

**MEDIA INDEPENDENCE AND DEMOCRACY:
INFLUENTIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN JOURNALISTS,
POLITICIANS, OWNERSHIP, AND ADVERTISERS IN ROMANIA**

By

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Abstract

The goal of this research is to identify the actors that have the most influence over Romanian journalists and under which conditions Romanian journalists are prone to be influenced by multiple heteronomous sources of power. Using data from European Media Systems Survey and Worlds of Journalism Study, this thesis seeks to identify the most influential actors in the Romanian news-media and the methods through which they influence and limit the independence of journalists. The results show that media owners and political parties (through politicians) are the most powerful actors when it comes to influencing the news media in general and political coverage in particular. Also, regardless of the type of professional conditions, and their declared ethical and professional values, most journalists are subject to blackmail, bribes, and different sorts of indirect limitations.

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Introduction

For some it might be futile to mention the importance of independent and unbiased news media for a democracy. However, representative democracy, at least at the ideal level, is a system where policy outcomes are influenced by voters' preferences and the information they have to form those preferences is essential and has been shown both normatively and empirically. Since mass media represent the main channel of information, the implications that a biased news media can have upon political systems and democratic societies are multiple and media independence has been seen as a guarantor of the free flow of information (Gans 1983).

Even though issues of media independence and autonomy have been approached and discussed numerous times, until recently there was no “rank and detailed conversation on the connection between the media and democracy and the implications of that relationship for inevitable changes that are overtaking media all over the world” (Dignes 2010, 45). This research aims at exploring these issues by focusing on the case of Romanian news media. The relations between news media and political power had an interesting development in the twenty years of democratic experience in Romania. From the 1990s until early 2000s the news media became more and more pluralistic, but after the first attempt of impeaching president Traian Băsescu in 2007, the relations between the news media and political power changed dramatically, and the progress made in fifteen years of democratization started to crumble (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010). Of course the economic crisis hit the Romanian media business hard and made the degradation process of quality journalism to be much faster (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011).

On top of that, in a relatively short period of time, the media business throughout the world went through significant changes and developments. The technological advancements and the financial crisis had an important impact on media as a business, and as an essential function of democracy. News media outlets worldwide are now being forced to change their strategies for doing journalism and business, and the trade-off between high quality journalism and profits seems to be more and more obvious. So, uncertainty seems to be the word that describes best the phenomena that I seek to analyze: the independence of news media and the types of actors and relationships that undermine journalistic independence, which in turn is seen as a central determinant of quality journalistic content. Since scholars are continuously stressing the importance of independent media in democratic societies and the intimate connection between high quality journalism and the quality of democracy (Levy 2010, 3), it is critical to identify the norms and the practices that have a negative impact on the quality of journalism.

Analyzing the relationships of influence between journalists, politicians, ownership, and advertisers is essential for the evaluation of the independence of the news media (Czepek 2009). These relations are ultimately an indicator of how well media organizations are fulfilling their normative roles in a democratic press (Norris and Ogdubemi 2009). However, there is no clear picture of the main causes of malaise, and consequently there are no precise policy paths that should be undertaken in order to solve the problems generated by informal relations between the main actors in the news media. Due to this lack of information on the relations between the actors mentioned above, in terms of who is influencing who and under which conditions, it is unclear what solutions there are in order to diminish the impact of heteronomous influences on the independence of news media organizations.

Furthermore, analyzing the relations of influence between journalists, politicians, owners, and advertisers, also has theoretical implications. In media theory, independent media is considered to be a fundamental function of democracy. In the so-called era of professional journalism, media research started from two important assumptions: power is highly diffused while media is autonomous, and functions on the behalf of society (J. Curran 2002). However, due to changes in the business, the media landscape has changed and the era of professional journalism was replaced by the so-called age of new-media.

This change implied a major theoretical shift, in the sense that power was now considered to be highly concentrated while media is subject to authority and power (J. Curran 2002). Despite these developments, through this research, I would like to argue that these theories are problematic for two main reasons. On the one hand, I argue that there is no central orbit of power, but rather there is a broad range of relevant actors that have power over the news media. On the other hand, the news media are not quite autonomous and the powers that influence it are diffused. This means that news media tend to be dependent on a broad range of actors that do not hesitate to exert their influence, but it is not necessary that the influencing actors remain the same because “media loyalties shift depending on economic support as well as general power shifts” within the press-business-politics relations (Ornerbring 2012, 499).

Campbell and Jamieson (2001) analyze the multiple actors that can influence news media organizations in the United States, and they emphasize the important impact that these multiple types and sources of influence have on the quality of journalism. They have found that the “news media are influenced by highly paid news managers and their clients [...]. The media are also affected by commercial pressures for ratings and revenues [...], and they respond to pressures from those in positions of political power” (Campbell and Jamieson

2001, 154-155). However, Campbell and Jamieson (2001) map relationships of influence by aggregating many examples of particular cases that are only representative for the relations between media, business, and politics in the United States for the last quarter of the twentieth century. The journalism business has changed since then and their findings might not be valid for the new emerging business of journalism in Eastern Europe. On top of that it is particularly challenging to design a systematic method for measuring relations of influence in the news media. Media scholars understand the implications of such relationships on the quality of journalism, but the overall picture has to become clearer in order to prevent the damaging effects that the lack of independence of the news media has on the quality of democracy.

Thus, the main goal of this research is to identify the actors that have the most influence over Romanian journalists and under which conditions Romanian journalists are prone to be influenced by multiple heteronomous sources of power.

1. Under which conditions journalists are more independent from politicians, owners, and advertisers influence?
2. What are the main types of influences, and under which conditions of journalistic practices they occur?
3. Does the increased vulnerability of journalists facilitate the colonization of news media by heteronomous influences?

In order to respond to these questions, I will use multiple sources of data to place the Romanian case in a comparative context and the core of the analysis will rely on a specifically designed survey of Romanian journalists (EMSS-J 2013), conducted in February – March 2013. Thus, I will use country level data from EMSS 2010 to assess the general picture of independence, professionalism, and the quality of news media in Europe. Further

on I will use descriptive data from Worlds of Journalism Study 2007-2011 in order to better explain journalistic professionalism and independence in the Romanian news media and subsequently I will use data from EMSS-J 2013 to assess the professional conditions under which journalists are less independent.

The main focus of the research is to identify the actors that have the most influence over Romanian journalists and to understand under which conditions Romanian journalists are prone to be influenced by multiple heteronomous sources of power, comparing journalist data with expert data on the same issues offers a more robust framework for analysis and comparison. Characteristics such as ownership structure and advertising patterns will be presented as well, by using various commercial data that is currently available for Romanian companies involved in the media business, mainly from Zenith Optimedia Research¹.

The core of the analysis will rely on a specifically designed survey of ~300 Romanian journalists, conducted in February – March 2013. The survey is part of the European Media Systems Survey, a project funded through a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship and a University of Essex research initiative support grant to Marina Popescu (Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira, European Media Systems Survey 2010 2010). Besides this pilot survey of Romanian journalists, the project includes two expert surveys that were conducted in 34 European countries in December 2009 – February 2010 and January – March 2013².

The rationale under which I choose to analyze media organizations in Romania is twofold. First, there is no reliable theoretical framework for the comparison of media systems across countries and further theoretical advancement is necessary in order to be able to

¹ <http://www.zenithoptimedia.com/zenith/marketers-portal/marketers-directory/media-sites/>

² To the coverage of the 2012 expert survey were added four new countries Albania, Iceland, Switzerland and Turkey. Also, compared to the 2010 survey, the 2012 survey covers online news sources as well. (<http://www.mediasystemsineurope.org/overview.htm>)

compare media systems and their determinants in a comprehensive and parsimonious framework (Hallin and Mancini 2004) that would also allow measurement. Secondly, there are serious issues of data availability related to both media systems and journalists in a range of countries. The Worlds of Journalism Study measures perceptions, epistemological orientations and ethical views of journalists from 18 countries (Hanitzsch, Hanusch and Mellado 2010) but it does not include a sufficient number of countries and lacks a number of essential questions for my research design. Although the Worlds of Journalism Study differentiates between many types of actors that can have the power to influence the work of journalists, it does not differentiate between the different types of methods through which different actors, from both outside and inside news organizations, are influencing the work of journalists.

There is only one database that contains cross national information about media systems and journalistic practices at the European level (Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira, European Media Systems Survey 2010 2010) but this database it is not suitable as a sole data source for the purpose of this research, since my focus is specifically on journalists and their perceptions, whilst the EMSS data comes from an expert survey and not from a survey of journalists. Therefore, I will use it in order to position the Romanian media landscape within the EU and within Eastern Europe. This positioning will help in explaining the particularities and peculiarities of the Romanian media landscape. From here on the analysis of the data obtained from the survey of journalists will be used in order to explain the different types of influences they are subjected to, and to discover the conditions under which their vulnerability increases.

The thesis will first briefly discuss the main concepts and theories on media and democracy, specifically on media roles in the public sphere and media independence. Chapter

2 will specify the main heteronomous influences on journalistic quality and independence as derived from existing literature and link them with expectations regarding Romania. Chapter 3 will first examine how these features vary across Europe in order to see how they are related with each other as well as to place Romania in context in respect to the variables of interest, both the dependent variables - journalistic quality and independence - and their determinants and correlates. The research does not seek to imply any relations of causation, but rather it identifies patterns of association and compares them with other patterns identified in previous research by Popescu and Toka (Popescu and Toka 2012) (Toka and Popescu 2012).

Chapter 4 constitutes the core of the research and it analyzes survey data on Romanian journalists' perceptions of their roles, values and professional activities. The analysis differentiates between the different types of methods through which both internal and external actors are influencing the work of journalists, and it identifies the news media organizations whose political coverage is the subject of influence from both external and internal actors. The analysis will conclude by emphasizing the importance of a clearer assessment of the patterns of influence over journalistic routines and practices within Romanian news-media organizations. Last but not least this research will identify further research points that are worth studying for a better understanding of the interplay of influence between journalists and internal and external actors, and the impact that this interplay has on the quality of journalism.

Chapter 1: Independent News Media and Democracy

1.1 *Democracy and the Public Sphere*

Starting with Jurgen Habermas, the social sciences, especially political science, have been interested in the influence and the importance of the public sphere in the political realm. When Habermas first theorized the importance of the public sphere he considered it as a space where there is a constant flow of ideas and criticism towards the most urgent problems of the government and/or political events and politicians. This auxiliary realm of politics was meant to ensure the active involvement and participation of those who are interested and are affected by public matters. “At the periphery of the political system, the public sphere is rooted in networks for wild flows of messages—news, reports, commentaries, talks, scenes and images, and shows and movies with an informative, polemical, educational, or entertaining content” (Habermas 2006, 415).

The public sphere transformed itself over time. It developed from exclusivist clubs and café's where intellectuals discussed matters of public interest and later, with the appearance of newspapers it became a virtual space of debate – virtual in the sense that the newspapers transcend a specific location and they can be distributed to large masses. Thus it was created what nowadays we call the mass-media. At the same time more specialist in writing and publishing ideas and comments about urgent matters of public interest were needed. Professional journalists are individuals that seek the trustworthiness of certain events, public figures or political movements and decisions and so on, and they publish facts and opinion about a broad range of events. In this context journalists and political figures have developed interdependence relations and each other's work would be lacking some substance in the absence of one of them. Habermas argues that these two actors, the journalist and the political figures, are the basis of any functional public sphere, by stating that “there are two

types of actors without whom no political public sphere could be put to work: professionals of the media system—especially journalists who edit news, reports, and commentaries—and politicians who occupy the center of the political system and are both the coauthors and addressees of public opinions” (Habermas 2006, 416).

Consequently the mass media developed new characteristics that have led to new theoretical approaches of the relation between the state and the mass-media (Krauss 2000) (Norris and Ogdubemi 2009). It is arguable how many of these characteristics are worth mentioning or that are even that important for the discussion. Krauss (2000) provides a meaningful classification of the essential functions of the media in a democratic society. First of all, the media should act as a watchdog by exposing governments’ wrongdoings and corruption (J. Curran 2002, 217). Secondly, the media should act as a guard dog, and provide the public with enough trustworthy information, in order to enhance the political participation and engagement of citizens in the political life. Third, the media should act as a guide dog which informs and educates citizens about public affairs. Last but not least, the media should provide a channel through which the government can communicate with the public and the other way around (Krauss 2000, 273).

However, most media theorists would argue that in a democratic society the news media should fulfill three important roles: watchdog, agenda setter and gatekeeper (Norris and Ogdubemi 2009) (J. Curran 2002). These roles must be seen as interdependent and not as clearly separable. In a recent book edited by Pippa Norris, the authors have concluded that these roles are vital for two reasons: 1) for the survival of quality and relevant news reporting and 2) for the survival of a genuine public sphere. Therefore, the watchdog role provides the public sphere with relevant investigations of the state institutions, political figures and private corporations. It “requires the news media to provide a check on powerful sectors of society,

including leaders within the private and public domains. Journalists are expected to guard the public interest and to protect it from incompetence, corruption, and misinformation” (Odugbemi and Norris 2009, 380).

Furthermore, news-media can be a true democratic agenda setter only if it provides the public with relevant information in a certain time and space confinement. However, it is important that this process is bi directional, in the sense that news media should inform the public about relevant problems of the society and in the same time the news media should inform the government about the concerns of the public. “As agenda setters, the news media ideally should function to raise awareness of social problems by informing elected officials about public concerns and needs” (Odugbemi and Norris 2009, 386). Last but not least, the news media should be an impartial filter of different voices in the public sphere. The filtering role or gate keeping is essential in a world where different interests collide especially when it comes to publicity and political power.

Theorists claim “that the news media should ideally serve as the classical agora by bringing together a plurality of diverse interests, voices, and viewpoints to debate issues of public concern” (Odugbemi and Norris 2009, 390). However, Pippa Norris (2009) concludes her book through a pessimistic conclusion. There is a massive difference between theories, expectations and ideals on one side and reality and evidence on the other side. More and more journalists are criticizing the increasing gap between ideal journalistic practices and real journalistic practices. The new technologies allowed for journalists to do their job in front of a laptop and not on the field, while gathering and triple checking information became an easier process. There is a permanent race of who gets the “newest” news faster. Source checking and the assessing the public relevance of certain topics seem to be journalistic practices that risk ending in the dumpster of history. Certainly “there is a substantial gap

between rhetoric and reality or between the ideals that are widely articulated in liberal democratic theory and the practices that are commonly found in states around the world” (Odugbemi and Norris 2009, 392).

1.2 Democracy and Media Independence

Many social scientists and media experts would argue that emphasizing again the importance of independent and unbiased news media for a democracy is not necessary. However, it is important to assess the implications that a biased news media can have upon political systems and democratic societies. Representative democracy, at least at the ideal level, is a system where policy outcomes are influenced by voters’ beliefs and preferences. In this context it is relevant for the field of political science to investigate how political preferences are aggregated and which opinions and beliefs are able to influence policy outcomes. However, political attitudes and preferences are subject to the manipulation power of the press (Kaplan and DellaVigna 2007, 1). Pew, quoted by Kaplan (2007) argues that there is a negative effect of news media bias upon the news agenda. Besides bias in agenda setting, the news media are faced with biases in framing and priming, and with biases that affect both directly and indirectly the ways in which journalists are performing their roles in a democratic press (Norris and Ogdubemi 2009).

Nevertheless, the news media can be biased by a broad range of actors that have different interests and agendas. Scholars have discovered that economic inequality may be a good predictor of news media bias. In countries where the economic inequality is high, rich actors can afford to influence the published information while the lower layers of the society are being manipulated even if they understand the possibility of media bias (Petrova 2008). However, the model developed by Petrova performs poorly in democracies where policy

outcomes are not subject to constant public scrutiny (2007). Even so, at least at the common sense level, it is likely that every democracy can be subject to such phenomena as media bias and media corruption. Moreover, unexpected events can decrease the quality of news coverage by indirectly forcing news organizations to adapt.

