigging, the state-controlled media's propaganda campaign presumably had a large impact on this huge increase in popularity. By the next parliamentary elections in 2003, NTV had been taken over by Gazprom, the Russian energy giant that is controlled by the government.

⁶² "Regulation of Speech and Media Coverage of Corruption: An Empirical Analysis of the Mexican Press." Stanig 2015.

⁶³ "Russia's 1999 Parliamentary Elections: Party Consolidation and Fragmentation." McFaul 2000.

⁶⁴ "Media and Political Persuasion: Evidence from Russia." Enikolopov, Petrova & Zhuravskaya 2011.

Another example comes from Malaysia, where independent bloggers and online media have made uncensored information much more widely available following government efforts to attract foreign investments by expanding internet access. In 2008 elections, the government lost its majority in the legislature for the first time since 1969. Support for the governing party fell by 11 percent in the short time it took for the internet to reach mass adoption, and it fell the most in the election districts closest to the country's backbone fiber-optic cable network.⁶⁵

To recap, the available data and literature on human rights, corruption and democratization show relatively unambiguously that freedom of speech and freedom of the press improve human rights protections. Likewise, data on corruption indicate that freedom of expression and the presence of free media prevent economic elites from spending their money to buy political influence, and political elites from trading their influence to make money. Furthermore, free media seem to promote democratization and slow authoritarian regimes' consolidation of power.

5.4 Innovation and economic growth

Do strong safeguards for the freedom of speech increase a society's ability to innovate and ultimately increase economic growth? The economies of almost all western countries are highly knowledge and technology-based. For that reason, we should expect that freedom of expression, if it influences the creation of knowledge or the capacity to capitalize on existing knowledge, will have a discernible influence on technological progress, innovation, and economic growth.

John Stuart Mill's defense of the freedom of speech in his 1859 treatise *Liberty* largely rests on this line of reasoning. He presents four arguments in favor of freedom of expression, each of which emphasizes how freedom can foster the creation of knowledge. He argues that:

1. Opinions that are silenced can still be true.
2. Even if suppressed opinions are largely false, they will often include a portion of the truth and they will, in dialogue with other comments, bring us closer to the truth.
3. Even if the prevailing understanding is completely true, contradictions and discussion can ensure that people's understandings are rationally substantiated and not merely superficial assumptions.

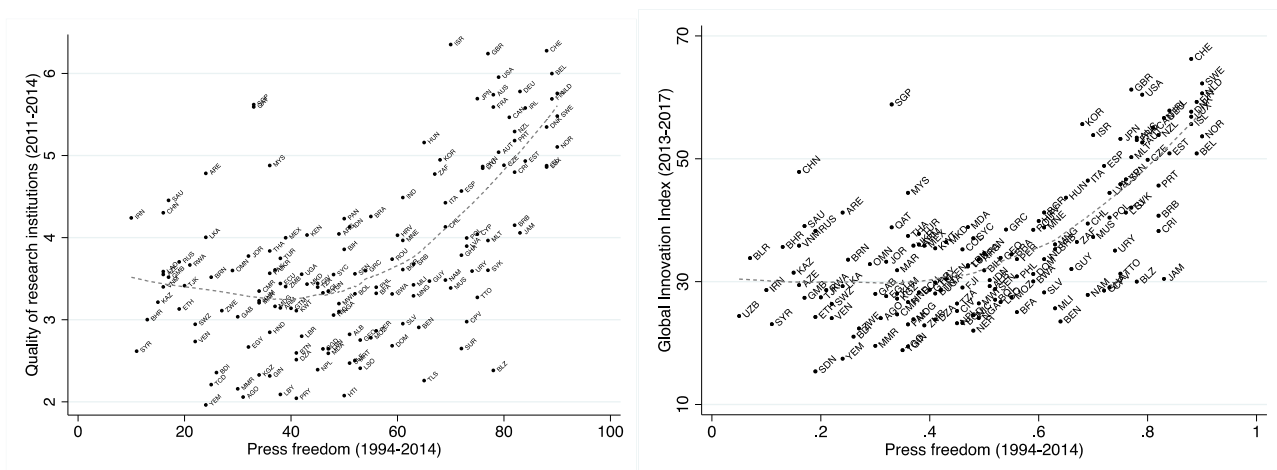
⁶⁵ "The Unintended Consequences of Internet Diffusion: Evidence from Malaysia." Miner 2015. However, since then the protection of the freedom of speech has fallen in Malaysia.

