

Advancing Democracy through Press Freedom in the Americas



A Project of the Inter-American Dialogue

Final Report

The Inter-American Dialogue

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Dialogue activities are directed to generating new policy ideas and practical proposals for action, and getting these ideas and proposals to government and private decision-makers in local, national, and international organizations. We also give diverse Latin American and Caribbean voices access to Washington policy discussions. Although based in Washington, the Dialogue conducts its work throughout the hemisphere, in close collaboration with institutions in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. A majority of our Board of Directors are from Latin American and Caribbean nations, as are more than half of the Dialogue's members and participants in our other leadership networks and task forces.

Since 1982—through successive Republican and Democratic administrations and many changes of leadership elsewhere in the hemisphere—the Dialogue has helped shape the agenda of issues and choices in inter-American relations. President Bill Clinton observed, “For 14 years the Inter-American Dialogue has played a leading role in framing the debate on issues that really matter to the people of our hemisphere.” President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil, a founding member of the Dialogue, stated that the Dialogue “has made a great contribution to the favorable atmosphere prevailing in hemisphere affairs at present.”

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November 2002

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Introduction

Throughout much of the Americas today, these are difficult, grim times. In recent years, democratic gains in a number of countries have stalled. These gains appeared in the early 1990s, after the turn from authoritarian, military regimes to civilian, constitutional governments, and with the end of the Cold War. There is broad agreement that regular elections at least provided the framework within which greater democratic freedoms could be fully exercised.

Expectations were especially high in those years regarding advances that could be made in press freedom. The right to express one's views is, after all, an essential ingredient in any society that claims to be democratic. Many hoped that the momentum generated by a more hospitable political context would eventually result in important changes in legislation, habits, and even attitudes that favor broader press freedoms—even beyond the gains that accompanied the lifting of censorship in most countries. Indeed, many anticipated a significantly more robust democratic setting, within which press freedoms would flourish.

By the end of the 1990s, however, it was clear that the expectations for improved democratic institutions and practice—as well as greater press freedoms—had not been fully met. Perhaps the expectations had been unrealistic in the first place. In any case, the progress report was, at best, uneven. To be sure, there were some important advances and reforms—among them, providing protection for vulnerable journalists working in dangerous situations, the development of non-governmental organizations designed to protect journalists, and legislation in some countries that successfully rolled back several of the contempt, as well as libel and slander laws that had been instituted by authoritarian governments. There is wide variation from country to country, and from issue to issue; generalizations should be made only with great caution. But by most measures, and in most places, the overall trend has been disappointing.

In January 2000, the Inter-American Dialogue, concerned about the continuing problems posed by restrictions on press freedoms throughout many countries in the Americas, launched a three-year project with the support of the McCormick Tribune Foundation. The project sought to generate a series of recommendations that would

“The right to express one’s views is an essential ingredient in any society that claims to be democratic.”

help advance press freedom in the Americas. By enhancing mechanisms of transparency and accountability, the suggested changes would, we hoped, help strengthen and enrich the overall quality of democracy. At a minimum, building such mechanisms and protections of press freedom would help halt continued decline in such a vital dimension of democracy.

The Dialogue decided to undertake a cumulative process—three meetings over the course of three years, with the final one taking place in Miami in April 2002—that brought together a diverse range of participants from throughout the Americas. Beyond assembling journalists, editors, publishers, academics, and non-governmental analysts and advocates, the initiative also placed high priority on engaging government officials—from the executive, judicial, and legislative branches—and representatives from the business community and private sector, on issues related to press freedom. Such a combination of participants was unusual, as these groups tend to discuss these matters, if at all, mainly with like-minded colleagues. Our belief was that this was the best way to generate recommendations that were both valuable and realistic, as well as to help mobilize a larger and broader constituency for press freedom in the Americas.

The seventy-six individuals listed at the end of this report participated in at least some phase of this cumulative process, and several took part in all three meetings. Their input was seriously considered in the elaboration of the following recommendations. This is not, however, a consensus report. Thus, the participants do not necessarily subscribe to these recommendations and certainly bear no responsibility for them.

Still, we are enormously grateful for their thoughtful and generous contributions to the various discussions on press freedom. We also thank the following participants for preparing background papers for the second meeting (which took place in January 2001). These papers offered more extensive analyses of some of the issues treated here.¹

“The Relationship between the Press and the Judiciary in Latin America”
by Ana Arana, Center of War, Peace and the News Media, New York University

“On Press-Judiciary Relations”
by Luis Pásara, University of Notre Dame

“Sentenced to Death”
by Ricardo Trotti, Inter American Press Association

¹ Please see the Appendix for excerpts from several of these papers. All are available in their entirety on the Inter-American Dialogue website, www.thedialogue.org.