The economic crisis is such an example where the news organizations were indirectly constrained to bend the democratic practices of journalism in order to survive. News organizations are sensible too, even to minor shifts in societal patterns and economic performance (Picard 2006). Since free unbiased information is vital for the proper functioning of a democratic public sphere, it is equally vital for the field of political science to assess the capabilities of media bias to weaken democracies. Political rents are well known for their ability to undermine the quality of democracy, but also the news-media organizations that are well connected to important political actors are subject to rent seekers and to corrupt practices (Svaleyard and Vlachos 2009). When in need, wealthy political and economic actors can use strategic leverage against news organizations if they need favorable news coverage or if they seek to manipulate the public opinion (Corneo 2006).

Analyzing the impact of media independence on the quality of democracy requires a complex understanding of multiple phenomena that shape a media system. The best strategy for the consolidation of a media system is to strengthen the independence from political power, through regulations (Marinescu 2009, 189). However, some argue that the influence of media ownership is more important and highly under-researched (Metykova and Waschkova C. 2009, 170). Metykova and Waschkova (2009) quote Curran (2002), who considers that the concentration of news-media distorts democratic processes and fair competition within the media landscape. It is hard to find compelling evidence of the influence of the concentration of ownership, but it is worth pursuing such inquiry, as yet there

are not sufficient “safeguards directed against the abuse of shareholder power over the media” (Metykova and Waschkowa C. 2009, 173).

Even though in general, the media reports written for the international promoters of press freedom, such as Freedom House, analyze superficial characteristics of media systems, it is necessary to develop a mechanism of evaluation that goes further and provides a deeper and more meaningful understanding of media independence. A more in depth look, at the broader range of actors that may have the power to limit the freedom of the press by influencing the independence of media organizations and journalists, is needed. It is not enough to identify constitutional provisions that protect and promote the freedom of the press, and to “count the cases of censorship and harassment against journalists” (Czepek 2009, 37). Informal relations between journalists, politicians, owners and advertisers are shaping the independence of media organizations.

Generally, independence is seen as an essential feature that is conditional for the fulfillment of media roles in a democracy. Of course, independence is a characteristic of both editors and journalists. These agency functions in a media system are vulnerable to both external and internal influences. Politicians, owners and advertisers have the leverage and can always intervene in the editorial policy of a media organization, in order to pursue private interests. Therefore is it important to investigate under which conditions the “genuine editorial independence vis-à-vis political power and pressures exerted by private interest groups or by public authorities” (Voorhoof 1998, 43) will occur. Also, the resistance in front of pressures exerted by private interest groups and politicians is important because it consolidates the ability of news organizations to hold the state authorities and big corporations accountable. Therefore, the independence of media organizations is essential in a political system where it is possible to hold the authorities of the state accountable.

However, independence from the state only is not enough; other actors can influence journalists and media organizations (J. Curran 2002).

Due to its uncontested importance for democracy, more actors throughout the world invest in the promotion of robust, independent media. These actions are developed under the assumption that “independent media contributes to the building of democracy” (Kumar 2006, 1). More than one billion of dollars have been spent since 1980 on media projects that promote media independence in new democracies (Hume 2004, 3). Kumar (2006) argues that the ultimate goal of these initiatives is to free the media sector from the financial and editorial control exercised by the state. Ultimately, the media sector should rely on advertising and sales in order to survive and grow. The problem is that sales and advertising might also have a negative impact on the independence of media organizations (Baker, Media, Markets, and Democracy 2002). Also in many countries there is no way to identify the actors that control a media organization and what is the impact on the content because “the loyalties of media owners change over time” (Kumar 2006, 14).

Chapter 2: Heteronomous Influences on Journalists and the News Media

2.1 The Changing Business of Journalism

The news industry today, operates under a legal framework that has been intensively deregulated throughout history. Media markets have become more liberal; not only in the US but in the European Union as well. These transformations of the markets have led to the consolidation and concentration of the media industry. Media organizations have managed to postpone the reform of media laws, which were meant to reduce the concentration of the media industry, largely because politicians often fear to go against powerful media outlets that can shape their political career. Overall, the media landscape is becoming increasingly fragmented, consumers have more choices, and audiences are more volatile, while most competing providers offer both entertainment and news programs.

From an economic point of view, the news industry is structured differently across countries. When authors analyze the basic revenue model of newspapers, they discover that while in the US 80 % of the total revenues of newspapers were from advertising, in Europe sales revenues are around 50 %. This gives a certain degree of stability of European newspapers compared with those in the United States (Levy 2010). Journalism impacts democracy, but we cannot say much about how the recent developments mentioned above will impact journalism and how the “new journalism” will change democracy. The implications of these challenges that face the news media call for media managers, policy-makers, and journalisms to make a series of choices that in the end will define the future of news.

While change is constant throughout the business of journalism, the character and consequences vary across media, across industries, and across borders. It is true that the pressures now faced by the commercial legacy news organizations derive partly from the rise

of the internet and partly from the global recession. However, it is important to keep in mind that many of the underlying problems, that commercial legacy news organizations are facing, are traceable to before the emergence of the internet and the recession.

The strategies for tackling and surviving the new challenges vary across countries and media systems. While in the United States the news organizations found themselves in a deep crisis because of the massive decrease of advertising revenues, in Germany, news organizations had a more diversified funding stream and therefore they were able to keep their businesses afloat, if not still profitable. Many German papers have professionally produced quality content (Koch 2008), whereas American news organizations decided to cut the high quality content in order to keep their businesses profitable (Levy 2010).

However, news organizations still have to be financially strong and independent in order to provide high quality content that is appropriate and beneficial for a democracy. Both managers and journalists are expected to find solutions for the renewal of the news industry, and of the journalistic profession. Nowadays, the key challenge for managers and journalists is to make people to pay attention and pay for journalism. Also, policy-makers are expected to be involved in this process of renewal and transformation, and the news industry needs regulation that is appropriate for the transformation of the journalism business.

Overall it seems that there is a kind of a typical framework of “normality” that stakeholders are afraid to reform. The policies that were meant to innovate and reform were either rejected or ignored by all stakeholders: industry associations, journalists and politicians (Freedman 2008). However, the evidence does not indicate that journalism is about to die but the situation is more dramatic in some countries than in others given pre-existing media system characteristics and the lack of sustainability of quality journalism (Abramson 2010). On the contrary, there are new generations of managers, journalists, foundations, and

governments that try to consolidate professional journalism underwritten by a profitable commercial news industry, while continuing to provide valuable contribution to democracy.

The modernization of the newsrooms has an important role in the journalistic quality, in the sense that the more modernized the newsroom is in terms of available technologies and infrastructure, the more journalists will be able to focus more on fulfilling their normative democratic roles. However, the modernization of newsrooms depends on the revenues of each news media organization in part (Meier 2007). It is, however, an open question as to the extent to which innovation in journalism is more likely to take place more in those places where quality journalism was respected and not a *rara avis* or whether even lower levels of innovation could make a significant difference in low information quality environments.

Types of funding and revenues have an impact on the extent to which journalists are free to do their job without much interference from both internal and external actors, but they also impact the journalistic quality in general. Of course, the economic crisis has had an impact on the types of funding and revenues that news media organizations have access to. Nowadays “quality journalism tends to be less funded from advertising revenues” (Gaman-Golutvina 2009, 239), which is not very peculiar given the contraction of the advertising market in general.

Table 1: Advertising expenditure growth in Romania (%)

At current prices	44.6	21.8	31.3	24.6	36.3	-18.1	-11.3	-7.8
At 2011 prices	29.2	11.8	23.2	18.8	26.4	-22.5	-16.4	-12.9

Data from IFS, ZenithOptimedia 2012

If we look at the evolution of advertising expenditures in the Romanian media market, we can see that advertising expenditures grew constantly until 2008. Since 2004, the advertising business constantly grew at very high rates until 2008 (Table 1). However, in

2009, right after the beginning of the economic crisis, the advertising expenditures contracted by more than fifty percent (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Advertising expenditure growth in Romania (%)



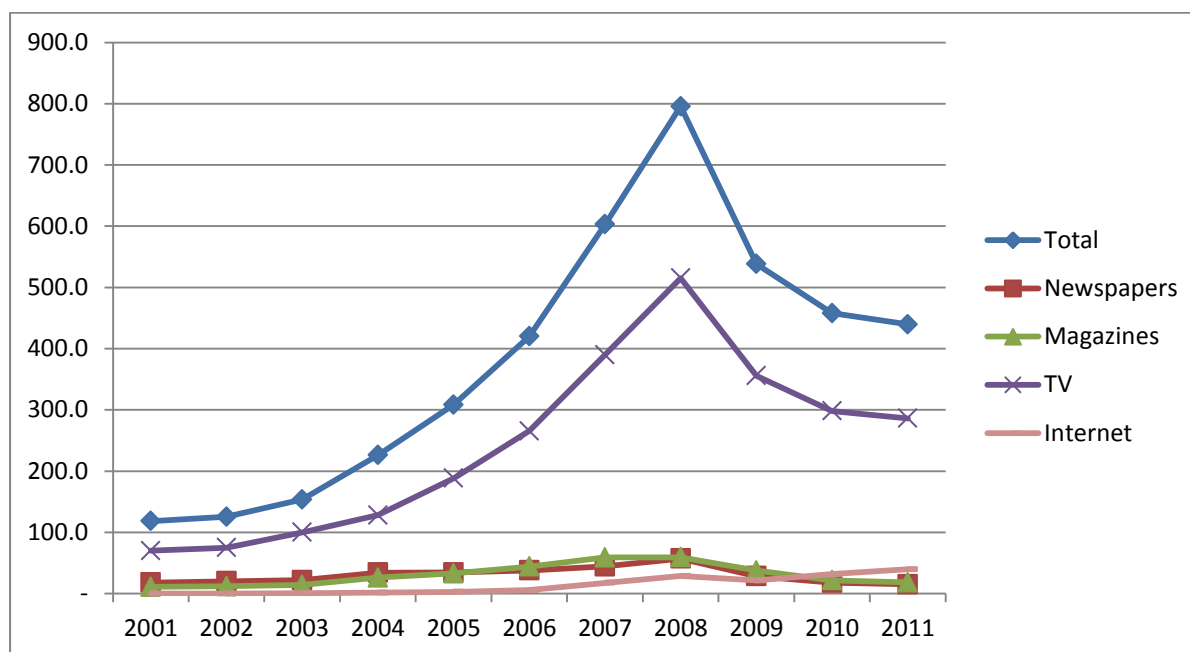
Data from IFS, ZenithOptimedia 2012

All types of media were affected by the sudden contraction of the advertising market in Romania. Newspapers and magazines suffered relatively mild contractions, while television channels were the most affected. However, the internet advertising market suffered only a minor contraction, and it started to grow back by 2010 (Table 2). In the first half of 2010 “online advertising reached the record amount of EUR 10 million” (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011, 15). Meanwhile, by taking a look at the total advertising expenditures in Romania there are no signs of immediate recovery (Figure 2).

Table 2: Advertising expenditure in US\$ (mill) at current prices in Romania

	Total	Newspapers	Magazines	TV	Internet
2001	118.3	18.0	11.0	70.0	-
2002	125.5	20.0	12.0	75.0	-
2003	153.7	22.0	14.0	100.0	0.5
2004	226.0	34.3	26.2	127.9	1.6
2005	308.4	34.4	32.9	188.3	2.8
2006	419.9	37.8	44.1	265.5	5.6
2007	602.9	44.4	58.9	390.0	17.5
2008	795.6	57.1	59.3	515.1	28.7
2009	538.1	28.3	37.6	355.6	21.4
2010	457.8	17.7	21.6	298.1	31.8
2011	439.7	15.0	18.4	286.1	39.7

Data from IFS, ZenithOptimedia 2012

Figure 2: Advertising expenditure in US\$ (mill) at current prices in Romania

All these developments, that are strongly related, to how the media market functions, had a negative impact on quality journalism in Romania. The economic crisis and the severe shrinkage of advertising revenues led most Romanian media organizations to a business style that did not have much in common with quality democratic journalism. Ganea, Popa and Ursulean (2011) emphasized that these developments have a negative impact on the quality of Romanian journalism. “Relevant and verifiable content became smothered by hysterical and opinion journalism” while “the circulation of several newspapers decreased half, 6000

media employees (journalists and technical staff) were made redundant, and over 60 local newspapers have been shut since the beginning of the crisis” (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011, 18). Moreover, journalists from investigation departments were moved to news departments, due to downsizing.

Although there were a few media organizations (radio stations mostly) that found time and energy to develop innovative marketing strategies in order to attract new listeners or to preserve them (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011, 14), it is not clear to what extent these strategies were efficient in terms of increasing advertising revenues and/or making those radio stations more financially sustainable. Also, there were a few Romanian news media outlets (notably Gândul, Evenimentul Zilei, PRO TV) that significantly changed their business strategy, and they started to develop their online presence. Nonetheless, Romanian media experts are wary of any news media organizations that are artificially sustained. The existence of such organizations implies that the owners try, and often succeed, to substitute their political agenda with the public interest. This trend has a major potential for “compromising both the journalistic profession and the role of the media” (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011, 18).

2.2 Influences on News Media Organizations and Journalists

Democratic theory emphasizes the importance of information availability (Dahl 1998) and in media theory, independent media is considered to be a fundamental function of democracy. In the so-called era of professional journalism, media research started from two important assumptions: power is highly diffused while media is autonomous, and functions on the behalf of society (J. Curran 2002). However, due to changes in the business, the media landscape has changed and the era of professional journalism has been replaced by the so-called age of new-media. This changed implied a major theoretical shift, in the sense that power was now considered to be highly concentrated while media is subject to authority and

power (J. Curran 2002). Despite these developments, through my research, I would like to argue that these theories are problematic for two main reasons. On the one hand, I argue that there is no central orbit of power, but rather more relevant actors that have power of media content. On the other hand, the media is not autonomous and the powers that influence it are diffused, including factors within the media profession itself.

Campbell and Jamieson (2001) argue that “the most effective manipulators of news media are those who understood journalistic norms and routines and use them to gain media access and to influence the nature of coverage” (Campbell and Jamieson 2001, 154). But influences on media organization can be considered useful, depending on context, when it comes from established grassroots organizations and local social movements. This means that, through grassroots organizations and local social movements, otherwise powerless individuals can influence news coverage (Campbell and Jamieson 2001, 293). Furthermore, individuals can hold the media accountable for precarious or insufficient coverage of a certain issue.

The media is not autonomous in the sense that media organizations and journalists are vulnerable to two types of influence: external and internal. External influence refers to the direct intervention of state authorities in matters that concern the media business, through regulation, trials against journalists and so on. Moreover, the state has a wide range of solutions to different problems of media systems. Of course these solutions might be detrimental to democracy when the state limits the licensing of newspapers, radio and TV station, or when it imposes partisan leadership for public broadcasters. Also, through regulations, the state can control the ownership concentration in private media, and decide to whom within the industry it will give governmental subsidies or not.

On the other hand, internal influence refers to the independence relationship between journalists and the leadership of the media organization that they belong to. Usually, internal independence is a matter of negotiation between the journalist and the media owner, through internal statutes and agreements. However there is more to independence than these two types of influences. Personal relations are highly important when evaluating journalists' independence from powerful actors such as politicians, owners and advertisers. The downside of the informal influences, is that, from the media researcher's point of view, although they are of high importance, they are hard to measure. Moreover, informal interventions over the independence of journalists can be facilitated by many factors that are related to a broad range of market and professional characteristics. If we consider only the journalists, it is very likely that they tend to become more vulnerable to bribes and all sorts of pressures because of low wages, poor education and training, and low levels of professionalization.

