



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Topic 3: *Guaranteeing freedom of expression with emphasis on media*

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1. Definition of key terms

Freedom of expression Everyone has the right to communicate his or her thoughts and ideas and share information through any form. In human rights, this is known as freedom of expression. [1]

Freedom of press: Freedom of the press is the right to circulate opinions in print without censorship by the government. For example the USA guarantee freedom of the press under the First Amendment to the Constitution, which states: 'Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.' [2]

Media: The term media refers to the communication channels through which we disseminate news, music, movies, education, promotional messages and other data. It includes all physical and online newspapers and magazines, television, radio, billboards, telephone, the Internet, fax. It describes the various methods through which people communicate in society. Anything that refers to communication, from a phone call to a news TV programme, can be called as media. When the media reach a large number of users it is called mass media. Local media refers to newspapers, radio stations or TV stations from your country or a special region in the country. [3]

Access to information: With freedom of expression, you can freely share or receive any information you need or that you are interested in. For example, by reading a particular newspaper or website, listening to a radio programme or watching a TV station. Citizens have the right to access both public and private information. [4]



1. Introduction

Nowadays media is having a rapid transformation. Communications, like telephones or radios, developed during the last centuries. The Internet is the latest communication technology that has been developed with over 2 billion of users from all over the world. Freedom of expression can be changed by these latest technologies of communications.

The invention of the internet has created specific new challenges and opportunities for people. Anyone with the possibility to access to the internet can create, share or edit their own or other's content. The outburst in digital communications (mobile phones, internet, and digital cameras) is allowing people or users to enter in public debates on a level never seen in history.

2. Background information

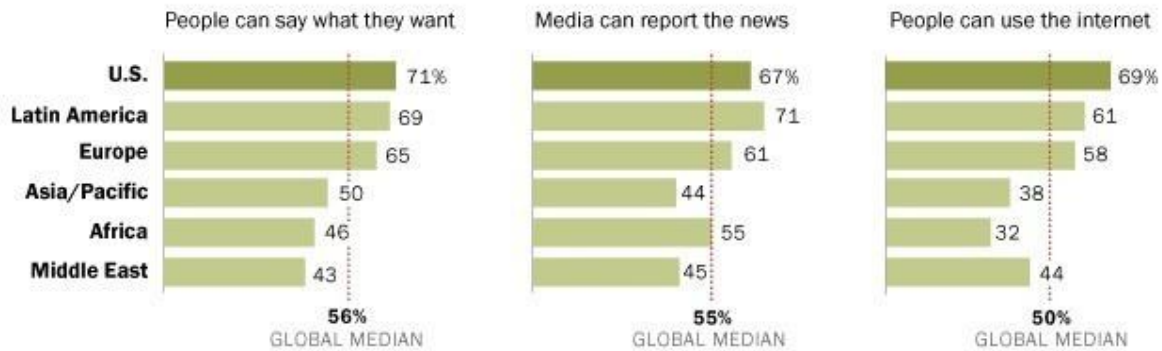
Freedom of expression has always controlled public platforms in order to activate them. Newspapers were the leaders of free speech from the 18th Century. Then by the end of the 20th Century broadcast media, such as radio and television, provided mass access to news and information of any type. Like mass media, they came to constitute mass societies for the first time in human history, where millions of people could share and communicate experiences and events together. The creation of the internet and the mobile phone is one step further in the development of communication technologies, creating a world of modern tech communications.

3. Major countries involved

In 2015, 38 countries from all the world were selected by the Pew Research Centre. So they found that Americans are freer to speak rather than other countries. Without any disapproval of the government, Americans also support freedom of the press, and the right to use the internet.

Americans especially supportive of free speech, press freedom and internet freedom

Regional median saying it is very important that ___ without state/govt censorship in our country



Note: Global median of 38 countries. Russia and Ukraine not included in Europe median.