“The Challenges of Investigative Journalism”
by Silvio Waisbord, Rutgers University

“The Challenges Democracy Created for Journalism Education in Latin America”
by Rosental Calmon Alves, University of Texas at Austin

Executive Summary

- I) Legal Enforcement and Reform—Contempt, as well as criminal libel and slander laws should be repealed. Even where they are not repealed, regarding public institutions as legitimate defendants under such laws goes against democratic values. In addition, governments should vigorously enforce laws aimed at bringing to justice those who murder, intimidate, and attack journalists. Many governments in the Americas are not doing so because of weak and ineffective justice systems, and often a lack of political will;
- II) Access to Information Laws—Without applying a single, one-size-fits-all model across the board, countries of the Americas should adopt access to information laws that meet a shared set of basic principles and that seek to apply such laws widely and judiciously. These principles include the right to appeal, the right to obtain information in a timely and affordable way, and protection of “whistleblowers”;
- III) Relations between Press and Judiciary—Judges and journalists should engage in dialogue to reduce the adversarial relationship that often exists between the groups, and to overcome the inadequate appreciation of and increase support for each one’s important contributions to the democratic process;
- IV) Role of Multilateral Organizations—Multilateral organizations should perform an enhanced and expanded role in promoting press freedom in the Americas. The Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Organization of American States (OAS) should receive increased political and financial support from member states to improve both its capacity to monitor problematic situations and to formulate policy ideas related to press freedom;
- V) Codes of Ethics and Journalism Training—Every media outlet should develop a code of ethics. These should emerge as a result of regular exchanges among owners, publishers,

“The OAS Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression should receive increased political and financial support.”

“International standards and norms should be applied to impel changes in domestic legislation.”

editors and reporters. Given the varied circumstances and features of media outlets, codes of ethics should not, however, be formalized into law, but rather viewed as shared goals. Moreover, there should be higher priority given to training of editors and journalists in the Americas. More education and increased compensation would contribute to greater professionalism. Governments should not legislate that a degree from a journalism school be a mandatory credential in order to practice journalism. Apart from the fact that high-quality education can take place in either journalism schools or general programs, insistence on such a degree is unnecessary and lends itself to a possible form of government control.

Policy Report

Legal Reform and Enforcement

Some laws in over a dozen Latin American countries should be repealed. The most important are *desacato* (laws of contempt) and criminal *calumnia e injuria* (libel and slander) laws that restrict speech deemed disrespectful of public officials. Such laws give government officials impunity, frequently invoking the protection of “public order” as justification. In democratic societies with a full range of legal guarantees, it is hard to defend the continued existence of such laws. In pursuit of this goal, international standards and norms, such as those expressed in the important 1994 Declaration of Chapultepec, should be more widely applied to impel important changes in domestic legislation.

In addition, perhaps of greatest concern are the continued attacks and threats directed against journalists in various parts of the hemisphere. These are reliably reported and documented by a variety of national and international organizations. The problem remains particularly serious in Colombia, but is also present in such countries as Mexico and Brazil. In most cases, the problem is the failure to apply and enforce laws already on the books to detain and prosecute those responsible. As with most violent crimes, the police and justice systems are often woefully deficient in performing their essential functions.

Governments across the hemisphere must give highest priority to enforcement of existing laws designed to punish those who attack journalists. In some instances, transferring such cases from local to federal jurisdiction may be warranted, since many crimes committed against journalists take place in the

interior of the country, where there is less protection and scrutiny, and fewer watchdog activities. Governmental authorities, along with non-governmental groups at both the national and international level, should make a strong, common effort to put an end to impunity—regardless of whether by design or incompetence—in these and all other violent crimes.

Special legislation to protect journalists would be politically difficult to achieve and is hard to justify on a variety of grounds. But in deciding on appropriate punishment for those responsible for violent crimes, the fact that the victims exercised freedom of expression—whether or not they were journalists—should be considered an “aggravating circumstance.” The point is that torture or murder of a journalist, or another individual who practices freedom of expression, is more than a personal crime. It is a crime against society, and a violation of the public’s right to know. It undermines democracy.

Access to Information Laws

A heartening development in the area of press freedom in the Americas has been the adoption of access to information laws in a number of countries. Mexico’s Law on Transparency and Access to Public Information, passed in April 2002, has received most attention, but there have also been noteworthy advances in other countries, including Jamaica, Paraguay, and Peru. The constituencies and coalitions that mobilized on behalf of such important legislation are contributing to the strengthening of democratic societies. They deserve broad support to expand their efforts.

There is no one-size-fits-all law for access to information. Such legislation varies, depending on particular situations. The U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which dates back to the 1960s, is tailored to conditions in the United States, and may not pertain fully to other countries in this hemisphere. Still, there are some key principles that should be contained in all access to information legislation that seeks to insure greater openness and accountability. Although not all information regarding sensitive national security questions and ongoing judicial procedures should be made fully accessible, it is crucial, for example, at least to have a clear definition of, and rules regulating, what constitutes “national security.”

Moreover, any access to information law should apply not only to the government and its agencies, but also to private sector institutions, especially those that produce public goods.

“The murder of a journalist is more than a personal crime.”

“A strained relationship often exists between journalists and judges.”

These include, for example, utilities, service companies, and also contracts awarded to consultants and independent entities by multilateral institutions. The right to appeal and the right to obtain public information in a timely and affordable way promotes effective compliance. Protection for “whistleblowers” needs to get high priority.

Special concern should also be given to the application and implementation of these laws. Many obstacles stand in the way of the efficient provision of the information requested. There are often bureaucratic difficulties. Access to information legislation should provide simple and effective procedures for appeal when the requested information is denied, or delayed. All actors in this effort should strive for maximum transparency.

Relations Between Press and Judiciary

One of the principal problems in advancing press freedom in the Americas is the strained relationship that often exists between journalists and judges. A relationship seen by both as adversarial hinders progress toward greater press freedom. There is a lack of communication, and an inadequate appreciation of each sector’s legitimate—indeed, critical—role in contributing to a vibrant democracy.