Developed western democratic countries have over time established functional media systems that largely fulfill their democratic roles and in most there is a lot of debate about how mass media could contribute more and more effectively to democracy. However, in new post-communist democracies that are in the process of development media systems had rather convoluted paths from and both communist legacies and pre-communist legacies influence the nature of journalism, while a range of factors related to post-communist politics have a relatively direct impact on the current structures of media regulation and ownership. Despite the fact that these states adopted legal frameworks that are similar to those in more developed established democracies, there are some structural challenges that need to be addressed. States with high levels of corruption are "significantly penetrated by patron-client factions characterized by personalized leadership and the objectives of factional rent capture. Developing country markets are characterized by the underdevelopment of the capitalist sector, and the use of factional political power to protect assets and to support accumulation

strategies based on the capture of assets using political power” (Khan 2005, 721). In these contexts functional and independent media systems cannot develop properly because owners (often referred to as *moguls*) seek to gain political power through the media that they control, and they are not so much interested in making profits out of good quality journalism.

In Central and Eastern Europe the close ties between owners and politicians have a negative impact on the editorial freedom of journalists, since they are forced to follow the general policy of that particular news media organization which is ultimately set by the owner itself (Ornerbring 2012).³ Journalists are often the subject of dubious relations between the owners and other influential third parties such as politicians and/or advertisers and the web of interests and influences is not easy to map. Although these relations are complicated and can take many forms and directions in terms of influence, two widespread journalistic practices can be identified: *advertorials* and *kompromat*. Both methods are a form of PR; the difference between them is that while the former implies a form of content that seeks to promote a positive image of the “client”, the latter is characterized by content that is focused on smearing the “client’s” enemies (Ornerbring 2012, 506).

In CEE, journalists have very few means through which they can oppose this kind of editorial control. Their means of resistance are undermined by general uncertainties in the job market, but also by precarious educational and professional background. Of course, all these elements depend on how well journalism is structured as a profession; the lack of proper representation of their interests through unions and professional associations is detrimental to the development and consolidation of independent news media (Stetka 2012). Gaman-Golutvina (2009) argues that “professional education, skills, technologies, and professional

³ Ornebring (2012) interviewed 272 politicians, political communicators, media representatives, and experts in media-politics relations from CEE. For similar accounts see also *EUMAP 2005 and MEDIADEM* (<http://www.mediadem.eliamep.gr>)

ethics are completely replaced by the loyalty of the journalist to the media owners and advertisers” (Gaman-Golutvina 2009, 238).

However it is unlikely that all positive characteristics of journalists are completely replaced by loyalties to owners, advertisers and politicians. There must be some variance in the degree of vulnerability that journalists have in front of owners, advertisers and politicians. Ultimately this variance can be explained by structural characteristics of the media business in general, and of specific news media organizations in particular, but from a theoretical standpoint, the quality of profession explains best the vulnerability of journalists to different kinds of pressure.

Even before the economic crisis of 2008 that marked the beginning of journalism’s downfall as a profitable business in its present form, there were voices that expressed their concern over the degradation of journalism as a profession that has a normative role in the quality of democracy. The public became more informed and consequently the public concern on the corporate and political dominance over the media started to increase (Williams 2003). The “public concern about corporate and political dominance over media and information services is greater than ever. Confidence among readers, viewers, and listeners is low and there is an increasing perception that journalism is failing to carry out its watchdog role in society because of the vested interests that drive the media business ” (Williams 2003, 3). As we shall see in the following chapters, Williams (2003) was right, and his description was accurate. However, these matters appear to be far more complicated as it was revealed later on. After the crisis, journalists lost their professional independence to a great extent. They became more vulnerable to the insecurity generated by the job market and therefore their position was not consolidated enough in order to refuse bribes and freebies against positive coverage of politicians, businesses, and advertisers.

2.2.1 Journalists' Vulnerability to Politicians' Influence

Ornerbring (2012), in his analysis of clientelistic relationships between political elites and the media in Eastern Europe, observes that “media elites often receive high rank jobs in public administration and government as a reward for their loyalty” (Ornerbring 2012, 503). Obviously, this behavior means that politicians like media elites and journalists that are not very critical of them; consequently, the reward, a public office, is very convincing even for media elites, not to mention for the average journalists. The temptation to be biased in coverage is consolidated by the fear of journalists to “wrestle” with powerful politicians. In Eastern Europe political elites are starting to influence more and more the journalists that criticize them, and it seems that politicians are gaining more confidence since they have observed that the media apparently is incapable to self-regulate (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011). Pfetsch and Voltmer (2012) arrive at a similar conclusion and they state that “corruption and close knitted ties between politicians and journalists continue to undermine the independence of political journalism” (Pfetsch and Voltmer 2012, 388). The relationships between journalists and politicians are very close in western democracies as well, but there, these relationships are founded on some basic ethical norms of the journalistic profession that are respected by most journalists and politicians.

In Central and Eastern Europe, and Italy, the ethical norms are not respected, for a number of reasons, but mostly journalists are offered bribes or all sorts of freebies. Pfetsch and Voltmer (2012) interviewed media elites and politicians in CEE countries and they have reached the conclusion that there is a “widespread practice of paid news coverage that involves both politicians exerting pressure through bribes and journalists expecting favors for their services, that is positive coverage of the commissioning politician or damaging attacks on his/her opponent” (Pfetsch and Voltmer 2012, 402). Of course, bribery seems to have a

negative impact on the relations between politicians and journalists themselves since “both politicians and journalists question each other’s trustworthiness” (Pfetsch and Voltmer 2012, 395). In this context “both media freedom and pluralism appear to be in jeopardy and the space for independent journalistic investigation is shrinking fast. The silencing of critical journalism is commonly achieved through ownership and economic pressures” (Stetka, Open Democracy 2012).

Politicians exert their influence mostly through informal ties. One example is the timing the release of potentially damaging information when nobody is watching, or timing the release of good news when everybody is watching. Two different strategies have different effects. A more obvious technique of influence is the use of access to the news media to manipulate the agenda. Conversely, owners have their own political agendas. When owners use their media organization to influence the agenda or the framing of events, those media organizations do not make, or try to make, profit at all. Consequently, journalists are not generally free to do reporting that conflicts with the agenda of their employers. Pressure increases when the business becomes controlled by a decreasing number of big corporations: in the early 1980s, 46 companies controlled most of the global media business, and in the 1990s the number was reduced to 23 large corporations (Campbell and Jamieson 2001, 144). However, we should not forget that in the free-market system, media organizations are directly dependent on advertising income. Advertisers can boycott news organizations, while attempting to affect the coverage, or influence the agenda or the framing processes. “Most journalists in Europe can tell a story of a news item withheld or fundamentally changed in order not to displease a major advertiser.” (Petters 1998, 66)

2.2.2 Journalists' Vulnerability to Owners' Influence

Owners have political agendas (media organizations that have agendas beyond profit – do not make, or try to make, profit at all). As Ornebring argues, journalists are not generally free to do reporting that conflicts with the agenda of their employers (2012). “Securing lucrative state contracts is an important method of state resource extraction, and so the networks of the moguls (owners) must ensure that their businesses get positive coverage to be in a position to secure such contracts. The targets of such communication are not the members of the public but rather other policy makers, administrators and decision makers” (Ornerbring 2012, 505).

Pressure increases when the business becomes controlled by a decreasing number of big corporations: in the early 1980s, 46 companies controlled most of the global media business, and in the 1990s the number was reduced to 23 large corporations (Campbell and Jamieson 2001, 144). This things being said, even though the media business seems to be controlled by a very limited number of corporations, Curran (2002) cites both liberal and conservative media analysis and says that this limited amount of corporations has a diverse ownership structure that prevents certain groups or interests to confiscate the editorial policies of newsrooms. It seems that there are signs that indicate a certain amount of ownership dissolution in western media organizations. “More power has been ceded to professional managers concerned with market performance rather than the pursuit of ideological goals” (J. Curran 2002, 130). In such context, media organizations would be forced to function as a direct respondent to the “wants, needs and views of the public” (J. Curran 2002, 130).

However, more conservative analysts suggest that the dissolution of ownership does not apply to all (or most) western media organizations. Even if this would be true for most western media organizations, then under which paradigm we analyze the media in poorly

democratized countries that are slowly consolidating their democracies? In this kind of countries, where media markets are under development, ideology and political power is most likely to matter the most in the relationship between ownership and editorial boards. Therefore, it is still important that the ownership is dispersed and so “the Berlusconi effect” can be avoidable. Baker (2007) news media are similar to elections in the sense that they are mediating institutions between citizens and the state.

Baker proposed an alternate analytical approach that relies on a “discursive account of structural opportunities for abuse, perhaps supplemented with a psychological assessment” of why owners take up the opportunity to influence editorial decisions (Baker 2007, 21). However, the goal of this research is to identify under which structural conditions journalists are more vulnerable to the influence of ownership on journalists’ ability to fulfill the normative roles of democratic journalism.

2.2.3 Journalists’ Vulnerability to Advertisers’ Influence

The proper functioning of an independent news media, according to the free-market paradigm, is directly dependent on advertising income, especially in a time when advertising revenues are decreasing. However, advertisers can benefit from their strong position within news media organizations and try to influence any content that can harm their business. Advertisers can boycott news organizations, while attempting to affect the coverage, or influence the agenda or the framing processes. “Most journalists in Europe can tell a story of a news item withheld or fundamentally changed in order not to displease a major advertiser.” (Petters 1998, 66). Also, advertisements can become news items, or rather PR items. In this way, media organizations produce content that promotes a certain product, company, campaign, or organization, for a fee; mostly without much ability to control their content.

2.3 Characteristics of the Journalistic Profession that Facilitate Low Independence

Media independence depends of course on how independent journalists are. Their professional standards depend on wages, education and training, and professionalization (Schulz 2001) (J. Curran 2002). Journalists become vulnerable to bribes and all sorts of pressures because of: low wages, poor education and training, and low levels of professionalization. Obviously, lower wages make journalists more vulnerable to the influence of powerful actors (politicians, owners & advertisers). “It is obvious that journalistic quality depends on material resources” (Schulz 2001, 51), but it is unclear to what extent the education and training of journalists, as well as the level of professionalization of their “guild” in Romania, is a factor that can explain for the extent to which journalists are vulnerable to the influence of powerful actors. At least at the normative level, education and training are thought to significantly improve the quality of journalists. “Well-trained journalists are better equipped to apply quality criteria like objectivity, truth, fairness and neutrality, and above all, to adhere to these norms in their practical work”. (Schulz 2001, 52).

Schulz (2001) argues that there are three preconditions of democratic media performance: resources, legal and political order, and professional standards. In terms of resources, high democratic media performance requires – besides financial resources – high quality human resources; namely, “persons who are talented and well trained for journalism” (Schulz 2001, 51). In terms of legal and political order, Schulz (2001) argues that besides a democratic constitution, high quality journalism needs a process through which “democratic principles are transformed into the system of laws and into the practices of jurisdiction”. [...] “A system of laws which serves an independent and objective journalism must: firstly, guarantee the essentials of individual communication freedom, i.e. the freedom of access to information, the freedom of expression and of the distributions of opinion; secondly, accord

specific privileges and protection laws necessary for journalists, such as a special right of information vis-à-vis state authorities, a right to refuse to give evidence in trials (in order to protect informants), as well as a protection of editorial offices against confiscation by public prosecutors; thirdly, protect the media against state control, as well as against powerful pressure groups or business firms, which is an essential prerequisite for journalistic quality” (Schulz 2001, 53).

In terms of professional standards, high quality journalism is “highly contingent on the standards and values that are taken for granted by journalists and which direct their routine behavior” (Schulz 2001, 54). Obviously these values have to be reinforced by internal mechanisms of the journalistic profession – self-regulation institutions such as an ombudsman, a press council, and professional organizations that are actively observing whether the standards are met. These internal mechanisms should include specific sanctions and punishments for any deviation from the normative roles of journalism. Ultimately it is the journalistic profession itself that has the power to reform and to reinforce the normative rules of democratic journalism.

Chapter 3: Independence, Professionalism, and the Quality of the News Media in Europe: Romania in a European and Post-Communist Comparison

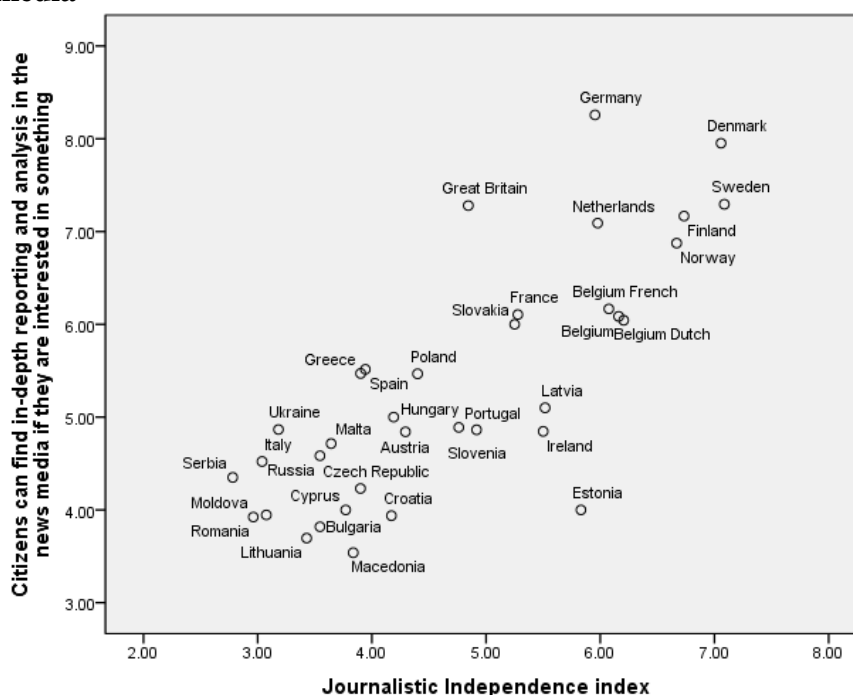
3.1 Independence, Professionalism, and the Quality of the News Media in Europe

This chapter analyzes the association between journalistic independence and professionalism, and the quality of the news media in Europe. The European Media Systems Survey (EMSS 2010) operationalizes the quality of the news media in Europe through a number of variables of which I am going to use two: the extent to which citizens can find in depth reporting and analysis in the news media if they are interested in something and the extent to which newspapers represent accurately the facts in public affairs. The analysis will seek to identify correlations between the two variables that measure the quality of journalism and four other variables: the Journalistic Professionalism Index, the Journalistic Independence Index, owner influence, and party influence over editorial policies of news organizations. The country level data from the EMSS 2010 will be used to identify patterns of association between owner and party influence, and the professionalism and independence of journalists. Finally, the analysis will identify the patterns of association between the quality of journalism and owner and party influence.

The Journalistic Professionalism Index is the mean of two variables from the EMSS expert survey (Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira, European Media Systems Survey 2010 2010). The first variable measures experts' opinion on how much journalists agree on criteria for judging excellence in their profession, while the second variable measures the experts agreement with the fact that journalists have sufficient training to ensure that basic professional norms like accuracy, relevance, completeness, balance timeliness, double checking and source confidentiality are respected in news making practice. The Journalistic

Independence Index is the mean of two variables from the same EMSS expert survey conducted by Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira (2010) (Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira, European Media Systems Survey 2010 2010). The first variable measures experts opinion on the extent to which politicians, business people and interests groups influence what the news media report and how, by pressurizing and bribing individual journalists, while the second variable that enters in the composition of journalistic independence index measures the experts opinion on the extent to which journalists are motivated by an ethic of serving the public interest (Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira, European Media Systems Survey 2010 2010).