4. Without contradiction, a completely true understanding of a phenomenon may be lost because contrast is necessary for thorough understanding.⁶⁶

An additional argument for the role of freedom of speech in innovation, science and growth is that it creates a space for 'ideas to have sex,' as Matt Ridley put it.⁶⁷ It makes way for unforeseeable combinations that sometimes lead to scientific or technological breakthroughs, or even quantum leaps.

These informal arguments are rearticulated in formal terms within economic theory; more specifically, in so-called 'endogenous growth theories,' which seek to explain the rate of technological development. In these models, investments in human capital, innovation and knowledge can increase economic growth by furthering technological advances, which in turn makes input factors such as manpower and capital more effective. If freedom of speech enhances knowledge production, it can be incorporated into endogenous growth theories as a factor that increases economic growth in the long run.

There are many different measurements of innovation and technology. In Figure 11, we see a strongly positive correlation between freedom of the press and the quality of research institutions in the interval from a middle value for press freedom (approximately 40) and up to the highest levels of press freedom. From the lowest value and up until the middle values, we can observe a moderately negative correlation.⁶⁸



Figures 11 and 12: Press freedom and respectively, the research institutions' quality and innovation (data from Freedom House, World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey, Global Innovation Index).

As mentioned previously, there are several caveats regarding omitted variables and possible reverse causality. However, the data in Figure 11 strongly suggest that free speech and protections have a beneficial effect on innovation and potentially on economic growth.

⁶⁶ On Liberty, Stuart Mill 1859.

⁶⁷ The Rational Optimist: How Prosperity Evolves, Ridley 2010.

⁶⁸ The research quality measurement was drawn from the World Economic Forum's survey of corporate leaders, who were asked to rate the quality of their country's research institutions on a scale from 1 (among the world's worst) to 7 (world-leading).

Figure 12 uses the Global Innovation Index to map the correlation between press freedom and innovation at a societal level. In 2017, Switzerland and Sweden topped the index, which is based on metrics such as a country's scientific output, its citizens' creativity online, and innovation in the corporate world. Here we can observe a comparable relationship. The correlation between freedom of the press and innovation is flat for the first half of the distribution, but then strongly positive from a middle range of press freedom and upward. This could be because strong protections for freedom of the press allow journalists to print stories that threaten the interests of established businesses, oligarchs and/or politicians, potentially contributing to increased innovation and so-called creative destruction. Singapore and China are notable exceptions from the correlation with low press freedom and high innovation, as one would expect.

The relationship between freedom of speech and the press, innovation, and economic growth is surprisingly understudied — presumably because reliable longitudinal measurements of freedom of speech have only recently become available. Reliable measurement of innovation, quality of research etc., over longer periods of time are also few and far between.

Nevertheless, a huge volume of research papers has investigated the question of the relationship between democracy and economic growth.⁶⁹ The majority of the research has found that there is no correlation between democracy and growth or that any such correlation is weak. There are, however, several exceptions and as of yet no scientific consensus. The relevance of these studies to our question is complicated by the fact that other aspects of democratic polities could plausibly affect economic growth, such as greater economic redistribution, varying risk of conflict, different levels of corruption and rule of law, and so on.

There are also certain unresolved questions in terms of the relevant policy-related discussions on freedom of speech. Situations like Chinese state visits where pro-Tibetan protesters are physically prevented from expressing their views on China's treatment of Tibet raise challenging questions about selective speech restrictions. For example, we know that the volume of export to China drops when a country has an official meeting with the Dalai Lama and that lower exports are associated with lower economic growth.⁷⁰ Can this kind of selective restriction on freedom of speech boost economic growth? Or do selective restrictions on freedom of expression lead to a risk of lower growth in the longer term because they can reduce a country's innovation and knowledge production as a whole?