Journalists, for example, need to know and understand that while cases are in progress, judges are under preventative order not to speak. In the same way, it would be useful to hold meetings with select judges to review and clarify the investigative and reporting process that the media undertake in criminal cases. Reporters, media owners, business people, and judges should participate in such meetings.

Other ideas worth pursuing include training of both journalists and judges about national and international laws, which could help reduce tensions on various issues, including, for example, attacks on journalists. More general education of legal norms should be complemented by campaigns, focused on specific questions, such as the defamation of public officials.

Specific attention should be directed to the tricky question of the “parallel investigations” often carried out by the press and the judiciary in criminal cases. There is a tension or tradeoff between the right to legitimate information and the press pursuing its proper role on the one hand, and the potential problem of interference in a judicial investigation on the other. Though such a tension may always exist to some degree, both judges and journalists need to take important steps to more fully

Excerpt from On Press-Judiciary Relations

By Luis Pásara, University of Notre Dame

Is it possible to design a common ground between the press and the judiciary? If the freedoms and rights of one are limited by the freedoms and rights of the other, the healthy exercise of freedom of the press must recognize the limits of citizens’ rights. This concept was recognized by the International Commission of Jurists and the Spanish Committee of UNICEF at a meeting in Madrid in 1994, in a document known as The Principles of Madrid in reference to the Relationship between the Social Media and an Independent Judiciary. The text says:

“The media has the obligation to respect the rights of those individuals protected by the International Pact, and the independence of the Judiciary.” (International Commission of Jurists, *La Revista*, no. 52, 1994, p. 96)

The precept of protecting the individual is frequently ignored when the press reveals information which, besides violating privacy, often tramples on the presumption of innocence, not only violating the principles of modern judicial systems, but also causing irreparable damage to the individual’s image and honor. This occurs each time the image of a detained individual is disclosed when he is only a “suspect”, when a judge has not even dictated a detention order against him. Neither a relative adverb, nor the habitual conditional verb tense used in the text under the picture or the reporter’s off-screen voice, can minimize the damage caused to that detained individual who in reality was innocent.

Serious journalism has addressed some of these issues. For example, in relation to terrorism, after having experimented with manipulative kidnappers, the English BBC, the Spanish TVE and the big television chains of the United States have adopted the rule of refusing to transmit the kidnapper’s demands live. A few years ago, Colombian journalists also adopted an ethics code to deal with the issue of kidnappings, and in the same manner, the Peruvian press agreed on a set of rules for the handling of terrorism cases. But much is left to be done to create a respected code of journalistic conduct.

On the other hand, the judiciary also requires certain changes in its mode of operating. This call for reform is prompted by a characteristic particular to our judicial systems that runs contrary to the concerns and work of journalists: while one of the media’s central objectives is to obtain information, the predominant judicial tendency in Latin America seems to be to focus on denying it. Beyond the limits imposed by the secrecy of a penal investigation—established by law, but excessively utilized by judges, sometimes without justification—the judiciary tends to conduct its work out of public view, without ordinary citizens’ knowledge. Secrecy seems to be a characteristic feature of the judicial profession, even in those cases where there is no privacy to be protected. Unfortunately, this sometimes results in media representatives resorting to bribery in order to obtain the judicial information they need to do their work.

At the heart of this tendency common among Latin American judges, there is a belief that the justice they administer is an affair based on an intimate relationship between the law and their conscience. From this belief comes the idea that the judge does not owe society an explanation of the decisions that he renders, nor of the criteria he uses to reach his judgment. Some judges even state that they only answer to God and their conscience when it comes to their work. But God did not appoint them to their position; it was society that trusted them with this highest of responsibilities and, therefore, it is society that must evaluate their performance. A judiciary whose decisions are incomprehensible to society is an illegitimate institution. Public opinion demands that judges give reasons and explain their decisions in cases brought before them in a court of law.

appreciate each other's roles, reach a common understanding, and thereby reduce such tension.

Role of Multilateral Organizations

Press freedom is a fundamental concern for the entire hemisphere. The establishment of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1998 marked a major advance that formally acknowledged such a concern. Since that date, the Special Rapporteur has performed a valuable role in the Americas, monitoring situations where freedom of expression is a relevant public issue, and applying pressure to repeal certain laws such as *desacato*, as was done in Costa Rica in 2002. Moreover, in Peru in 2000, for example, the Office of the Special Rapporteur performed the role of an "early warning system" that was able to "raise the red flag" when freedom of expression was threatened in that country.

The Office of the Special Rapporteur, which is part of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and relies substantially on voluntary contributions from governments, should receive increased political and financial support from OAS member states, as well as from the private sector throughout the Americas. At present, its resources are woefully inadequate in relation to the enormity of the challenge. The possible erosion of press freedom should be regarded as an urgent priority for governments that have made impressive democratic advances and now face the real possibility of backsliding. The Special Rapporteur's office needs to fashion a strategy, both within the OAS and outside the organization, to further enhance its influence and raise its visibility. It should do so by mobilizing support among a wide array of key actors, in civil society, the government, and the private sector.

The role of other multilateral organizations in the area of press freedom—and of the overall condition of democracy in the Americas—deserves serious consideration. The feasibility of linking conditions of freedom of expression and, particularly, access to information laws and enforcement records with lending decisions made by such international financial institutions as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank should, for example, be explored. Such a shift is no doubt fraught with many difficulties, though engaging the attention of such institutions may help further raise the press freedom question on the wider, hemispheric agenda. In fact, it would be productive if there were a closer,

more systematic coordination between such multilateral institutions and other key players working on this question, including the Inter American Press Association.