Figure 3: Journalistic independence and the quality of in-depth reporting and analysis in the news media

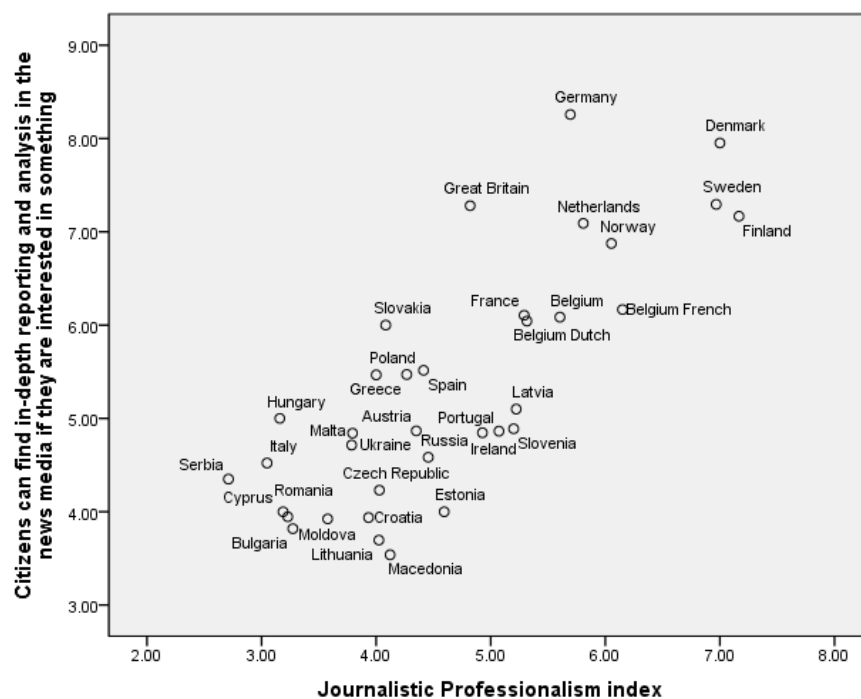


Data from European Media Systems Survey 2010

I have plotted the journalistic independence index against the variable that measures the extent to which citizens can find in-depth reporting and analysis in the news media if they are interested in something (Figure 3). The correlation results ($r=.799$, $p<0.01$) and the plot paint a straightforward picture of the relation between journalistic independence and the quality of journalism. If we look carefully at the plot we can observe a pattern. Namely, in the

countries that perform less on the journalistic independence index, citizens find less in-depth reporting and analysis. Another important thing to mention is the fact that the most of the countries clustered in the lower left corner of the plot are new post-communist democracies in Eastern Europe. This emphasizes the fact that, even though these countries have adopted legal frameworks for the functioning of the news media that are comparable with those in the western democracies, the media landscapes in new democracies are not yet fully developed in such a way that it encourages free and independent journalism and news-media. We will see in the next chapter that the Romanian media system is not properly developed yet in order to deliver high quality journalism that follows democratic rules and roles.

Figure 4: Journalistic professionalism and the quality of in-depth reporting and analysis in the news media

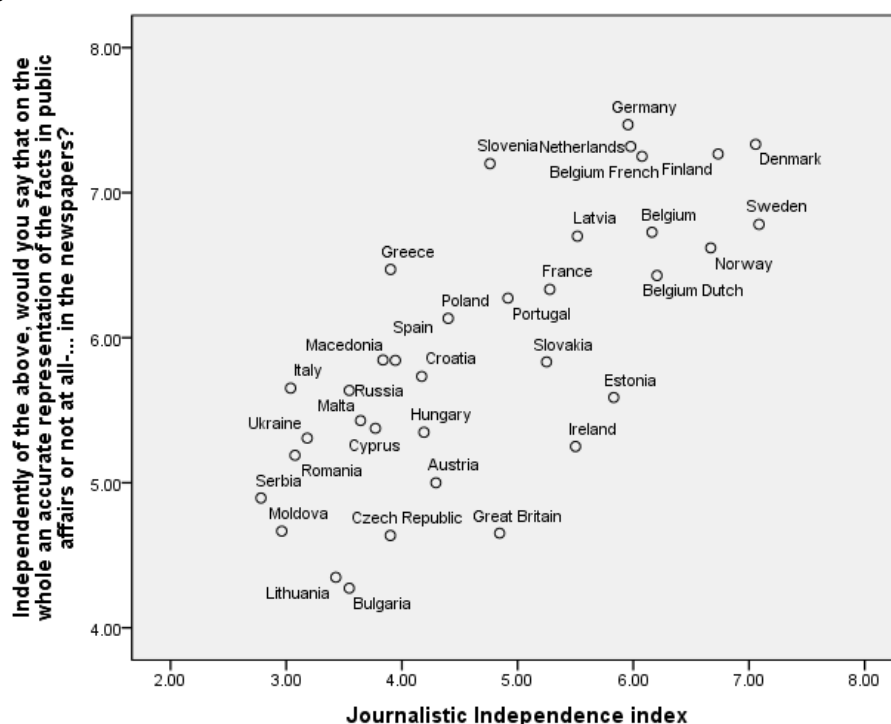


Data from European Media Systems Survey 2010

Further on I have plotted the journalistic professionalism index against the ability of citizens to find in-depth reporting and analysis in the news media if they are interested in something (Figure 4). The same pattern is observable in this plot as well. The correlation

results ($r=.789$, $p<0.01$) and the plot paint a straightforward picture of the relation between journalistic professionalism and the quality of journalism. New post-communist democracies have low levels of journalistic professionalism and the citizens of these countries can find in-depth reporting and analysis with difficulty. Of course, even among these countries, there are some differences, but the main point that this analysis makes is that journalistic professionalism is associated with journalism quality in general and with the quality of reporting in particular. Last but not least, these two plots (Figures 3 and 4) show that even developed countries with longer democratic tradition, such as Italy and Greece are facing similar problems with their news media as the CEE countries.

Figure 5: Journalistic independence and the accurate representation of public facts in newspapers

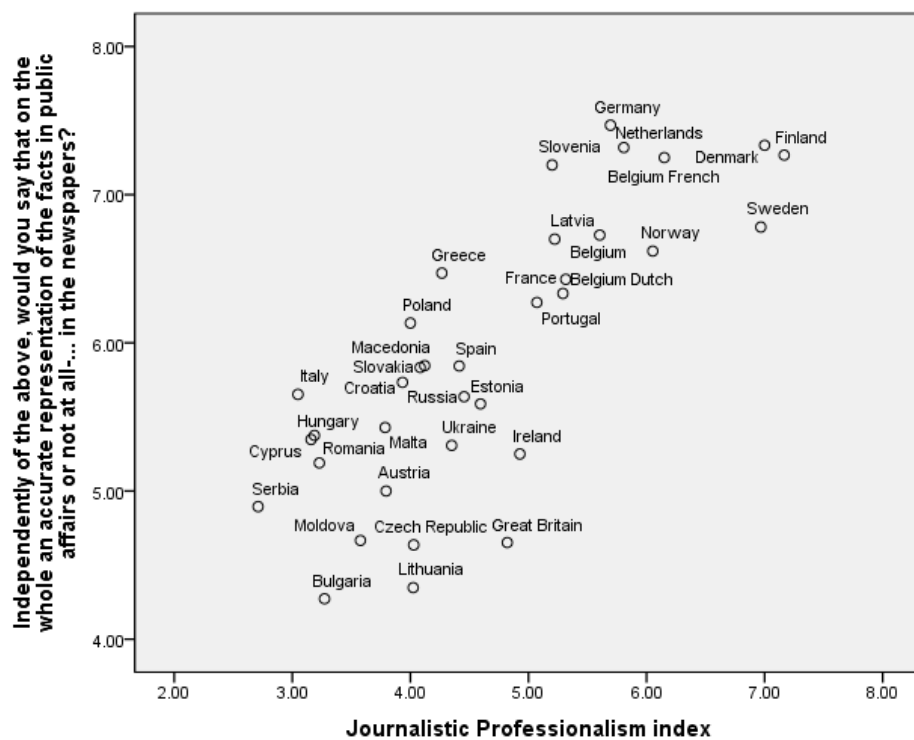


Data from European Media Systems Survey 2010

Similarly, when plotted against the extent to which the way in which journalists are representing the facts in public affairs is accurate or not, the journalistic independence index reveals a similar pattern in the thirty two countries represented in the EMSS 2010 survey (Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira, European Media Systems Survey 2010 2010). The

correlation results ($r=.745$, $p<0.01$) and the plot paint a straightforward picture of the relation between journalistic independence and the quality of journalism in general and the accurate representation of public fact in particular (Figure 5). Specifically, in western consolidated democracies rank high on the journalistic independence index and on the extent to which journalists in these countries are representing the facts in public affairs more accurately. Likewise, Italy seems to have nothing in common with the western consolidated democracies in terms of journalistic independence and quality of journalism.

Figure 6: Journalistic professionalism and the accurate representation of public facts in newspapers



Data from European Media Systems Survey 2010

Furthermore, when plotted against the extent to which the way in which journalists are representing the facts in public affairs is accurate or not, the journalistic professionalism index reveals a similar pattern in the thirty two countries represented in the EMSS 2010 survey (Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira, European Media Systems Survey 2010 2010). The correlation results ($r=.786$, $p<0.01$) and the plot paint a straightforward picture of the relation

between journalistic professionalism and the quality of journalism in general and the accurate representation of facts in public debates in particular (Figure 6). Namely, western consolidated democracies rank high on the journalistic professionalism index, and journalists in these countries are representing the facts in public affairs more accurately. Again, Italy is part of the club of countries that rank low on both journalistic professionalism and independence index and the accuracy of reporting. The plot reveals a rather bizarre case, the one of Great Britain which ranks low on the accuracy of reporting, while maintaining a fair amount of journalistic professionalism.

Developed western countries have developed functional media systems that fulfill their democratic roles. However, in new democracies that are in the process of development media systems have not evolved properly yet. Despite the fact that these states adopted legal frameworks that are similar to those in more developed established democracies, there are some structural challenges that need to be addressed. States with high levels of corruption are “significantly penetrated by patron-client factions characterized by personalized leadership and the objectives of factional rent capture.

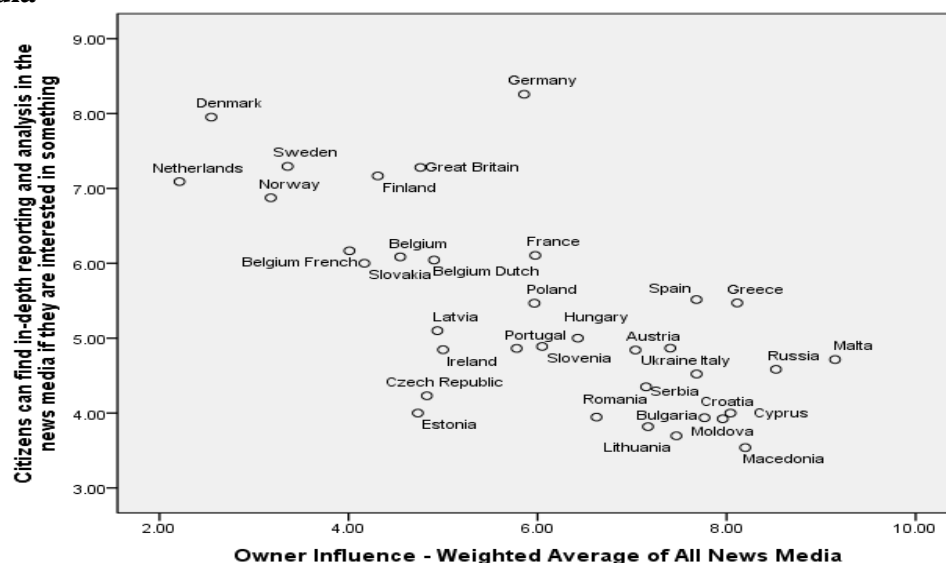
Markets in the new-post-communist countries are characterized by the “underdevelopment of the capitalist sector, and the use of factional political power to protect assets and to support accumulation strategies based on the capture of assets using political power” (Khan 2005, 721). In these contexts functional and independent media systems cannot develop properly because owners (often referred to as *moguls*) seek to gain political power through the media that they control, and they are not so much interested in making profits out of good quality journalism. Besides the negative impact of owner interference, news media organizations in new post-communist democracies are also faced with the underdevelopment of journalistic professionalism. Journalists do not agree yet on a set of

general norms and criteria for judging excellence within the profession. Moreover, most journalists in post-communist countries might not have sufficient training to ensure that basic professional norms like accuracy, relevance, completeness, balance, timeliness, double checking and source confidentiality are respected in news making practices.

3.2 Owner and Party influence, and the Quality of the News Media

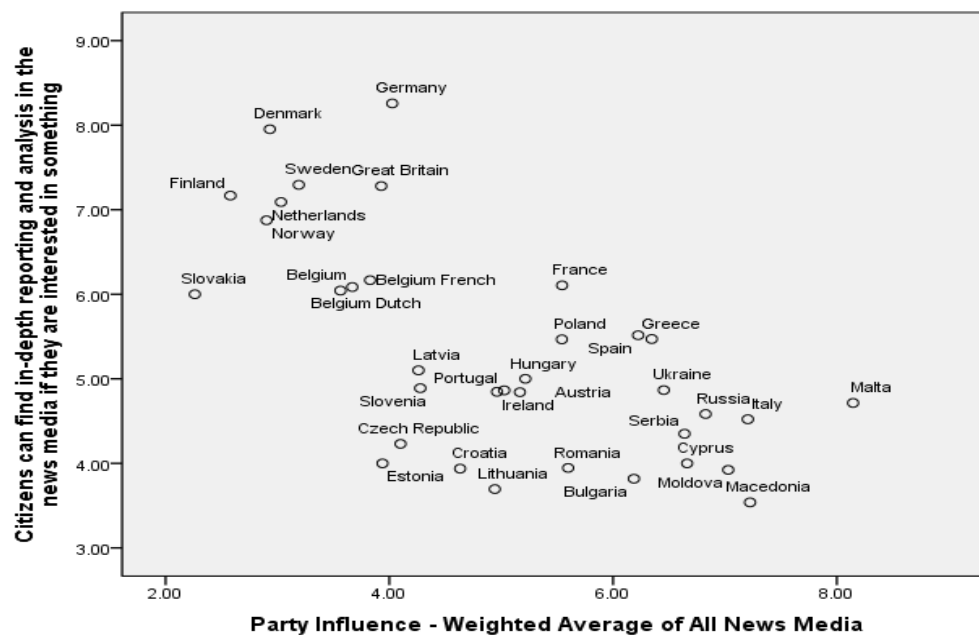
Given that now we have a clearer picture of the importance of journalistic independence and professionalism on the quality of journalism in Europe, we shall now turn to the analysis of the importance that owner and party influence have on the quality of journalism. This part of the analysis shows results that are similar and complementary to the analysis made in the previous section. It is similar in the sense that it seeks to discover the elements that are associated with low quality journalism, and it is complementary because it seeks to discover other patterns of association between influential actors and low quality journalism. Since the EMSS 2010 study does not include variables that measure the influence of advertisers, the analysis provides insights only about the association between the influence of owners and political parties and the quality of journalism.

Figure 7: Owner influence and the quality of in-depth reporting and analysis in the news media



The correlation results ($r=.699$, $p<0.01$) show that the degree of influence of media owners is related to the extent to which citizens can find in-depth reporting and analysis in the news media. The plotted relation between owner influence and the quality of reporting and analysis reveals a pattern that is similar with the ones observed before, when the independence and the professionalism of journalists were plotted against measures of the quality of the news media (Figure 7). Namely, the owner influence is greater in the new post-communist democracies compared with more consolidated democracies in Western Europe. Also, the quality of reporting and analysis in the news media is much higher in more advanced and consolidated western democracies. Again, Italy does not fit to this pattern, but neither does Slovakia, for which we can observe similar scores as more advanced democracies such as Belgium and France. Nonetheless, we can undoubtedly say that the less media owners try to influence the editorial policies of the news-media organizations they own the more citizens will be able to find in-depth reporting and analysis in the news-media.