Despite the relatively weak evidence, data from Figures 11 and 12 imply that freedom of speech has a positive influence on knowledge production, innovation and potentially on economic growth. Future research should be expected to improve our understanding of the question and help shed light on political disagreements, including on selective restrictions of freedom of speech.

⁶⁹ "Foreign Aided: Why Democratization Brings Growth when Democracy Does Not." Hariri 2015.

For exception see "Democracy Does Cause Growth," Acemoglu et al. 2015 "Democracy and Economic Growth: A Historical Perspective," Gerring et al. 2005, and "Why Democracies Outgrow Autocracies in the Long Run: Civil Liberties, Information Flows and Technological Change." Knutsen 2015.

⁷⁰ "Paying a Visit: The Dalai Lama Effect on International Trade," Fuchs & Klann 2013.

6. Conclusion: Is freedom of expression in crisis?

What's the point of freedom of expression? As this report has shown, it is highly likely that freedom of expression — in addition to its inherent moral value — benefits society in a range of ways, from strengthening human rights protections, exposing corruption, and supporting democracy to boosting technological and economic growth. Additionally, we evaluate the quality of the arguments on the effects of freedom of expression using empirical evidence and research. One of the most important conclusions we can draw is that over-confident declarations regarding the consequences of freedom of expression should be avoided because they are very difficult to investigate, and, just as worryingly, because large parts of the existing research have considerable limitations.

Concerns that unrestricted freedom of expression will increase the risk of conflict, genocide and terrorism are most likely exaggerated. Only in the world's most politically closed countries do we find even a slight correlation between restrictions on freedom of expression and reduced risk of conflict or terrorism. Similarly, the internet and mobile technologies have meant that many statements that would not have previously achieved wide publicity have been able to gain mass audiences and attract thorough documentation — for example, in terms of police killings of black Americans or accusations of corruption.

Given the facts, it would seem odd that free speech is under pressure in so many ways. Global freedom of the press has fallen to its lowest level in 13 years, which has gone hand in hand with a general decrease in respect for democracy and constitutional rights.⁷¹ And there is cause for even more pessimism. China's alternative model, which allows for innovation, economic growth and prosperity without freedom of speech, is attractive to many countries whose leaders seek popular legitimacy through successful reforms rather than through free elections.

Populist leaders like Putin and Erdogan manage to combine illiberal policies, including propaganda and marginalization of critical voices, with national and popular appeal. They also appeal to political movements as well as ordinary citizens in their regional spheres of interest; Putin also has an undeniable appeal to certain politicians and groups in western democracies. In the Muslim world, nothing indicates that the space for religious criticism — often closely linked to politics — will expand considerably anytime soon. The death penalty for blasphemy in Pakistan, the murder of secular bloggers in Bangladesh, as well as whippings and long prison sentences for Saudi free thinkers all testify to this.

Most importantly, the world's democracies no longer seem to promote the value of freedom of speech as a particularly important social good. In the United States, Donald Trump's presidency has shown greater hostility to journalists than that of any other western leader in recent history. He has called the news media "enemies of the people", proposed tightening libel laws and mused about the possibilities for stripping critical cable networks of their broadcasting licenses.⁷² When the leader of the world's

⁷¹ "Freedom of the Press 2017. Press Freedom's Dark Horizon." Freedom House 2017.

⁷² "Trump Tweets: The Media is the 'Enemy of the American People,'" The Hill 2017 and "Trump Threatens NBC Over Nuclear Weapons Report." New York Times 2017.

leading democratic superpower is clearly questioning freedom of the press, a potential consequence is that that leaders in the rest of the world can more easily justify their own restrictions on freedom of expression. At the same time, EU countries such as Britain, France and Germany have taken ever more invasive steps against terrorist propaganda and illegal expressions on social media, even punishing mildly condoning terrorist attacks. Moreover, at the EU level, measures against fake news are being proposed. On top of this comes the jihadist threat to journalists, cartoonists, etc., as well as the possible negative consequences of fake news and propaganda that could lead to a crisis of confidence in liberal democracies.