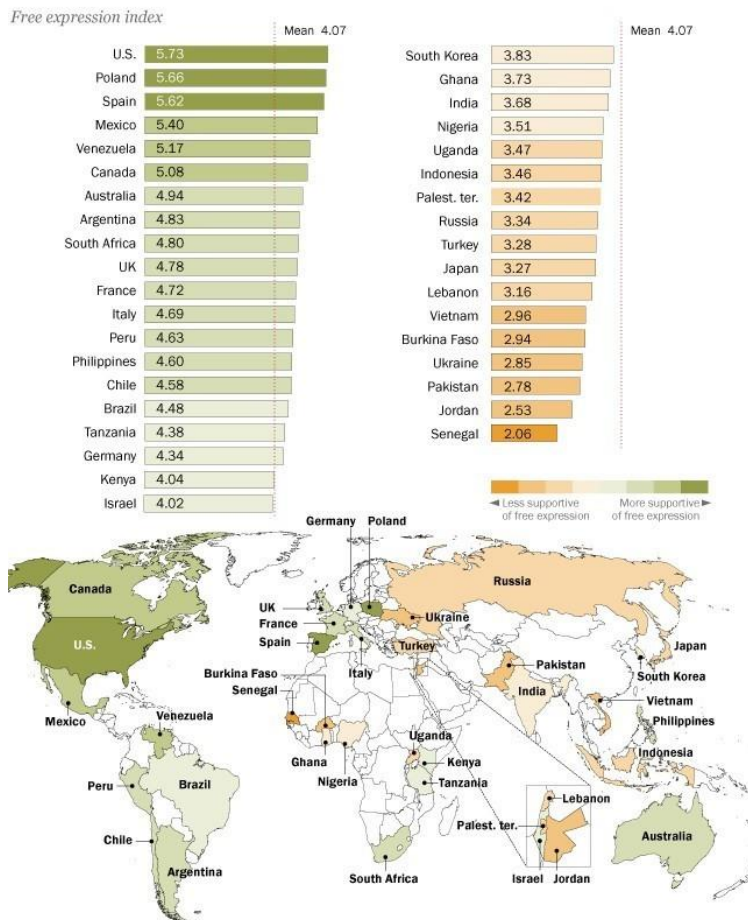
Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes Survey.

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The researchers compiled a list of the 38 countries based on their answers to a questionnaire composed by five questions about freedom of speech, with answers from 0 for the least supportive of freedom of expression and 8 for the most supportive. They then came out with the median of each country involved in the questionnaire.

As we already know, US registered the highest score, with a median at 5.73. Poland was the second most free country after the Americans with a median of 5.66. However, Spain and the United Kingdom were the only other European countries being part of the 10 most free, with respectively 5.62 and 4.78 (median).

U.S. most supportive of free expression



Note: Support for free expression is measured using an eight-item index ranging from 0-8, with 8 representing the most supportive of free expression. Respondents were coded as 0 or 1 for each of the eight questions, where 1 indicates support for allowing free speech or press in a particular situation and 0 indicates support for government restrictions on free expression in some circumstances. Of the questions included in the index, five questions ask about free speech and three questions ask about free press. The mean score for each country is used in this analysis.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes Survey.

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Mexico, Venezuela, Australia, South Africa, and Canada are other countries that are symbolically free. Senegal, instead, was at the bottom in the list with a score of 2.06 instead the other African state of Burkina Faso was the other one in the bottom 10 states with a median of 2.94. We already know, from the definition of freedom of press and speech that in the American constitution freedom of speech and press is included. In the end, the Americans were seen and found by the researchers as the freest and opened country talking about freedom of speech.

According to a report published in 2006 by CPJ (Committee to protect journalists) The world's deepest information void is in communist **North Korea** that has no independent journalists, and all radio and television receivers sold in the country are locked to government-specified frequencies. **Burma, Turkmenistan, Equatorial Guinea, and Libya** round out the top five nations on CPJ's list of the "10 Most Censored Countries. The other countries on the list are **Eritrea, Cuba, Uzbekistan, Syria, and Belarus**. [5]



5. UN involvement

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a fundamental document in the history of human rights. It was written by representatives from different parts of the world, the Declaration was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all people and all nations. It defines, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into more than 500 languages.

In the 19th Article, the UN talks about freedom of expression, stating:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” [6]



6. Useful links & Bibliography

<http://www.un.org/en/index.html>

<https://en.unesco.org/>

https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/freedom-expression_en

<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/11/freedom-of-speech-country-comparison/>

[1] <http://www.cilvektiesibugids.lv/en/themes/freedom-of-expression-media>

[2] <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-freedom-of-the-press-definition-history-examples.html>

[3] <https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/media-definition-meaning/>

[4] <http://www.cilvektiesibugids.lv/en/themes/freedom-of-expression-media/freedom-of-expression/what-is-freedom-of-expression>

[5] <https://cpj.org/reports/2006/05/10-most-censored-countries.php>

[6] <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>