Codes of Ethics and Journalism Training

Press freedom is closely bound with press responsibility. Journalistic ethics are crucial to include in any discussion of advancing democracy through press freedom.

For individual media companies and publications, codes of ethics should be promoted and developed by owners, publishers, editors, and reporters. Each company's own internal ethical standards are essential. It would not, however, be advisable to codify such ethical standards; this would be unnecessarily complicated, and hard to implement and enforce. Still, owners, publishers, editors, and reporters should strive to reach agreement on such a code, and should strictly adhere to it.

The deepening economic crisis bears on a variety of issues related to press freedom in the Americas. Its possible effect on ethical questions is particularly challenging and deserves attention. As owners need to maintain good relations with advertisers, the firewall between ethics and commercial interests could weaken. Economic difficulties can also lead journalists to seek other employment to complement their meager incomes. Some jobs, such as advisors or press secretaries, could test their objectivity in reporting.

The professionalization of editors and journalists in the Americas should be among the highest priorities to strengthen the fabric of democracy. Professionalization in this sense means higher levels of education and greater compensation. Training is also crucial, though this can take place through practicing the trade or through courses in journalism schools. Professionalization does not necessarily mean obtaining a degree in journalism. Governments in the Americas should recognize that, to practice journalism in accordance with the highest professional standards, such a degree is not necessary and in fact, requiring one by edict runs the risk of resulting in government control.

Concluding Thoughts

Taken together, these five areas of recommendations, if effectively implemented, would help extend and secure press freedoms throughout the Americas. Relevant governmental and non-governmental actors should commit themselves to: repealing contempt, and criminal libel and slander laws that have no

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"Owners, publishers, editors and reporters should strive to reach agreement on a code of ethics."

“The difficult times make the task of enhancing press freedoms even more urgent.”

place in fully democratic societies; adopting and implementing legislation that guarantees public access to information; promoting better relations between the press community and the judiciary; strengthening multilateral mechanisms concerned with press freedom, especially the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression; and, increasing greater professional standards, through opportunities for higher education and better pay, with more serious attention given to ethical dilemmas and concerns.

All of these recommendations depend on the will and commitment of many actors to give press freedom the high priority they deserve. Some may argue such an effort is unrealistic, given the wave of pessimism that today characterizes the political climate throughout much of the Americas. But the difficult times make the task of enhancing press freedoms even more urgent and compelling than it was before.

The Inter-American Dialogue’s three-year project has underlined how critically important the press freedom agenda is in the Americas. Its direct effects on strengthening democracy—improving transparency and accountability and keeping corruption in check—are not hard to see. Less direct, perhaps, but also of great importance are the positive, overall effects greater press freedoms would have on the region’s fragile social fabric and acute economic conditions. Such freedoms would, for example, tend to foster a more open business environment, increase confidence, and make foreign companies more inclined to invest. The access to and publication and distribution of credible economic information would also call immediate attention to serious problems and could help avert crises.

As we learned through this distinctive, cumulative process, a keen interest in press freedom questions extends considerably beyond the group of those who regularly practice journalism. Government officials and private sector representatives also share such a concern. That is why continually mobilizing such groups and sustaining efforts that bridge differences and seek common ground is a worthy enterprise, one that can significantly increase the chances of securing press freedoms, and advancing democracy, in the Americas.

Appendix I

Excerpts from Background Papers Commissioned for the Project

Excerpt from The Relationship between the Press and the Judiciary in Latin America

BY ANA ARANA, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Introduction

The transition from dictatorships to democracy that started in the 1980s in Latin America has transformed many aspects of life in the hemisphere. There are free elections in every country, except for Cuba. Trade has been liberalized. The executive and legislative branches of most regional governments are making attempts to be more open and responsive to the needs of their electorates. But Latin American judicial systems have seen little fundamental change. In many countries, to boot, the systems are highly compromised remnants of authoritarian regimes, leaving the press in the difficult situation of not only performing duties that should be performed by the judiciary, but facing the difficulty of attacking the same judicial system that is later responsible for investigating attacks against the press.

As the region enters a new millennium there is a need to revamp the relationship between the press and the judiciary. Some old assumptions need to change and a better working relationship needs to be cobbled. For one, the press has to move away from thinking that it is the only one that can complete an investigation, performing the duties of the investigator, prosecutor and judge in each new investigation. Even if a press investigation discovers a wrongdoing, it is not up to the journalists to complete the job of a functioning judiciary. A press investigation is not the same as a judicial investigation, cautions Jairo Lanao, of the Inter American Press Association’s Chapultepec Project, which is studying legal constraints against the press in Latin America.

Likewise, the judiciary has to learn to work with the press, providing access to reporters, in complete fulfillment of the rules of democratic functions. Only a well-informed electorate, privy to how the judicial system works through well-researched press accounts, would contribute to stronger democracies. Unfortunately, much of Latin America is still shackled with antiquated laws that block access to public court documents. “The idea of the *secreto de sumario* was that it would lead to accountability, but in most cases right now, it is used to protect well-connected guilty parties,” says Joanne Mariner, deputy director for the Americas at Human Rights Watch. These old codes need

“Traditionally, the Latin American judiciary has preferred to work behind closed doors.”

to be reformed in a collaborative effort between the press and the judiciary. Working laws that protect due process need to be designed. And both the press and the judiciary need to come up with a new and effective working order.