The problem of fake news — fraudulent news material deliberately produced to cheat or mislead readers, listeners or viewers — poses a strong dilemma for democracies, because the threat of fake news for freedom of expression is twofold. On the one hand, there is a real threat from manufacturers of fake news. They are used to influence policy agendas to the benefit of producers (e.g. in other countries' elections) or to shield the sender from criticism by reducing confidence in the news; in both cases, fake news undermines democracy in the receiving countries. The state-sponsored news channel RT excelled in this discipline during the war in Ukraine, but it is not the only example. The same kind of disinformation can be found in Turkey, Venezuela, China, Syria and elsewhere.⁷³ The threat will only grow: new technologies will soon be able to produce life-like but fake video clips, where, for example, political leaders will appear to say things they have never said.⁷⁴ Political debate, democracy and freedom of speech will come under severe pressure.

On the other hand, the sheer scale of fake news has led politicians to call for bans, as proposed in both Italy, Germany and France, and at the EU level. But how do we define fake news? One of the reasons that fake news thrives is huge distrust in the established media. It is often connected to the sense that there are topics, which are not reported fairly because of high ideological and cultural homogeneity among the elite, including journalists.

To penalize journalists or media who produce fake news — for instance, invented or greatly exaggerated stories with a focus on immigrants and Muslims, about Israel or about Donald Trump — may inadvertently confirm conspiracy theorists' view of the world: their prophets' truths are so dangerous that the powers-that-be must intervene to silence them. Bans will presumably not make the mistrust, whether legitimate or illegitimate, of the established media disappear. For instance, research has shown that Facebook's experiments with placing warnings on articles whose veracity has been contested by independent fact-checkers had mixed success on younger voters and strongly pro-Trump voters.⁷⁵ Furthermore, there is a long history of using the question of truth and accurate coverage as a fig leaf for media suppression.⁷⁶

⁷³ "The New Authoritarians: Ruling Through Disinformation." Legatum Institute 2015.

⁷⁴ See for instance "Scarily Convincing Fake Video Tool Puts Words in Obama's Mouth." The Telegraph 2017.

⁷⁵ "Assessing the Effect of 'Disputed' Warnings and Source Salience on Perceptions of Fake News Accuracy." Pennycook & Rand 2017.

⁷⁶ "On Democratic Backsliding." Bermeo 2016.

Why is freedom of speech under particularly vicious attack today? To recap, two basic factors ultimately explain attacks against it: powerful people seeking to protect their interests and ordinary people's indifference or even opposition to freedom of expression. Particular dangers arise when the two form strong alliances. Turkey today shows an example of this: Recep Tayyip Erdogan has an interest in making it hard for journalists to report on Turkey's democratic setbacks, and at the same time many ordinary Turks mistrust established and western-oriented media, which they see as a reflection of the intellectual upper class that despises patriotic and religious Turks and their values.⁷⁷ In such cases, leaders can often prevail in restricting a society's overall degree of freedom of expression through legislation, administrative practices as well as help with intimidation from non-state actors.

Political polarization may be one occasion for negative spirals endangering freedom of speech through reduced public support for it. If right-wing figures experience censorship, it will make them less inclined to support freedom of speech for those whom they see as the source of censorship. When left-wing figures — for instance, at American universities — see right-wing figures not supporting freedom of speech, they in turn become less inclined to allow their ideological opponents to speak freely. For instance, young Americans increasingly believe (and Democrats more so than Republicans) that freedom of speech should be curtailed when it concerns comments that are perceived as offensive to minorities and vulnerable groups.⁷⁸ This development has led to violent clashes where students use force to try to prevent speakers with whom they disagree from giving public talks or lectures. In turn, these episodes further radicalize the extreme right.

This back-and-forth between political opponents does not only happen with respect to freedom of speech, but also with respect to democracy itself. In their comprehensive study of regime change in Latin America from 1990 to 2010, political scientists Scott Mainwaring & Aníbal Pérez-Liñán find that governments and oppositions follow one another when it comes to support for democratic governance in speech and action.⁷⁹ If a government's behavior becomes less democratically oriented, then the opposition will usually also become less supportive of democracy. The same logic applies to radicalized and non-democratic opposition groups, such as communist parties or guerrilla movements: their explicit or implicit disavowal of democracy usually lead the sitting government to reduce its own support for democratic rule.