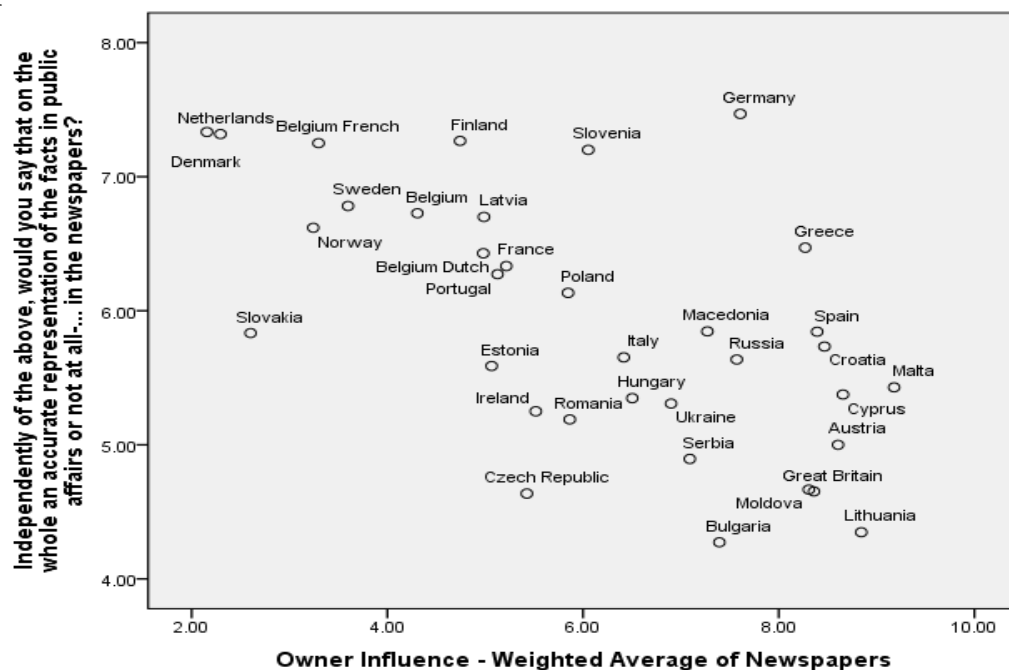
Figure 8: Party influence and the quality of in-depth reporting and analysis in the news media



Data from European Media Systems Survey 2010

The relationship between party influence and the quality of reporting and analysis in the news media is less clear, but definitely we can see a pattern there as well. The correlation analysis results ($r=.659$, $p<0.01$) show that there is a strong relation between party influence and the quality of reporting and analysis in the news media. Despite this, from the plotted correlation we can observe a few outliers such as Malta, France, and Germany. Also, the separation between the two clusters observed in the previous sections of the research, western and post-communist, is not so clear (Figure 8). However, we can safely conclude that the less political parties try to influence news-media organizations the more citizens will be able to find in-depth reporting and analysis in the news-media.

Figure 9: Owner influence and the accurate representation of public facts in newspapers

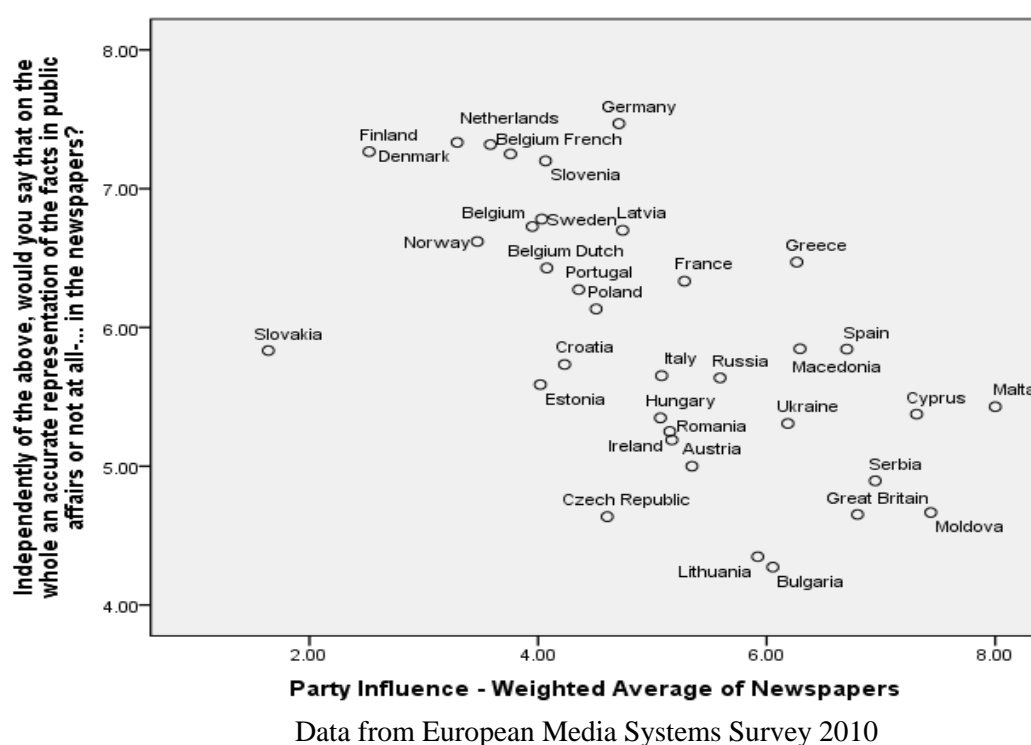


Data from European Media Systems Survey 2010

The relationship between owner influence over newspapers and the extent to which newspapers accurately represent the facts in public affairs is not a straightforward one. Even though the results of correlation analysis ($r=-.606$, $p<0.01$) show that the higher the influence of owners is, the less accurate the representation of facts in public affairs will be, the plotted correlation (Figure 9) reveals a few peculiar cases such as Germany, Austria, Slovenia, and

Great Britain. In Germany and Slovenia, even though reported owner influence is quite high, the news media offers a relatively accurate representation of facts in public affairs. On the other hand, Austria and Great Britain have high owner influence and rank very low on the accuracy of representation of facts in public affairs.

Figure 10: Party influence and the accurate representation of public facts in newspapers



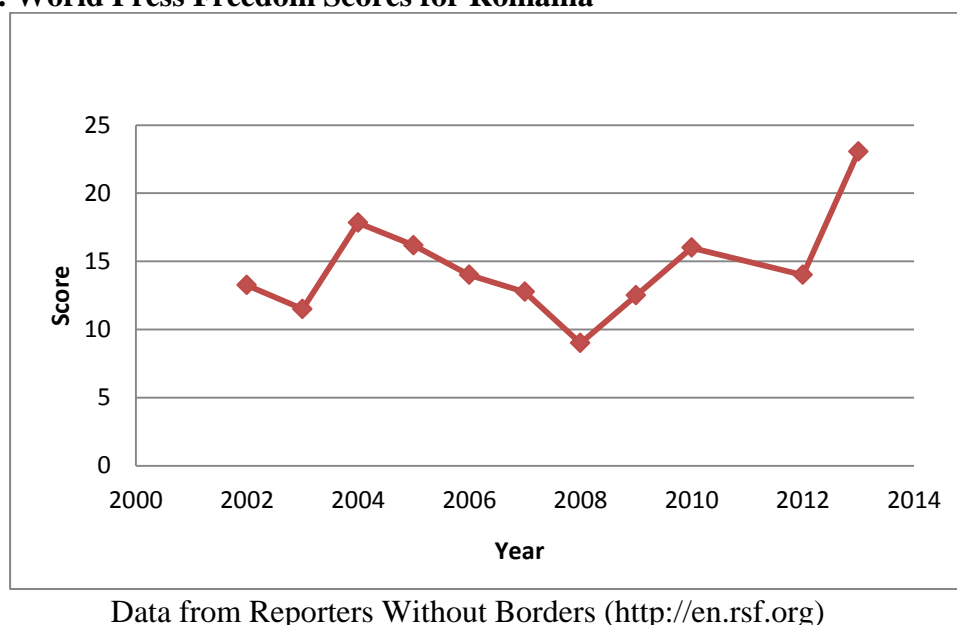
The relationship between party influence over newspapers and the extent to which newspapers accurately represent the facts in public affairs is not a straightforward one, even though the results of correlation analysis ($r = -.606$, $p < 0.01$) show that the higher party influence over newspapers is the lower the accuracy of fact representation will be. The plotted correlation (Figure 10) clearly shows that there is an association between party influence and the quality of newspapers. Nonetheless, even in consolidated democracies in Western Europe there is a considerable amount of party influence over newspapers. This influence might not be similar with the influential relations between newspapers and political clients in Central and Eastern Europe, since it could be just a reflection of the relationships

between journalists and their sources. In Central and Eastern Europe, the relations between politicians and journalists often transcend the simple source-journalist interaction.

3.3 Romanian News Media and Journalism: Freedom and Quality

The relations between news media and political power had an interesting development in twenty years of democratic experience in Romania. From 1990s until early 2000s the news media became more and more pluralistic, but after the first attempt of impeaching president Traian Băsescu in 2007, the relations between the news media and political power changed dramatically, and the progress made in fifteen years of democratization started to crumble (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010) (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011) (Coman and Gross 2012).

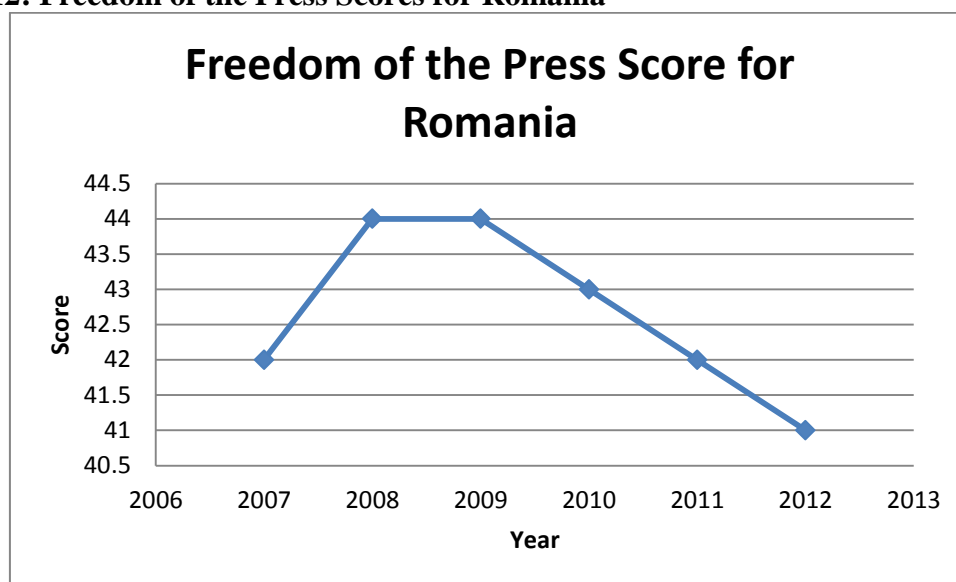
Figure 11: World Press Freedom Scores for Romania



Data from major research institution on media freedom are to some extent contradictory. The data from reports without borders shows that the press freedom score for Romania has fluctuated over a decade but overall the score went up, which means that the Romanian press is less and less free (Figure 11). This pattern has been emphasized in other

reports and research (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010) On the other hand, data from Freedom House shows that overall Romania has slightly improved in terms of freedom of the press (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Freedom of the Press Scores for Romania



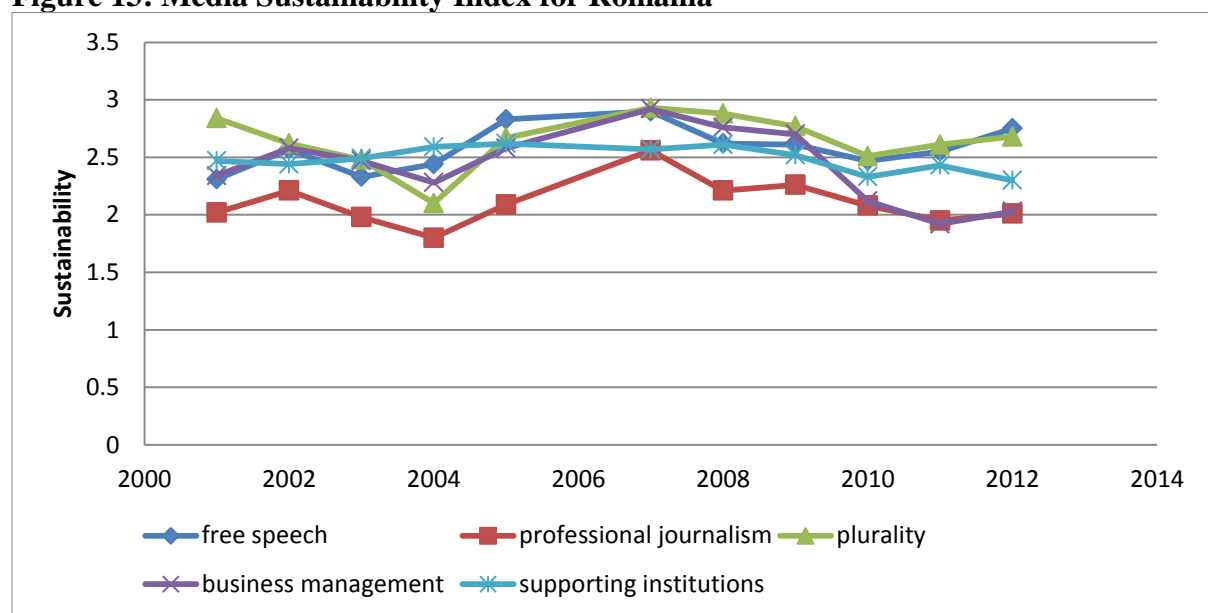
Data from Freedom House Freedom of the Press Index
(<http://www.freedomhouse.org>)

More complex data, from the Media Sustainability Index, shows a low variation of the indicators that constitute the Index. Indicators of free speech, professional journalism, media plurality, business management, and media supporting institutions, show that Romania has met the legal functions of quality journalism, but lacks progress in topics like the professionalism of journalists, and the quality of the media business as a whole (Figure 25).

The International Research and Exchange Board develops the media sustainability index which puts in perspective the relations between sustainability and professionalism, plurality, free speech, and interactions with other institutions. According to their methodology media systems can be qualified as Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1), Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2), Near Sustainability (2-3), and Sustainable (3-4). Countries that score on the Index below 1 do not meet or only minimally meet the objectives

of free press while the government and laws actively hinder free media development. Moreover professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal. Countries that score on the Index between 1 and 2, partially meet the minimal objectives of a free press. In these countries important segments of the legal system and government are opposed to a free media system, despite some clear evolution in terms of actions of civil society that call for a free press. Moreover, the media in these countries is professionalized only to a limited extent. Countries that score on the Index between 2 and 3 have recorded significant progress in many of the normative objectives of a free press. Here, legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment are promoting and supporting independent media. Even though the rules of journalism are cemented both in law and practice, more time may be needed to ensure that the media is sustainable both in terms of business and professionalism. Lastly, countries that score on the Index between 3 and 4 have a media system that is professional, free, and sustainable, or is approaching these objectives. These media systems are immune to government change, economic peaks and lows, and other changes in society.⁴

Figure 13: Media Sustainability Index for Romania



Data from International Research and Exchange Board (irex.org)

⁴ Media Sustainability Index Methodology http://www.irex.org/system/files/u105/EE_MSI_2012_Romania.pdf (Accessed: 25 January 2013)

Of course the economic crisis hit hard the Romanian media business and made the degradation process of quality journalism to be much faster (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011). Of course, the economic crisis had an impact on the types of funding and revenues that news media organizations have access to. Nowadays “quality journalism tends to be less funded from advertising revenues” (Gaman-Golutvina 2009, 239), which is not very peculiar given the contraction of the advertising market in general. Nonetheless, the data from the International Research and Exchange Board on media sustainability in Romania shows that the crisis only had little impact on the sustainability of the Romanian media. However, the index might not be very accurate since it suggests that Romania, legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment are promoting and supporting independent news media. To a certain extent this is true, but as we shall see in the following sections the business environment and the degree of journalistic professionalism in Romania does not encourage nor support free and independent news media.