“It is the failure of other institutions that is forcing the press to function beyond its capacity and puts journalists in danger,” says Mariner. Lanao warns, however, that “journalists need to know that the press does not act in the same way as the courts.”

The IAPA’s Impunity Project has found that in the case of many murdered journalists, the victims were acting way beyond the duties ascribed to a functioning press in a working democracy. It was up to them to safeguard democratic principles and unearth wrongdoing, without the backing of a strong judiciary, and many times despite the obstacles posed by the same judiciary.

Improving relations between judges and journalists

At present there are several international organizations working to reform the judicial systems throughout the hemisphere, but none of these reform programs have taken into consideration the need to build up better relations between the press and the judiciary.

Opening court documents and providing better access for the press would lead to considerably better relations between both sectors. Also, promoting discussions between both sectors would be highly beneficial. While there is some interest in keeping the judiciary shrouded in mystery, there is a growing tendency in some countries in the region for the judiciary to open up. That tendency needs to be further explored, and promoted in all countries.

Traditionally, the Latin American judiciary has preferred to work behind closed doors, with no accountability to its citizens. In turn, journalists have wrongly assumed that their role is to protect democracy by doggedly seeking wrongdoing. This is a commendable enterprise and one that should be encouraged in newspapers, but without the assumption that only the press is able and willing to do it. The press can only point to the wrongdoing. The judiciary has to take on the legal investigation. The judiciary needs to understand the role of the press as an interlocutor before readers, citizens to whom the judiciary is ultimately responsible.

Once there is a working order, journalists would have to learn not to rely on leaks to obtain forbidden court documents, and to understand how some leaks violate the underpinnings of the rule of law and, in some extreme cases, endanger due process.

In order to improve current adversarial relations, the press would have to curb its desire to find explosive stories when these threaten due process.

There is a need for the judicial system and the press to work together. Rather than regarding the press as an enemy, court officials need to see the press as an education tool, which can help improve the system. Reporters also need to go beyond just reporting on wrongdoing and help explain how the legal system works or does not work. Judges and court officials need to be more open and explanatory about the judicial system. Reporters think attorneys do not want to talk because they do not want to relinquish their confidentiality—and court officials feel reporters do not do enough research on legal matters and will never understand the proclivities of the legal system.

Besides understanding the role each side plays and working in tandem to better access the court documents and information, there is a need to remove laws that criminalize speech and curtail freedom of the press.

More worrying is the fact that many countries have laws that restrict freedom of expression, including *desacato* laws, which penalize offensive declarations against public officials. In other countries, like Chile, members of the judiciary have used the system to intimidate journalists.

Investigating and prosecuting violence against journalists

Regional press freedom groups have played an important role in pressing for investigations of murders of journalists. But it is also important to raise local reporters’ interest in crimes committed against their own colleagues. Many reporters are quick to discount the need to investigate attacks against their colleagues and discard the possibility that crimes are in reprisal for the victims’ work. Constant oversight of the cases is important to ensure that they are completed. Thus, newspapers perhaps should consider setting up a beat that deals with investigations of attacks against the press.

Some countries have established special prosecutors for crimes against journalists. A case in point is Colombia, where the impunity rate in murder cases hovers at about 97 percent. The special prosecutor has had a positive impact, solving several cases of attacks against journalists.

“In Colombia the impunity rate in murder cases hovers at about 97 percent.”

“Rather than protecting freedom of the press, special courts have a chilling effect.”

Lifting criminal penalties for criticizing public officials

This threat against the press will only be lifted when criminal libel is eliminated and criticism of public officials is not penalized. Citizens who have felt wrongly attacked by the press should have recourse in civil courts. Laws protecting the press against reprisals for criticism of public officials are essential throughout the region. The public has the right to learn how its elected officials are performing or behaving. It is primarily here that vestiges of authoritarian regimes are found in the region—whereby governments forbid the press from writing about public officials, especially members of the judiciary. Offenses against public officials should not merit higher fines or stiffer penalties than those provided for any common citizen who has been wrongly attacked by the press.

Other ways used to control the press are the licensing of journalists, special press courts, the right to reply or rectification, and the designation of offenses committed by the press.

Professionalizing the Judiciary

Countries that have institutionalized or created judicial committees to oversee the hiring and promotion of judges have seen improved press freedoms. These special committees have brought more skilled personnel to the profession, and not individuals who are easily subjected to manipulation by other government officials. Even in Colombia, the existence of the Constitutional Court has protected human rights and a free press through a series of directives. Venezuela on the other hand, has a very politicized judiciary. The courts are controlled by whomever is in power.

Less politicized courts and the lifting of highly restrictive press laws will contribute to independent and fair court decisions on media cases. Constant oversight by local and international press watchdog groups is important, however. Regional journalists must also keep tabs on court decisions.

Some countries—including Bolivia, Guatemala, and Ecuador—have special press courts to handle cases involving the news media. Rather than protecting freedom of the press, however, these courts have a chilling effect on the media. There should not be any type of special justice system for journalists because it creates a window of opportunity to commit abuses. Likewise, those countries that have them should eliminate restrictive laws that increase the penalty when the crime is committed by the news media.