The threat of terrorism and rise of nationalist populist movements that challenge the political dominance of traditional parties in western countries have already led to appreciable restrictions on freedom of expression, especially in relation to content on the internet and social media. If Europe continues to experience relatively frequent terrorist attacks, this could lead to further legislative action to curb the spread of Islamist extremists' messages. It is also conceivable that such terrorist attacks will strengthen popular movements that demand a fundamental break with the migration and asylum policies of today. This could bring national populist parties directly into the seat of government, where

⁷⁷ "When Polarization Trumps Civic Virtue: Partisan Conflict and the Subversion of Democracy by Incumbents." Svoblik 2017.

⁷⁸ "40% of Millennials OK with Limiting Speech Offensive to Minorities." PEW Research Center 2015.

⁷⁹ "Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall." Mainwaring & Pérez Liñán 2014.

they might prove uncharitable toward politicians who formerly backed laws restricting populists' speech. If not, a surge in support for such parties and a hardening of their rhetoric could make the traditional parties they challenge react with further restrictions and laws against hate speech.

All in all, in the coming years freedom of expression will face a massive test — and possibly a real crisis.

It will be up to civil society both locally and globally to protect freedom of expression in speech and action as well as to support journalists and dissidents who are targeted by harassment from state and non-state actors. As our analysis shows, there are very strong arguments for those who want freedom of expression to be strengthened rather than weakened, and there is much to lose in the erosion of free speech and debate.

7. Works Cited

Acemoglu, D., Naidu S., Restrepo, P., Robinson, J. A. "Democracy Does Cause Growth" NBER Working Paper Series (Marts 2014). Available at: ><https://economics.mit.edu/files/12806>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

ACLU, "Q&A: The myth of 'Radicalisation'" Available at: ><https://www.aclu.org/other/qa-myth-radicalization>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

Adena, M.; R. Enikopolov; M. Petrova; V. Santarosa & E. Zhuravskaya. "Radio and the Rise of The Nazis in Prewar Germany." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 130, Issue 4, (November 2015), Available at: ><https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjv030>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

BBC News 2017, "Longer jail terms for viewing terror content online." Available at ><http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-41479620>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

Bermeo, N. "On Democratic Backsliding" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 27, No. 1. (January, 2016)

Bonnier, E., Poulsen, J., Rogall, T. & Stryjan, M. "Preparing for Genocide: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Rwanda" *SITE working paper series*. (Stockholm: Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics, 2016), Available at: ><https://ideas.repec.org/p/hhs/hasite/0031.html>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017).

Carter, J. A., Maher, S., Neumann, P. R. "#Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks" (London: ICSR, King's College London, 2014). Available at: ><http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ICSR-Report-Greenbirds-Measuring-Importance-and-Influence-in-Syrian-Foreign-Fighter-Networks.pdf>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

CBSN Originals 2018, "Weaponizing Social Media: The Rohingya Crisis," available on ><https://www.cbsnews.com/news/rohingya-refugee-crisis-myanmar-weaponizing-social-media-preview/> (accessed on February 28th 2018).

Center for Systemic Peace 2016, "Major Episodes of Political Violence, 1946-2016." Available at ><http://www.systemicpeace.org/warlist/warlist.htm#> (accessed on February 24th 2018).

Clark, L., "Twitter's spam tools helped shut down 376.890 terrorist accounts in 6 months" *Wired*. Available at: ><http://www.wired.co.uk/article/twitter-transparency-report-2017>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

Committee to Protect Journalists, "The Obama Administration and the Press." Available at ><https://cpj.org/reports/2013/10/obama-and-the-press-us-leaks-surveillance-post-911.php>< (accessed on d. Sep. 21st 2017)

Danmarks Radio, "Professor: Lov mod hadprædikanter er på kant med grundloven" (2016) Available at: ><https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/professor-lov-mod-hadpraedikanter-er-paa-kant-med-grundloven>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

Enikolopov R., Petrova M. & Zhuravskaya E.V. "Media and political persuasion: evidence from Russia." *American Economic Review*. Vol. 101, Nr 1. (December 2011)

Eubank, W.L. & L. Weinberg, "Does Democracy Encourage Terrorism?" *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 6, Issue 4 (1994).