The EMSS data places Romania together with other countries in Central and Eastern Europe in terms of professionalism, independence, influences from political parties and owners. Clearly the low professionalism and independence of journalists in Romania has to do with the influence that political parties and owners exert over news media organizations. The following chapter focuses on the Romanian case and analyzes more thoroughly the interplay between professionalism and independence on one side and heteronomous influences on the other.

Chapter 4: Journalistic Professionalism and Independence in Romanian News Media

In order to analyze more thoroughly the interplay between professionalism and independence on one side and heteronomous influences on the other I will use two sources of data. Firstly the analysis will rely on data from the Worlds of Journalism Study (2007 - 2011) in order to better explain journalistic professionalism and independence in the Romanian news media. The Worlds of Journalism Study measures perceptions, epistemological orientations and ethical views of 1800 journalists from 18 countries (Hanitzsch, Hanusch and Mellado 2010). Secondly the analysis relies on data from European Media Systems Survey – Journalists (EMSS-J 2013) in order to assess the professional conditions under which journalists are less independent and more vulnerable to heteronomous sources of influence. This survey conveys relevant data on Romanian journalists' perceptions of their roles, values and professional activities, as well as their perceptions on journalists' vulnerability to heteronomous sources of influence.

The core of the analysis will relies on the specifically designed survey of Romanian journalists, conducted in February – March 2013. The survey is part of the European Media Systems Survey, a project funded through a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship and a University of Essex research initiative support grant to Marina Popescu (Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira, European Media Systems Survey 2010).

The EMSS-J 2013 survey of Romanian journalists was conducted in February and March 2013, and I was part of the team that developed the research design and the questionnaire (see Annex 1). Firstly, there were selected eleven national newspapers and twenty local newspapers – both print and online – and then journalists were listed for each newspaper with their names, role in the newspaper, e-mail, and phone number. The selected

national newspapers had at least a circulation of 5000 copies per day. The selected local newspapers, in most cases, were the ones with the highest circulation in the region in which they publish. The journalists were selected only if their position within that news media organization allowed them to take editorial decisions. In this case it makes more sense to conduct the survey with journalists that have a certain amount of decision making power, who are more likely to have both direct experience of editorial issues and strategic issues, and possibly a somewhat broader picture on the issues at their own and other media outlets, within the media system and journalism in Romania. Given that the EMSS research team selected the journalists with these criteria in mind, a reduced number of journalists from each national newspaper were targeted.

After the selection process the online questionnaire was sent to all selected journalists. Four e-mail reminders were sent in March 2013 (5, 12, 16, and 21) and another one in April the 3rd. Where a phone number was available journalists were reminded via telephone to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire has 40 questions that cover the types of influence on democratic journalistic practices, the conditions under which journalists are prone to be influenced by multiple heteronomous sources of power, and subjective views on other journalists' performance and their own performance. Also, the questionnaire covers issues of education and training of journalists, as well as the consolidation of journalism as a profession, i.e. journalist membership in professional organizations that provide a code of professional ethics. The perceived independence of journalists from heteronomous influences will be compared against their level of education and training, and against the perceived level of professionalization Romanian journalism⁵.

Even though, according to the Worlds of Journalism Study, 97 % of Romanian journalists graduated from college and the average Romanian journalist has worked for at

⁵ The questions through which I plan to measure these indicators can be found in Annex 1

around eight years in the news media, Romanian journalists are still vulnerable to the influence of politicians, ownership, and advertisers (Hanitzsch, Hanusch and Mellado 2010, 278). When asked how often their peers accepted money or presents from the people they cover, only two percent of Romanian journalists said they never took bribes and only one point one percent said that they never accepted freebies (different types of gifts; such as trips, expensive alcoholic beverages, etc.). Twenty five percent and thirty five point four percent of Romanian journalists recognized that they take bribes almost always and respectively rather often. When it comes to freebies, thirty six point two percent of Romanian journalists said they accept such gifts almost always, while thirty four percent say that they accept freebies rather often (Table 4).

Table 3: Journalists' frequency of accepting bribes and/or freebies

	Almost always	Rather Often	Sometimes	Rather rarely	Never
Bribes	25	35.4	26	11.5	2.1
Freebies	36.2	34	23.4	5.3	1.1

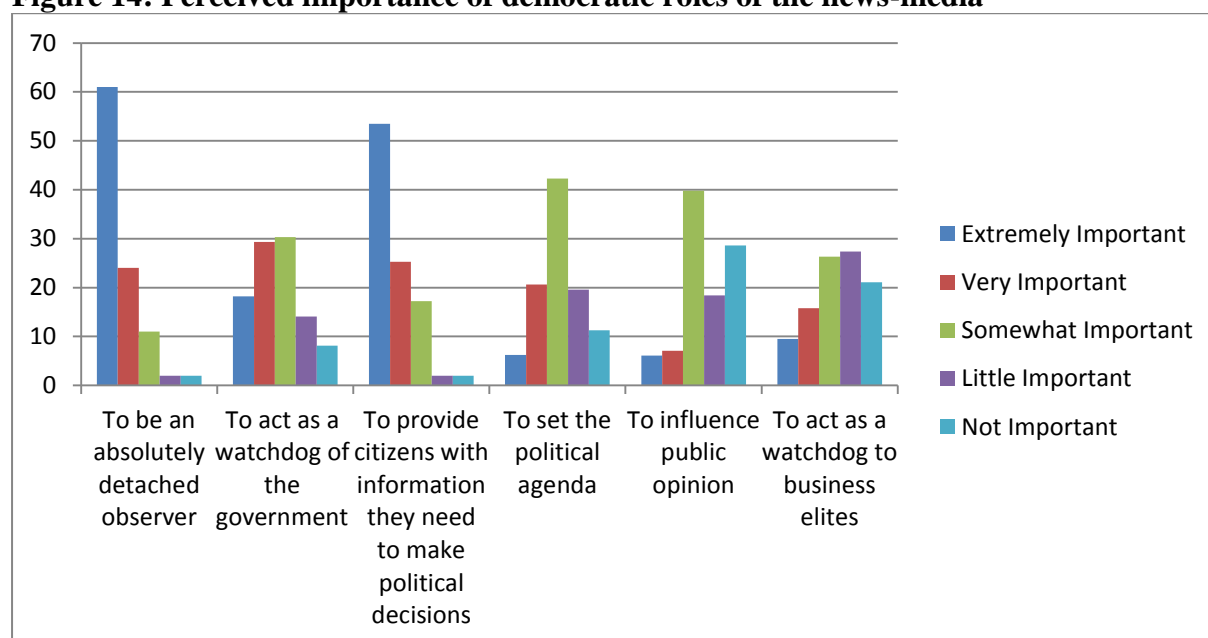
Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

Table 5 and Figure 14 illustrate shows to which extent Romanian journalists agree with some of the normative characteristics of a democratic news-media. While most journalists agree that it is very important to be an absolutely detached observer and to provide citizens with information they need to make political decisions, they say that it is less important for them to set the political agenda, to influence public opinion, or to act as a watchdog to business elites. When they were asked about the role of the journalist as a watchdog of the government, few journalists said that this was extremely important. However approximately 29 percent of the respondents say that the watchdog role is important, and approximately 30 percent of the respondents say that the watchdog role of the news media is somewhat important.

Table 4: Perceived importance of democratic roles of the news-media

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Little Important	Not Important
To be an absolutely detached observer	61	24	11	2	2
To act as a watchdog of the government	18.2	29.3	30.3	14.1	8.1
To provide citizens with information they need to make political decisions	53.5	25.3	17.2	2.0	2.0
To set the political agenda	6.2	20.6	42.3	19.6	11.3
To influence public opinion	6.1	7.1	39.8	18.4	28.6
To act as a watchdog to business elites	9.5	15.8	26.3	27.4	21.1

Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

Figure 14: Perceived importance of democratic roles of the news-media

Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

When it comes to ethical norms that are to be followed in quality journalism, most Romanian journalists agree that there are ethical principles that have to be followed by all journalists. However, Romanian journalists think that respecting and following these ethical principles largely depends on the situation (Table 6). Nonetheless, Romanian journalists

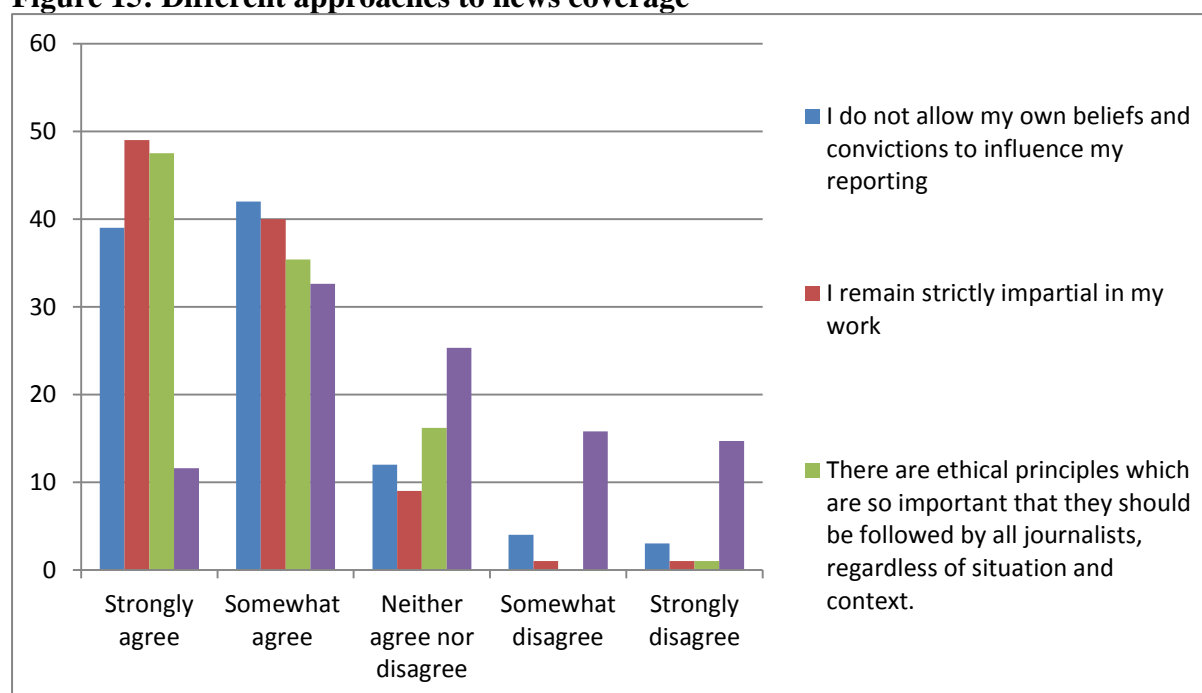
largely agree that they should remain strictly impartial in their work and they do not allow their own beliefs and convictions to affect their work (Table 6).

Table 5: Different approaches to news coverage

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I do not allow my own beliefs and convictions to influence my reporting	39	42	12	4	3
I remain strictly impartial in my work	49	40	9	1	1
There are ethical principles which are so important that they should be followed by all journalists.	47.5	35.4	16.2	-	1
What is ethical in journalism varies from one situation to another	11.6	32.6	25.3	15.8	14.7

Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

Figure 15: Different approaches to news coverage



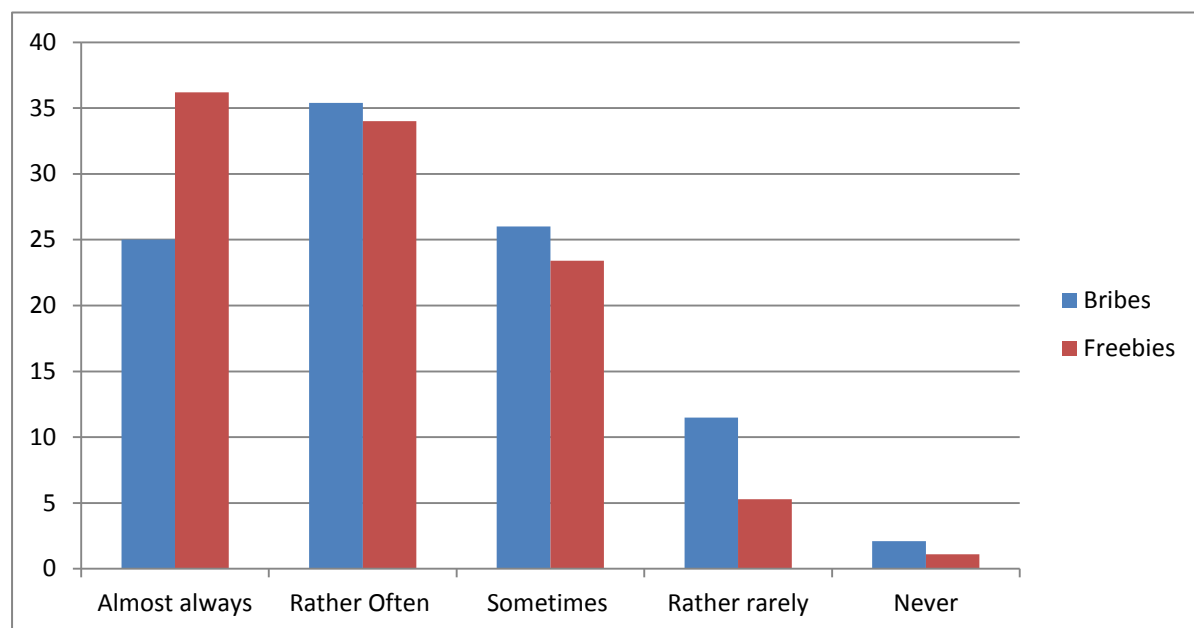
Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

The fact that there are some journalists that consider that what is ethical in journalism varies from one situation to another can be interpreted as controversial and contradictory, but

it is possible that the wording of the two questions in the WJS questionnaire were misleading. It might be the case that some journalists that responded to the WJS questionnaire consider that ethic principles are important but specific contexts might limit the ability of the journalism to work inside these ethical parameters. In short, bending the ethical rules can be justifiable only in extreme cases. However, it is not yet clear, whether these extreme cases are used in the interest of the public or just means to other ends.

Even though most Romanian journalists agree with some ethical norms and they say that they try to fulfill their roles, there is an important piece of information that contradicts this description. Bribery and accepting freebies seem to be widely accepted practices within the Romanian news organizations (Figure 15). This fact is worrisome and it implies that journalists do not care so much about ethical norms after all.

Figure 16: Bribing Journalists



4.1 Journalists' Vulnerability to External and Internal Influences

The authors of the FREEEX report for Romania conclude that “artificially sustained media discourages healthy investment in the media industry and in honest journalism” (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011, 19). The case of Romania is valuable in this sense, given the financial situation of most media outlets and their dependence on deals with the state (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011). After the withdrawal of the German media group WAZ, its president, Peter Hombach, declared that “oligarchies buy newspapers and magazines, not so much in order to make money, but to help them gain political influence” (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011, 18).

On top of investing lots of money in unprofitable media businesses, these *moguls* are often under the scrutiny of the public opinion for breaking the law. For example, in 2010 two media *moguls* in Romania were arrested: “one (Sorin Ovidiu Vantu) for favoring a criminal accused of complicity to abuse and embezzlement, and the other (Dan Voiculescu) for blackmail” (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011, 19). Both media owners used their media outlets to misinform and to lie to the public about their involvement in these affairs. Also, Sorin Ovidiu Vantu, has been taped by the prosecutors and the public opinion found out that he was pressuring and threatening the editors of his 24h all-news channel Realitatea TV.

His conversations with journalists were made public, and it became very clear that he was using his influence to mingle with the editorial policy of Realitatea TV. “You are not free, man. You like it, you work; you don’t like it you leave, what’s the big deal! Yes old mad, this is what I need, a very efficient organization that answers the economic commands to which it is subject. Nothing more.” (Hotnews.ro 2010). In another conversation, this time with the editorial manager of political satire magazine “Academia Catavencu”, Vantu said that the magazine “has become an employer’s organization. It should meet the interests of the

employer. The business interests of the employer. Who likes it can stay, and who doesn't like it can leave. The jokes like editorial independence are over, I want to be able to do my own deals" (Hotnews.ro 2010). The transcriptions of conversations that he had with editors and journalists go on, but they all are in the same key.