International mechanisms

The Inter-American Commission of Human Rights already functions as an international arbiter in cases involving the news media. Combined efforts by many international press freedom groups such as the Inter American Press Association (IAPA), the Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters sans Frontières and the Freedom Forum, plus regional press freedom groups, help keep the cases alive. International oversight is important to remind governments that certain abuses will not be tolerated by the international community. Efforts such as IAPA's Chapultepec project work because so few world leaders want to be left behind. Signing on to the Chapultepec Declaration provides another weapon to force rogue governments into line.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has sent a handful of cases to the Inter-American Human Rights Court. A case, however, must pass through a strict investigation and consultations with the government involved before the case is referred. This procedure should continue. IAPA has sixteen cases before the commission, which are undergoing lengthy investigations.

“International oversight reminds governments that certain abuses will not be tolerated.”

Excerpt from Sentenced To Death

BY RICARDO TROTTI, INTER-AMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION

“A free press is like a canary in a mine. Just as the canary’s death sends a signal that the miners are in danger, so the death of press freedom means that society is in danger.”

Anthony Lewis

In many Latin American countries, when a person decides to become a journalist he knows in advance that he is sentenced to death. In countries where the murder of and attacks on journalists are commonplace—such as Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala or Mexico—the executioners raise their axes both within institutions connected to the government or the military and within groups operating outside the law, which are made up of drug traffickers, guerrillas, paramilitaries or common criminals. Violence does not have a clearly identifiable face.

This new era is also characterized by the promotion of further restrictions aimed at intimidating the news media and individual journalists, who are repeatedly accused of being enemies of the institutional order, seeking to destabilize it.

Threats, kidnapping and the murder of journalists. Lack of respect for professional confidentiality, official obstacles to investigative reporting and making it obligatory to belong to a professional association in order to work as a journalist. Seizure and closure of media, excessive taxes and other financial punishment. New rules and regulations, government meddling, and assault by subversive groups. All these restrictions are part of an enormous panoply leveled menacingly at freedom of expression.

Violence is fed and nurtured by impunity, creating a vicious cycle that ensnares not only the original victim but the lives of many surrounding him. The murder of journalists is therefore the greatest concern and the major battle undertaken in the name of freedom of the press. In 1994, during the General Assembly of the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) in Toronto, Canada, the issue was already one of considerable concern. “In Guatemala, Mexico and Colombia the terrible message to enemies of democracy and freedom of expression is clear: One doesn’t have to go through the messy process of restrictive legislation and legal suits to intimidate or silence the press. A bullet is faster, cleaner and virtually immune from legal punishment.”

“The bloody conflict in Colombia is a source of continuing threats to journalists.”

For Danilo Arbilla, president of IAPA, “the murder of a journalist is an aggravated crime, because it not only takes the life of a person but also infringes the right of the rest of society to be informed and the right to freedom of expression.”

No recent political era in Latin America, of whatever stripe, has been exempt from attacks on the press. Previously, violence was unleashed by despotic and totalitarian governments. Today, amid democracy, it is more closely linked to terrorism, drug trafficking and official corruption.

During the dictatorships, journalists had no guarantees of freedom and generally had to work underground. Sources and interviewees could disappear at any moment. “There were three challenges—interview the source, survive in order to publish the report, and actually publish it,” says Carlos Wagner, special assignment reporter for the daily *Zero Hora* of Porto Alegre in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. He also noted, “the agencies of repression were very agile and communicated with each other,” as a result, they could act together and clamp down on the press.

In these past twelve years of renascent democracies, a total of 225 journalists have been murdered in the Americas. Meanwhile, at the time of the dictatorships in Argentina, ninety-three news men and women disappeared during the “dirty war.” In Guatemala, during that same time, the headquarters of the Association of Guatemalan Journalists “was used only to hold wakes,” a report by the organization said.

Currently, the bloody conflict in Colombia is a source of continuing threats to the media and individual journalists. The warring armed antagonists—guerrillas and paramilitaries—are those chiefly responsible for the violence. A survey carried out in mid-2000 by the University of la Sabana in Bogotá, showed that among fifty editors questioned, 25 percent of them had received threats. The editors blamed guerrillas, paramilitaries and drug traffickers, in that order, as being responsible for the threats.

Violence is also on the rise in Mexico. As in a number of other countries, failure to bring the guilty to justice is the norm.

In Cuba, the same hard-line control of the press continues, with the indiscriminate arrest of independent journalists and expulsion of foreign correspondents. Cuban reporters continue to face harassment, imprisonment, privation of correspondence and a ban on leaving the country. Many of them escape and seek asylum in neighboring nations. For many, this iron-fisted control or “psychological suffocation” and thus lack of a social role for the press means “there is no need” to actually kill the reporters.

The consequences of impunity

The consequences can be viewed from two angles. Professionally, there is the fear engendered by the impunity that leads to self-censorship, disinformation and news management. Journalists and their editors tend to seek to protect themselves, eschew stories that could create problems, and hold back on investigative reporting. Thus, a kind of less hard-hitting, more superficial journalism that fails to fulfill the watchdog role of the press is born.

Socially, impunity creates greater distrust of the authorities, institutions and democracy itself.

When a journalist is murdered it is natural for his colleagues to call on the politicians, police and judiciary to act to ensure their personal safety as they go about their work.