European Social Survey, "ESS round 6 Source Questionnaire" (London: Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, 2012) Available at:>https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/round6/fieldwork/source/ESS6_source_main_questionnaire.pdf< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

European Social Survey, "ESS round 6: European Social Survey Round 6 Data" *Norwegian Centre for Research Data*. (2012). Data File Edition 2.3.

Freedom House, "Freedom on the Net 2016. Silencing the Messenger: Communication Apps Under Pressure" Available at: > <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/freedom-net-2016>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

Freedom House, "Freedom on The Net: Myanmar 2017." Available on ><https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2017/myanmar> (accessed on February 24th 2018).

Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press 2017. Press Freedom's Dark Horizon" Available at: > <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/freedom-press-2017>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

Fuchs, A. & Klann, NH., "Paying a visit: The Dalai Lama effect on international trade", *Journal of International Economics*, vol. 91, nr. 1, (September 2013)

Geddes, B. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics" *Political analysis*, vol 2. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

Gerring, J., Bond, P., Barndt, W. T., Moreno, C. "Democracy and Economic Growth: A Historical Perspective" *World Politics*. Vol. 57, Nr. 3. (2005)

Global Innovation Index. "The Global Innovation Index 2017: Innovation Feeding the World."

Guardian, "Glenn Greenwald's partner detained at Heathrow Airport for nine hours" *Guardian*. (August 19th, 2013). Available at: ><https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/18/glenn-greenwald-guardian-partner-detained-heathrow>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

Guardian, "Amber Rudd: viewers of online terrorist material face 15 years in jail." (Oct. 3rd 2017). Available at ><https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/oct/03/amber-rudd-viewers-of-online-terrorist-material-face-15-years-in-jail> (accessed on Feb. 24th 2018).

Hafez, M. & Mullins, C. "The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism.", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 38, Nr. 11. (September 2015).

Haidt, J. 2012. *"The Righteous Mind."* New York: Vintage

Harari, Y. "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind." New York: Harper.

Hariri, J.G. "Foreign Aided: Why Democratization Brings Growth When Democracy Does Not." *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 45, nr. 1 (2015)

Hegghammer, T. *"Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists."* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Human Rights Watch, "Saudi Arabia: New Terrorism Regulations Assault Rights" (March 2014). Available at: ><https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/03/20/saudi-arabia-new-terrorism-regulations-assault-rights>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

Human Rights Watch, "Malaysia: Anwar's Conviction Sets Back Rights" (February 10th, 2015). Available at: ><https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/02/10/malaysia-anwars-conviction-sets-back-rights>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

Human Rights Watch, "Freedom of Speech Remains Illusory in the New Burma" (November 8th 2016). Available at ><https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/08/freedom-speech-remains-illusory-new-burma> (accessed on February 24th 2018).

Human Rights Watch, "Silencing Turkey's Media" (December 2016) Available at: ><https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/12/15/silencing-turkeys-media/governments-deepening-assault-critical-journalism>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

IFEX 2017, "The threat of 'glorifying terrorism' laws." Available at >https://www.ifex.org/europe_central_asia/2017/02/02/glorifying_terrorism_charges/< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

Institut for Menneskerettigheder 2017, "Hadefulde ytringer i den offentlige debat online." Available at >https://menneskeret.dk/sites/menneskeret.dk/files/media/dokumenter/udgivelser/ligebehandling_2017/old_rapport_om_hadefulde_ytringer_2017.pdf< (Accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index 2016" accessed on ><http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