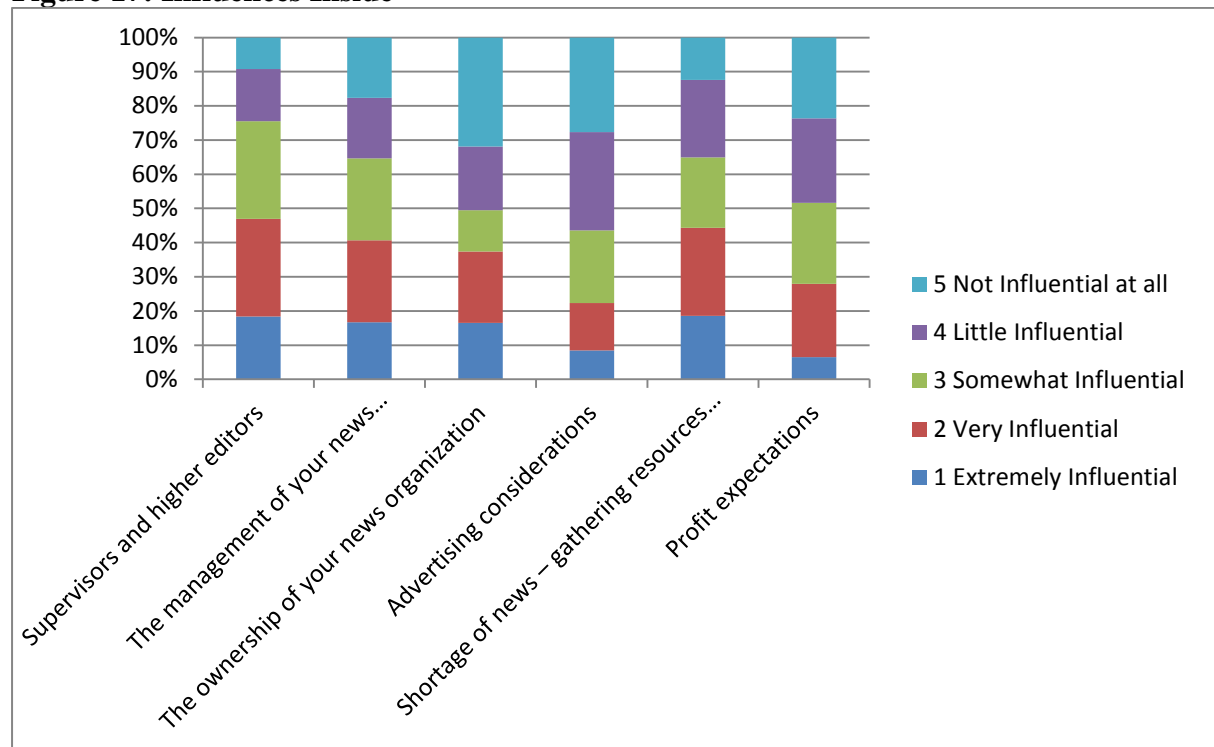
Table 6: Influences Inside

	Extremely Influential	Very Influential	Somewhat Influential	Little Influential	Not Influential at all
Supervisors and higher editors	18.4	28.6	28.6	15.3	9.2
The management of your news organization	16.7	24	24	17.7	17.7
The ownership of your news organization	16.5	20.9	12.1	18.7	31.9
Advertising considerations	8.5	13.8	21.3	28.7	27.7
Shortage of news – gathering resources including staff	18.6	25.8	20.6	22.7	12.4
Profit expectations	6.5	21.5	23.7	24.7	23.7

Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

The data from the Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011) illustrate that journalists are affected to a considerable degree by the ownership of their respective news-media organizations. Supervisors and higher editors have a considerable amount of influence over the work of journalists (Table 7). Another important factor of influence seems to be the shortage of news-gathering resources. This fact can be explained with the shortage of resources generated by the economic crisis and the downsizing of advertising revenues. Since the work of journalists depends a lot on their ability to do their work without being constrained by any shortage of resources, it is of high importance that news media organizations adapt themselves to the changing business of journalism. Otherwise, securing quality journalism without having proper means and resources could become a hard task.

Figure 17: Influences Inside



Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

When it comes to types of influences from inside the news media organization that they work for, Romanian journalists recognize that the influences vary in terms of source and intensity. It is not clear however, which professional conditions lead to more or less vulnerabilities in the front of such influences. Nonetheless journalists consider that the supervisors/editors, the management, and the ownership of the news organization are very/extremely influential on their day-to-day job. Also, the shortage of news-gathering resources has a considerable influence over the day-to-day job of journalists. Surprisingly, advertising considerations within the newsroom do not seem to be considered very relevant. However, it is not clear what the researchers that conducted the Worlds of Journalism Study had in mind when they differentiated between advertising considerations within the newsroom and advertisers' influence in general. Furthermore, this might have had an impact on the validity of responses to this question.

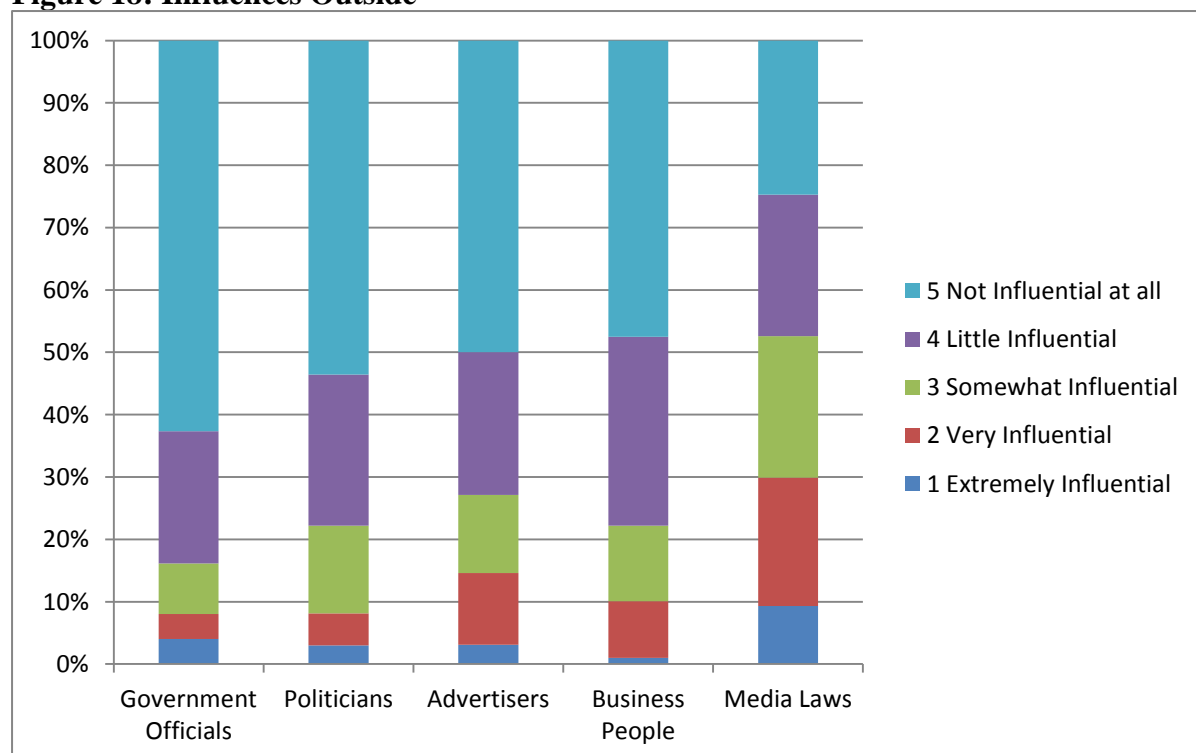
The data from the Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011) also illustrate the degree to which influences from outside news media organizations are affecting the work of journalists. In this case, Romanian journalists report very little influence from government officials, politicians, advertisers, business people, and media laws (Table 8).

Table 7: Influences Outside

	Extremely Influential	Very Influential	Somewhat Influential	Little Influential	Not Influential at all
Government Officials	4	4	8.1	21.2	62.6
Politicians	3	5.1	14.1	24.2	53.5
Advertisers	3.1	11.5	12.5	22.9	50
Business People	1	9.1	12.1	30.3	47.5
Media Laws	9.3	20.6	22.7	22.7	24.7

Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

Figure 18: Influences Outside



When it comes to the influences from outside the news organization that they belong to, journalists seem to report scores that are not consistent with previously reported results

from the same survey. Only two percent of Romanian journalists say that they never took bribes or freebies from politicians, advertisers, and business people and yet they say that these actors do not have much influence on their day-to-day job. These results are surprising and contradictory; therefore these issues need to be further investigated in order to paint a more nuanced picture of the types of influences that journalists are subjected to, and of the conditions under which journalists are prone to be more easily influenced.

Table 8: Correlation between journalistic autonomy and three different types of influences

			Autonomy: control over the work	Influences inside: ownership	Influences outside: politicians	Influences outside: advertisers
Kendall's tau_b	Autonomy: control over the journalistic work	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.286**	-.364**	-.165
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.000	.067
		N	97	88	96	93
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

Given the anecdotal evidence provided by Ganea, Popa and Ursulean (2011) there seems to be very less doubt about the extent to which Romanian media owners are willing to interfere with the editorial freedom of their employees. Nonetheless it is important to consolidate the evidence with the analysis of correlation between journalists' perceived autonomy and various types of heteronomous influences (Table 9). The results show that media owners and politicians' influence is correlated to the amount of control that journalists have over their work. Moreover, since media owners are often representing political parties (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010), it is likely that the influences exerted by owners and political parties are very similar, in the sense that they emerge from the same interest groups. Despite the expectations advertisers' influence does not seem to matter that much for the extent to which journalists have true control over their work.

Interestingly the data from European Media Systems Survey – Journalists (2013) paint a more nuanced picture of the influences that journalists are subject to. Table 12 nuances between news media organizations and types of influence on political coverage. The outlets for which higher means are reported (Evenimentul Zilei, Jurnalul National, TVR, Antena 3, Realitatea TV, B1TV, RTV, and cotidianul.ro) are known to be more or less openly associated with political parties and interest groups (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010).

Table 9: Influence on political coverage by news media organization

	Party		Ownership		Advertisers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Own outlet	4.92	3.686	5.22	3.720	4.41	3.362
Main national newspapers						
Evenimentul Zilei	8.57	2.510	8.63	2.789	5.86	2.936
Jurnalul National	10.07	2.076	10.10	1.930	7.11	2.878
Romania Libera	6.52	3.062	7.37	3.428	5.86	2.974
Ziarul Financiar	3.32	2.371	5.14	2.551	5.94	2.956
Adevarul	5.88	2.804	6.84	2.991	5.75	2.740
Libertatea	3.38	2.261	5.06	2.970	5.76	3.276
Click	3.50	2.386	4.89	3.008	5.85	3.403
Cancan	3.50	2.342	4.94	3.086	5.85	3.535
Main National TV News Stations						
TVR	9.43	1.990	9.51	1.805	5.25	3.129
PRO TV	4.10	2.694	6.47	2.617	6.29	3.280
Antena 3	10.79	.565	10.38	1.914	7.64	2.840
Realitatea TV	9.48	1.928	9.85	1.748	7.44	2.656
B1TV	9.40	2.400	9.62	2.313	7.11	3.012
RTV	9.62	2.230	9.82	2.522	7.56	2.843
DIGI24	4.60	3.078	6.24	3.252	5.26	3.023
Main National Online Newspapers						
Hotnews.ro	6.45	3.590	7.05	3.720	5.09	2.944
Zf.ro	3.80	2.564	5.17	2.770	5.34	3.048
cotidianul.ro	8.85	2.833	9.47	2.501	6.692	3.129
Gandul.info	4.71	2.482	6.34	2.897	5.64	2.810

Data from European Media Systems Survey - Journalists (2013)

Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi (2010) argue that even though precise data on media ownership in Romania is not widely available, most people know who owns what, because the conflicts

between media outlets and politicians revealed enough information about media ownership. “The transparency of the ownership is not a serious problem in Romania, however, because everybody knows who owns what. The political war between the major media owners and President Basescu raised the visibility of the ownership. The owners are often the real media stars of their outlets, more so than journalists” (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010, 24).

Nonetheless, the fact that Romanian journalists think that two highbrow national newspapers are influenced by the political party to which they are close, by their ownership, and by their advertising clients raises serious concerns about the quality of the Romanian news-media. Furthermore, four all news TV channels plus the public broadcaster are considered to be dependent on the parties to which they are associated and their ownership as well. Last but not least, the online newspaper *cotidianul.ro* is considered to be highly dependent on the political party to which is close and their ownership. This dependence, or rather lack of independence, seems to be the rule in the Romanian news-media, since such a large share of news-media organizations are considered to be influenced by political parties, owners, and in some cases by advertisers.

4.2 Journalists’ Vulnerability to Different Methods of Influence

Besides the matter of who influences who, the question of who influences through which method is highly relevant. All relevant actors in the media business have of course different methods of leverage and influence that they can use whenever the situation *requires* it. The data from EMSS-J (2013) show that politicians often try to influence the journalistic content by appointing persons that are close to them in the institutions that regulate and supervise the mass-media. Also, politicians are thought to indirectly sanction and limit the work of journalists by restricting their access to sources of information. However, they can use more direct tools of intimidation such as harassment, blackmail, or physical violence. Last but not

least, politicians can exploit the laws that regulate libel and defamation in their favor, and again, by doing so they limit the ability of journalists to do independent work.

Table 10: Influence over journalistic content through different methods

Method	Politicians		Owners		Advertisers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Licensing decisions	6.71	3.082				
Political appointments in regulation and supervision institutions of mass-media	9.52	1.992				
Influence the journalists or media organizations through various favors	8.86	2.176	7.71	2.700	7.18	2.840
Sanctioning the journalists who are critical through the limitation of their access to news sources	7.70	2.794				
Blackmail, harassment, or physical violence against journalists	4.98	2.638	4.63	3.092	2.33	1.681
Exploiting the laws that regulate libel and defamation in order to intimidate journalists	5.92	3.121				
Using rules of confidentiality or national security as a justification for limiting the freedom of the press	7.36	2.776				
Boycotting media organizations					5.59	3.182

Data from European Media Systems Survey - Journalists (2013)

On the other hand, owners and advertisers try to influence journalists mostly through various favors (freebies) or by simply bribing them. However, there are cases when owners directly harass or threaten the physical integrity of journalists (Ganea, Popa and Ursulean 2011). As for the influence of advertisers and the methods they use, boycotting seems to be their favorite tool. As expected, whenever an advertiser does not like the coverage of a certain media organization with which it has an advertising contract, it will immediately threaten to boycott that outlet.

4.3 Journalists' Vulnerability and Professional Conditions

The professional standards of journalists depend on wages, education and training, and professionalization (Schulz 2001) (J. Curran 2002). Journalists become vulnerable to bribes and all sorts of pressures because of: Low Wages; Poor Education/Training; Low Levels of professionalization. Obviously, lower wages make journalists more vulnerable to the influence of powerful actors (politicians, owners & advertisers). "It is obvious that journalistic quality depends on material resources" (Schulz 2001, 51), but it is unclear to what extent the education and training of journalists, as well as the level of professionalization of their "guild" in Romania, is a factor that can explain for the extent to which journalists are vulnerable to the influence of powerful actors. At least at the normative level, education and training are thought to significantly improve the quality of journalists. "Well-trained journalists are better equipped to apply quality criteria like objectivity, truth, fairness and neutrality, and above all, to adhere to these norms in their practical work". (Schulz 2001, 52).