In Brazil, Colombia and Mexico such an option does not exist. Journalists there feel impotent, finding to their chagrin that they are unable to ask the police for protection because all too many police officers are themselves involved in the murders of news men and women.

Neither do journalists tend to seek protection under the law, because the judiciary is often suspected of collaboration with politicians. It may take years for justice to be done and when it is, those who actually commit a crime are punished while those who masterminded it are allowed to go free.

It is very rare for the guilty to be punished. Many governments will spend more time excusing their incompetence than conducting investigations. To justify foot-dragging, it is quite common for a smear campaign to be launched against the victim.

Noted Argentine writer Ernesto Sábato said that, “I have not the slightest doubt that without freedom of the press there can be no democracy. And if I regard it as ominous and unacceptable that a journalist be murdered for simply fulfilling his role of informing, I also regard it as morally and legally unacceptable that such a murder go unpunished.”

The imperative need to investigate

Investigating the murder of journalists is important as a first step to doing away with impunity. Probing the extent of the impunity serves, among other things, to call for action by the authorities, demand justice be done, prevent possible further murders, underscore the value of the life and work of journalists, provide closure for the victims’ relatives and, above all, make the public aware of the issue.

“Without freedom of the press there can be no democracy.”

Pressure tactics and solving the crimes

The 1997 Hemispheric Conference on Unpunished Crimes against Journalists in Guatemala City was an effective international response to impunity. The strategy was to formulate a series of requests to governments and inter-governmental agencies, as well as press organizations, to work together in the battle against impunity.

Some months later, a major step forward was taken. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), by unanimous vote of its 161 member states, adopted Resolution 120, which calls on governments to accept the principle of not setting a statute of limitations for crimes against a person when they are committed in order to prevent the exercise of freedom of information and of expression or when the objective is the obstruction of justice.

In addition, the Resolution calls for the refinement of legislation, so as to enable the trial and conviction of the intellectual authors of murders of those who are exercising the right to freedom of expression. The resolution also calls for those who are responsible for crimes against journalists or media, while in performance of their duties, to be tried in civil and/or regular court.

The conference also recommended other lines of action, including the creation of the Office of Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression within the Organization of American States. This recommendation bore fruit two years later.

Other recommendations are yet to be implemented. A joint effort among international press organizations is required to bring them to fruition. There needs to be an insistence on bringing about changes in the law so that crimes against journalists shall not be subject to any statute of limitations. It should also be ensured that criminal liability in many murder cases may be transferred to federal jurisdiction; that governments investigate who is behind a murder; that the laws governing states of emergency should not authorize curtailment of press freedom; that funding by multilateral agencies be conditional on full respect by recipient countries of freedom of the press; that legislation be enacted prohibiting defendants accused of crimes against journalists from being tried before military tribunals or special courts, and that interdisciplinary and international missions be coordinated to pressure governments for justice.

The defense and awareness of press freedom must also be bolstered by other mechanisms, such as getting communities as a whole involved at a national level, reaching out to students in the schools, and advocating higher quality reporting with regard to accuracy and ethics.

Excerpt from The Challenges of Investigative Journalism

SILVIO WAISBORD, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Investigative journalism has become ubiquitous in contemporary Latin America. Without exception, investigative journalism has recently gained strength in all countries. Relegated to partisan and marginal publications in the past, investigative journalism gained acceptance in the mainstream press in the 1980s and 1990s. Many reasons account for the affirmation of investigative journalism: the consolidation of democratic governments; transformations in media economics; the existence of publications committed to denouncing specific abuses; and confrontations between some news organizations and some administrations. Despite common characteristics, investigative journalism has experienced a seesaw evolution according to different domestic political developments as well as editorial and industrial changes in the news media in each country.

Investigative journalism reports information about abuses of public relevance that some individuals and organizations want to keep secret. Because all reporting is (or should be) essentially investigative, it is incorrect to define investigative journalism in terms of the use of certain newsgathering methods. What is distinctive about investigative journalism is that it publicizes information about wrongdoing that affects the public interest. To adopt this approach does not mean to underestimate the importance of methods used to denounce wrongdoing, but to emphasize that investigative methods are actually not unique to investigative journalism.

The main value of investigative journalism to democratic governance is that it contributes to increasing political accountability in Latin American democracies. This is particularly important considering that the weakness of accountability mechanisms has been identified as one of the most serious problems that the democracies in the region are confronting.

The contributions of investigative journalism can be understood along the lines of the “Fourth Estate” model of the press, according to which the press should make government accountable by publishing information about public affairs that is of public interest. From this perspective, investigative journalism is one of the most important contributions of the press to democracy. It is linked to the logic of checks and balances in democratic systems; it provides a valuable mechanism for monitoring the performance of democratic institutions. The idea of “Fourth Estate” needs to be taken critically as it proposes the idea of a fully independent press that keeps government at a distance. The

“Press freedom remains an ambiguous concept.”

reality of investigative journalism is different, however: it is a complex network of relationships between news organizations and government offices. Political and economic issues, as well as continuous information exchange, articulate multi-layered relations between the news media and government. There is no need to have a press as a whole committed to scrutinizing government action for investigative journalism to exist; even partial divisions and confrontations in those relations make it possible.

Press freedom and investigative journalism

Is investigative journalism the by-product of democratic consolidation? Democracies make investigative journalism possible by offering institutional conditions that allow for increasing press freedom, but the return of democracy per se does not necessarily trigger press denunciations. There is a close relationship between press freedom and investigative journalism. To put it simply, investigative journalism requires the existence of legal, political and economic conditions that guarantee minimal autonomy for news organizations and journalists.