- Internet live stats, "Internet users by country" (2015). Available at:
><http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users-by-country/2015/>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)
- King, G., Keohane, R. O. & Verba, S. "*Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*" (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)
- Knutsen, C.H. "Why Democracies Outgrow Autocracies in the Long Run: Civil Liberties, Information Flows and Technological Change." *Kyklos*, Volume 68, Issue 3, August 2015, Pages 357–384
- Krishnarajan, S., Møller, J., Rørbæk, L. L., Skaaning, SE. "*Democracy, Democratization and Civil War*" V-Dem Institute. (Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, August 2016). Available at: >https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/ba/5e/ba5ea763-bb26-4e67-8e3e-199bc409c8a1/v-dem_working_paper_2016_34.pdf< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)
- Legatum Institute, "The New Authoritarians: Ruling Through Disinformation." (2015) Available at:
><https://lif.blob.core.windows.net/lif/docs/default-source/publications/the-new-authoritarians---ruling-through-disinformation-june-2015-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=4>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)
- Magen, A. "Fighting Terrorism: The Democracy Advantage." *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 29, Issue 1 (January 2018), pp. 111-125.
- Mainwaring, S. & Pérez Liñán, A. "*Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall*" (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- McFaul, M. "Russia's 1999 Parliamentary Elections: Party Consolidation and Fragmentation." *Demokratizatsiya*, vol 8. (Winter 2000) Available at:
>https://www2.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/demokratizatsiya%20archive/08-1_McFaul.PDF< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)
- McGoogan, C. "Scarily convincing fake video tool puts words in Obama's mouth" *The Telegraph*. (12 Juli, 2017) Available at: ><http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2017/07/12/scarily-convincing-fake-video-tool-puts-words-obamas-mouth/>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)
- New York Times, "A War of Words Puts Facebook at the Center of Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis." (Oct. 27th 2017). Available at ><https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/27/world/asia/myanmar-government-facebook-rohingya.html> (Accessed on February 24th 2018).
- Mill, J. S. "*On Liberty*" (Parker and Son Ltd, 1859)
- Miner, L. "The unintended consequences of internet diffusion: Evidence from Malaysia ☆" *Journal of Public Economics*, Volume 132 (December 2015), s. 66-78
- Neumann, P. & Kleinmann, S. "How Rigorous Is Radicalization Research?", *Democracy and Security*, Vol. 9, Issue. 4 (2013)

- Patel, F. *"Rethinking Radicalization"* (New York: Brennan Center For Justice, 2011) Available at: ><http://www.brennancenter.org/publication/rethinking-radicalization>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)
- Pennycook, G. & Rand, D.G., "Assessing the Effect of 'Disputed' Warnings and Source Salience on Perceptions of Fake News Accuracy" (2017). Accessed on: >https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3035384< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)
- Petersen, M. B, Stubager, R. & Togeby, L i Politica, "Frihed for Loke såvel som for Thor" *politica*, årg. 39, nr. 1. (2007). Available at: > <http://pure.au.dk/portal/files/93130792/Politica2007c.pdf>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)
- Politiken 2010 "Højrefløjen vil have fri hetz." Available at ><http://politiken.dk/debat/art5478008/H%C3%B8jrefl%C3%B8jen-vil-have-fri-hetz>< (Accessed on Sep. 21st 2017).
- Politiken 2016, "Regering vil kunne straffe religiøse forkyndere med 2 års fængsel." Available at ><http://politiken.dk/indland/politik/art5622564/Regering-vil-kunne-straffe-religi%C3%B8se-forkyndere-med-2-%C3%A5rs-f%C3%A6ngsel>< (Accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)
- Politiken 2012, "Her er sagen mod Roj TV." Available at ><http://politiken.dk/indland/art5456488/FAKTA-Her-er-sagen-mod-Roj-TV>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)
- Politiken. "Racisme hører ikke fortiden til." Available at ><http://politiken.dk/debat/debatindlaeg/art5509476/Racisme-h%C3%B8rer-ikke-fortiden-til>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)
- Poushter, J. "40% of Millennials OK with limiting speech offensive to minorities" PEW Research Center (20 November 2015). Available at: ><http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/20/40-of-millennials-ok-with-limiting-speech-offensive-to-minorities/><(accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)
- Prud'homme, J. A. *"Policing belief: The impact of blasphemy laws on human rights"* (Washington D.C: Freedom House, 2010). Available at: >https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Policing_Belief_Full.pdf< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017).
- Reuters, "Myanmar journalists take fight for freedom of speech to court" (June 7th 2017). Available at ><https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-media/myanmar-journalists-take-fight-for-freedom-of-speech-to-court-idUSKBN18Y1A7> (accessed on February 28th 2018).
- Ridley, M. *"The Rational Optimist: How Prosperity Evolves"* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2011)
- Rujun, S. & Urn, L. R."Lee Kuann Yew, founding father of modern Singapore, dies at 91" Reuters. (23 March, 2015) Available at: ><http://www.reuters.com/article/us-singapore-leekuan-yew/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-of-modern-singapore-dies-at-91-idUSKBNOMI08Y20150323>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