The World of Journalism Survey (2007-2011) has a number of questions related to the professional conditions of journalists. For the case of Romania, WJS (2007-2011) reports a high employment status among journalists: 94% of journalists selected by WJS have a permanent work contract while only 2% work under a temporary contract. The other 2% of journalists may work as freelancers or under copyright contracts. Moreover, only 14% of Romanian journalists are members of a professional organization, despite the fact that the membership within a professional organization would ensure journalists with better representation and more tools for protecting their rights and independence.

Romanian journalists have a relatively normal work pattern. The average required working hours per week is 41.05 (Std. Deviation = 4.954), and the average journalist produces 28.5 news items per week (Std. Deviation = 35.672; Range: minimum 4, maximum

300). Out of the total working time, journalists spend 37.5% of their time gathering information and investigating. However, not all journalists allocate the same amount of time for gathering information and investigation. There are journalists who do not allocate any time for gathering information and investigation, while there are a few who allocate 90% of their time for these purposes.

Nonetheless we cannot say for sure to what extent the professional conditions facilitate or not the independence of journalists. In order to find out which professional conditions make journalists less independent, namely to find out if the influences of politicians and owners vary across different professional condition of journalists, an analysis of variance has been conducted (Table 10).

Table 11: Analysis of variance of inside and outside influences by journalism as main job

ANOVA						
F - 1.39520		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Influences inside: ownership	Between Groups	7.583	1	7.583	3.426	.067
	Within Groups	196.988	89	2.213		
	Total	204.571	90			
Influences outside: politicians	Between Groups	.931	1	.931	.828	.365
	Within Groups	109.029	97	1.124		
	Total	109.960	98			

Data from Worlds of Journalism Study (2007-2011)

The analysis does not have any conclusive results. However, one could speculate that journalists are more vulnerable to be influenced by media owners if they have other jobs besides the journalist one. The other professional conditions tested do not predict the influence of owners and politicians. The influence of owners and politicians does not vary across different types of membership in professional organizations, activity in professional

organizations, studied journalism or communication, gender, type of employment do not predict the influence of owners and politicians. It is very likely that these results are influenced by the size of the sample, in the sense that the sample is not big enough to provide a detailed analysis of professional conditions under which journalists work.

Conclusions

It is obvious that the problem of journalistic independence has more deep rooted causes, and the fact that journalists accept bribes and freebies so often is an effect of more structural phenomena. The relations of influence are not isolated one from each other but rather, they occur in a systematic way. These relations are founded upon “increasingly smaller politico-economic power centers with whom media owners, and separately manager-journalists, commentators, star-journalists, negotiate about the issues and mostly the individuals who will be the focus of positive or negative media attention” (Coman and Gross 2012, 466). Coman and Gross also emphasize that because of the constellation of these power centers, “true ideological diversity and clear political identities are in reality limited, regardless of the number of political parties, and the political parallelism that is associated with external pluralism and that has a specific nature in Romania” (Coman and Gross 2012, 466). Other authors agree that the problems with the Romanian news media are complex and involve the acknowledgment of the entire spectrum of factors that are crucial for a consolidated media system. Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi (2010) state that there are “three false expectations are blocking attempts to find solutions to the Romanian media’s problems: the state is bad, self-regulation works, private property is always good” (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010, 26).

Although the Romanian media has gained independence from the state itself, through appropriate legislation, there are social subsystems (political, economic or solidary groups) from which the news media cannot gain independence. These social subsystems are reinforced through general “social and political attitudes that threaten the freedom of expression more than the laws and public institutions” (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010, 23). This had important implications over the diversification of the Romanian media system

since the “multinational media companies that were expected and welcomed in Romania in 1990s were unable to compete with local investors who were in search of political protection through the media” (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010, 25).

Many authors have tried to come up with a list of sustainable solutions for the Romanian news-media. However, it has become more obvious that changing the redefinition of the relationships between the state, journalists and media owners is a hard goal to achieve, even though all it takes is to enforce anti-concentration rules that already exist. But nowadays, owners and powerful businesses that often are advertisers represent more of a menace for professional journalism than the state does. The rights of the journalists as employees are weakened by job insecurity amplified by the crisis, but these rights were never openly negotiated with the journalists themselves. Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi argue that “self-regulation is the only solution to improve ethical standards” in the Romanian news-media (Ghinea and Mungiu-Pippidi 2010, 26).

This research emphasizes a number of issues that are relevant for the discussion of the independence of news media and the actors and conditions that facilitate it or limit it. First, the country level analysis shows that in Europe the independence and the professionalism of journalists are strongly related to the quality of journalism. Also the influence of media owners and political parties are strongly related to the quality of journalism. Second, the results show that media owners and political parties (through politicians) are the most powerful actors when it comes to influencing the news media. Third, media owners and political parties (through politicians) are using similar methods in order to influence the political coverage in the news media. Mostly, media owners and politicians are using diverse favors (bribes and freebies), and blackmail in some cases, in order to influence journalists. Fourth there is a discrepancy between the declared commitment to ethical norms and

democratic goals of journalism and the practices of journalists. Even though most journalists agree on most ethical norms and normative roles of journalism the majority of them accepts bribes and freebies from politicians, owners, and sometimes even from advertisers.

Even though this research does not offer a definitive picture of the implications of lack of journalistic independence on the quality of the news media, it has become clearer that media owners and political parties (through politicians) are the most powerful actors when it comes to influencing the news media in general and political coverage in particular. To some extent, this research shows that journalists that work under precarious professional conditions are expected to be more vulnerable to influences. However, the results seem to indicate that regardless of the type of professional conditions, and their declared ethical and professional values, most journalists are subject to blackmail, bribes, and different sorts of indirect limitations. Under such conditions, it is obvious that the only solution to the problems of news media in Central and Eastern Europe in general, and Romania in particular, is self-regulation.

Appendix

Annex 1: Questionnaire EMSS-J 2013, Romania

Thank you for accepting to answer our questionnaire on journalism and mass media in [COUNTRY]. We would be very grateful if you responded to all our questions and if you added any comments or information when you considered necessary. The responses and the comments remain anonymous.

For most questions, we would like you to express your opinion by selecting a single number on a 0-10 scale. The meaning of 0 and 10 is always shown above the scale in the questionnaire.

To what extent do you believe that the following statements are true about the mass media and journalists in [COUNTRY]? Please select 0 if you think that the statement is entirely untrue and 10 if you think that it is absolutely true:

News media enjoy a lot of credibility in [COUNTRY]

Untrue											True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

The news media have significant influence on what is discussed by politicians by focusing public attention on particular problems in [COUNTRY].

Untrue											True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Citizens can find in-depth reporting and analysis in the news media if they are interested in something.

Untrue											True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Would you say that on the whole newspapers in [COUNTRY] provide an accurate representation of the facts in public affairs or not at all?

Untrue											True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

And how about the television channels, would you say that on the whole they provide an accurate representation of the facts in public affairs or not at all?

Untrue											True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

To your knowledge, to what extent it is true that the following apply to journalism and journalists in [COUNTRY]

The political orientation of the most prominent journalists is well-known to the public.

Untrue											True
--------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Journalists in [COUNTRY] are motivated by an ethic of serving the public interest.

Untrue										True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Journalists in [COUNTRY] agree on the criteria for judging excellence in their political orientations

Untrue										True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Journalists have sufficient training to ensure that basic professional norms like accuracy, relevance, completeness, balance, timeliness, double-checking and source confidentiality are respected in news-making practices.

Untrue										True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The journalistic content of public television in [COUNTRY] is entirely free from governmental political interference.

Untrue										True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

How common is it that politicians or interest groups try to influence media coverage by the following:

	Uncommon										Common	
Media licensing decisions?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Political appointments to media oversight and regulatory bodies?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Bribing journalists or media outlets with various favours?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Sanctioning critical journalists by limiting their access to information sources	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Blackmail, harassment or physical violence against journalists?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Exploiting hate speech, libel or defamation laws to intimidate journalists?												
Using confidentiality rules or national security as a justification for limiting press freedom?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

How common is it that advertisers try to influence media coverage by:

	Uncommon										Common	
Bribing journalists or media outlets with various favours?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Harassment or physical violence against journalists?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Boycotting the media organization?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

How common is it that the owners of media organizations try to influence media coverage by:

	Uncommon										Common	
Bribing journalists or editors with various favours?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Harassment or physical violence against journalists?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Thinking about how various media report and analyze political news, please rate them according to how often they do various things.

How would you characterize the political colour of each of these media outlets in [COUNTRY]? Please select for each media which political party it agrees with most often.

	Not at all								Strongly		
Own outlet	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main national newspapers											
Evenimentul Zilei	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jurnalul National	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romania Libera	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ziarul Financiar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National TV News Stations											
Antena 3	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B1TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Realitatea TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RTV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DIGI24	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National Online Newspapers											
Hotnews.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Zf.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cotidianul.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gandul.info											

How far is the political coverage of each of the following media outlets influenced by a party or parties to which it is close?

	Not at all								Strongly		
Own outlet	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main national newspapers											
Evenimentul Zilei	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jurnalul National	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romania Libera	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ziarul Financiar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National TV News Stations											
Antena 3	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B1TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Realitatea TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RTV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DIGI24	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National Online Newspapers											

Hotnews.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Zf.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cotidianul.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gandul.info											

Some people say that the political orientation of media outlets is best described in terms of political left versus political right. Given what left and right means in the given country, where would you place each of these media on a scale where 0 means left and 10 means right?

	Not at all								Strongly		
Own outlet	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main national newspapers											
Evenimentul Zilei	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jurnalul National	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romania Libera	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ziarul Financiar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National TV News Stations											
Antena 3	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B1TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Realitatea TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RTV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DIGI24	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National Online Newspapers											
Hotnews.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Zf.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cotidianul.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gandul.info											

And how much is the political coverage in the following media outlets influenced by their owners?

	Not at all								Strongly		
Own outlet	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main national newspapers											
Evenimentul Zilei	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jurnalul National	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romania Libera	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ziarul Financiar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National TV News Stations											
Antena 3	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B1TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Realitatea TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RTV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DIGI24	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National Online Newspapers											

Hotnews.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Zf.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cotidianul.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gandul.info											

And how much is the political coverage in the following media outlets influenced by their advertisers?

	Not at all								Strongly		
Own outlet	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main national newspapers											
Evenimentul Zilei	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jurnalul National	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romania Libera	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ziarul Financiar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National TV News Stations											
Antena 3	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B1TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Realitatea TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RTV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DIGI24	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National Online Newspapers											
Hotnews.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Zf.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cotidianul.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gandul.info											

To what extent do these media provide accurate information on facts backed by credible sources and expertise?

	Not at all								Strongly		
Own outlet	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main national newspapers											
Evenimentul Zilei	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jurnalul National	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romania Libera	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ziarul Financiar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National TV News Stations											
Antena 3	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B1TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Realitatea TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RTV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DIGI24	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National Online Newspapers											

Hotnews.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Zf.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cotidianul.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gandul.info											

To what extent does each present equally well the arguments of all sides in political debates?

	Not at all								Strongly		
Own outlet	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main national newspapers											
Evenimentul Zilei	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jurnalul National	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romania Libera	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ziarul Financiar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National TV News Stations											
Antena 3	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B1TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Realitatea TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RTV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DIGI24	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National Online Newspapers											
Hotnews.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Zf.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cotidianul.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gandul.info											

To what extent does each of the following news organizations advocate particular views and policies?

	Not at all								Strongly		
Own outlet	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main national newspapers											
Evenimentul Zilei	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jurnalul National	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romania Libera	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ziarul Financiar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National TV News Stations											
Antena 3	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B1TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Realitatea TV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RTV	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DIGI24	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main National Online Newspapers											

Hotnews.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Zf.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cotidianul.ro	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gandul.info											

Do you think it is true that public television in [COUNTRY], compared to private television channels, provides ...

	Untrue True										
More political news	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Wider range of programming	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More boring programmes for the average viewer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More in-depth coverage of politics and public affairs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A less sensationalist style	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More focus on the culture and traditions of minorities in [COUNTRY]											
More trustworthy information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What are the main problems of public television in [COUNTRY]? Please write in your answer with your own words in the space below.

Do you think that too much public money is spent on public television compared to how much it delivers in line with its public service mission?

Untrue							True			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

To what extent do you believe that the following are true about the online news in [COUNTRY]:

The internet had made journalism more responsive to the public.

Untrue							True			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The internet has significantly broadened the range of actors who can influence public opinion.

Untrue							True			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Online news media outlets are not yet significant competitors of traditional media outlets.

Untrue							True			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Here are some alternative options for funding journalism. For each, please tell us if, as far as you know, these are used in [COUNTRY] and whether you think that such funding should be considered in [COUNTRY] or not.

	Exists		Should exist	
	YES	NO	YES	NO

Fees from subscription 'pay walls'	1	0	1	0
Direct subsidies from government	1	0	1	0
Nonprofit / foundation status	1	0	1	0
Government tax credits for news consumers	1	0	1	0
Government tax credits for news organizations	1	0	1	0
Donations from private individuals	1	0	1	0
Donations from nonprofit institutions	1	0	1	0
Donations from interest groups	1	0	1	0
Transaction fees from online retail activity	1	0	1	0
Revenue from local search	1	0	1	0
Revenue embedded in fees people pay their internet providers	1	0	1	0

How far do [COUNTRY] media outlets in general succeed in:

... stimulating general interest among citizens in public affairs?

Not at all											Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

... providing a forum for politicians and parties to debate in front of citizens?

Not at all											Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

... providing a variety of perspectives on the important issues of the day?

Not at all											Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

... serving as "watchdog" scrutinizing the actions of government officials on behalf of citizens?

Not at all											Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

To what extent would you say the following statements are true in [COUNTRY]

Media coverage of public affairs has a lot of influence on public opinion in [COUNTRY]

Untrue											True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Media coverage of public affairs has a lot of influence in political and policy circles in [COUNTRY]

Untrue											True
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

The following list describes some of the things the news media do or try to do. Please tell us how important is each of these things in your work.

	Not at all important						Extremely important
--	----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	---------------------

... report things as they are.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
... provide analysis of current affairs.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
... monitor and scrutinize political leaders.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
... monitor and scrutinize business.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
... set the political agenda.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
... influence public opinion.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
...advocate for social change.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
... support national development.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
... provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
...motivate people to participate in political activity.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

How often do you think it is the case that journalists in [COUNTRY] have to disregard codes of professional ethics in their work?

Never									Almost always	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Journalists are sometimes offered money or presents by the people and institutions they cover. How often do you think journalists in [COUNTRY] accept these presents?

Never									Almost always	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Journalists sometimes also have access to certain material privileges or freebies, such as trips to cover a story that are not paid for by the news organization. How often do you think journalists in [COUNTRY] accept these freebies?

Never									Almost always	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Thinking of your work overall, how much freedom do you personally have in selecting the news stories that you work on?

No freedom at all									Complete freedom	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q12. How confident are you that a news organization that is owned by a corporate parent company can do a good job covering news about that company?

Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not too confident	Not at all confident

Q13. How confident are you that a news organization can do a good job covering news about the companies that advertise in that news organization?

Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not too confident	Not at all confident

Q14. Is there any on-going effort to address ethical issues in your newsroom, directed by your news organization's management?

Yes	No	DK

Q18. Have there been instances in which your newsroom was encouraged to do a story because it is related to an owner, advertiser, or sponsor?

Yes	No	DK

DEMOGRAPHICS

Now I would like to ask a few questions about yourself. Of course, the information about your personal responses will not be available to anyone except as part of the statistics about a country.

	Yes	No
During your formal education, did you specialize in journalism?	1	0
Are you a member of any journalist organization or association?	1	0

How many years have you been working in journalism? Please write in the number here: years

Of these, how many years in total have you worked for your current news organization? Please write in the number here: years

How much of your working hours do you spend with other paid jobs than journalism?

None										At least as much as with journalism	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Finally, how interested are you in politics?

Not interested at all									Extremely interested	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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