Saiya, N. "Blasphemy and Terrorism in the Muslim World" *Terrorism and Political Violence*. (Abingdon: Routledge, January 2016)

Seawright, J., Gerring, J. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research" *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol 61, Issue 2 (February, 2008)

Shed, S. "Facebook said Germany's plan to tackle fake news would make social media companies delete legal content" *Business Insider*. (May 30, 2017) Available at:
><http://www.businessinsider.com/facebook-says-germany-fake-news-plans-comply-with-eu-law-2017-5?r=UK&IR=T&IR=T>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

Showalter, D. "Jews, Nazis, and the Law: The Case of Julius Streicher." *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, p. 143-163 (1989).

Stanig, P. "Regulation of Speech and Media Coverage of Corruption: An Empirical Analysis of the Mexican Press." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 59, No. 1, (January 2015)

Stigsgaard, L. "Kapløb mod ytringsfriheden" *Udvikling*, Udenrigsministeret. Nr. 1. (February 2017), s. 17-18

Stouffer, S.A. "*Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties*." (New York: Doubleday, 1955)

Svolik, M. "When Polarization Trumps Civic Virtue: Partisan Conflict and the Subversion of Democracy by Incumbents." Available at:
><https://campuspress.yale.edu/svolik/files/2017/04/polarization-16tnmfw.pdf>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

The Guardian 2012, "Woman jailed after al-Qaida terrorist material found on her phone." Available at
><https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/06/woman-jailed-al-qaida-material-on-phone>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

TV2 Nyhederne 2016, "Smiley om terror koster ung iraker betinget udvisning." Available at
><http://nyheder.tv2.dk/krimi/2016-09-21-smiley-om-terror-koster-ung-iraker-betinget-udvisning>< (accessed on Sep. 21st 2017)

Thompson, A. *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007)

Thucydides, "*The Peloponnesian War*." Available at:
><http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0200>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

United Nations Development Programme, UNDP. "*Journey to extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment*" (New York, 2017) Available at: > <http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

Vasilyeva, N. "Dozens in Russia imprisoned for social media likes, reposts" *AP News*. (3. Maj, 2017). Available at: ><https://apnews.com/0274242811894097a9d79f789002aab0/dozens-russia-imprisoned-social-media-likes-reposts>
<<https://apnews.com/0274242811894097a9d79f789002aab0/dozens-russia-imprisoned-social-media-likes-reposts>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

Victoroff, J., Adelman, J., Matthews, M. "Psychological Factors Associated with Support for Suicide Bombing in the Muslim Diaspora" *Political Psychology* Vol. 33. Nr. 6. (2012)

Wike, R. & Simmons, K. "Global Support for Principle of Free Expression, but opposition to some forms of speech" (Washington D.C.: PEW Research Centre, 2015). Available at:
><http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/11/18/appendix-c-detailed-tables/#free-speech>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)

Yanagizawa-Drott, D. "Propaganda vs. Education: A Case Study of Hate Radio in Rwanda" i Auerbach, J. & Castronovo, R., *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Yanagizawa-Drott, D. "Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from The Rwandan Genocide" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 129. Nr. 4 (Fall 2014) Available at:
><https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/13457754/RwandaDYD.pdf>< (accessed on Sep. 18th 2017)