Press freedom is, by no means, a univocal concept. Notwithstanding its uncontested status as the bedrock of the press in democracy, it remains an ambiguous concept. Press freedom is easier to define negatively than positively. Press freedom *is not* government censorship, gag laws, violence against reporters, or official meddling in newsrooms. In the Western tradition, press freedom is commonly associated with the absence of government intervention. Press freedom requires a set of institutions and laws that allow the press to keep government at arm's length. Besides this, there is little consensus on the meaning of press freedom and its impact on investigative journalism. Should burdensome taxes on news organizations be considered indicators of the presence or absence of press freedom? What about editorial decisions to kill stories? Advertising pressures? Political lobbying of journalists? Answers are wide-ranging on whether press freedom includes anything beyond formal and legal mechanisms through which governments intervene in the workings of the press.

Identifying press freedom with the existence of an independent press does not get us much further. Press independence is commonly associated with the existence of news organizations that are independent from the government and political organizations. This idea, however, contradicts the reality of news organizations interwoven with political and economic powers, a

point that numerous studies of journalism have extensively documented. News production results from interwoven political, economic, and cultural networks and from multileveled relationships between reporters and sources. This reality makes press independence difficult, if not impossible. Instead, we can understand press freedom as a set of conditions anchored in a set of laws and practices that strengthen the autonomy of news organizations and reporters.

Constraints on investigative journalism

Investigative journalism faces external and internal constraints. Both sets of constraints affect the practices and the subjects that journalism investigates. Ideally, a journalism that investigates a variety of issues and produces in-depth, factual stories is desirable to contribute to the formation of an informed citizenry, public dialogue, and democratic accountability.

External constraints refer to limitations on investigative work that exist outside newsrooms and affect investigative journalism. They are legal, political and economic.

Legal constraints

With the consolidation of democracy, formal censorship has been eliminated but a number of legal constraints continue to make investigative journalism difficult. Democratic constitutions are crucial but insufficient to support investigative journalism.

First, the absence of public access laws in some countries limits the work of investigative reporters. Although the majority of countries have the right to petition, government offices lack resources to attend to demands, and laws are rarely enforced. Observers have concluded that despite in-the-book laws, there is no effective access to public information. Laws have been passed but have not substantially changed reporting practices.

Second, only a few countries have laws granting journalists the right to professional secrecy. In the absence of such laws, journalists may be coerced to reveal sources in court. Among the many arguments that have been offered for why such legislation is indispensable for journalism, two are particularly relevant for investigative journalism. The right to professional secrecy gives credibility to journalists vis-à-vis their sources (lack of legal assurance discourages sources from providing information), and gives the press special protection that it needs in order to contribute to the public good.

Third, “right to reply” laws have also been the subject of con-

“Formal censorship has been eliminated but legal constraints continue.”

“Despite laws, there is no effective access to public information.”

trovsky and remain a major obstacle for investigative journalism. Virtually all Latin American countries have such laws. Publishers and journalists have criticized them on the grounds that they allow officials to meddle into the affairs and decisions of private companies, and also discourage the publishing of controversial information.

Fourth, the attempts of several civilian administrations to push “gag laws” have also been at the center of heated debates. Although many governments have not been successful in building congressional support for their approval, those initiatives patently revealed the intention to muffle investigative journalism with legislation that harshly punishes news organizations and reporters.

Fifth, insult laws also impair the work of investigative reporters. The goal of these laws is to punish the publication of information about private lives. A number of recent high profile cases that pitted government officials against journalists attest to the importance of such laws in contemporary investigative journalism. By failing to discriminate between private citizens and public officials, those laws allow officials to claim protection as citizens.

Sixth, contempt laws also make investigative journalism difficult because they give government officials the right to sue journalists for criminal charges. Because they contemplate stiff prison sentences and monetary damages, they also discourage the publication of denunciations.

Besides laws, persistent difficulties for the existence of an independent judiciary in Latin America also remain as key obstacles for investigative journalism. Experiences in other regions of the world, most notably in the United States, attest to the fact that judicial decisions in favor of the press were fundamental for investigative journalism. Court decisions that prioritized freedom of information proved to be crucial vis-a-vis the intentions of individuals and institutions to suppress press revelations.

Political constraints

The persistence of the laws previously mentioned can be taken as a sign of a generalized attitude among government officials about investigative journalism and the press in general. Strengthening press freedom is, for the most part, of little concern for politicians. Investigative journalism is believed to be a personal nuisance, not a necessity for democratic governance. In any region of the world, investigative journalism always faces political obstacles. Pressures on news organizations and on

reporters that publicize wrongdoing are common everywhere. Individuals who have been accused of wrongdoing typically resort to both subtle and open methods to suppress stories, lobby publishers and editors, and intimidate reporters.

In Latin America, the persistent belief among government officials that bullying news organizations that denounce wrongdoing is an accepted way of doing politics greatly damages investigative journalism. Among politicians, the idea that news organizations are little more than transmission belts of official information is still pervasive. Intimidating and punishing critical journalism have long been common practices. Cutting down or suspending government advertising, ordering investigations into accounting books, threatening to affect various economic interests of media companies, and shutting off information sources, have been some of the typical mechanisms through which officials penalize critical journalists and news organizations. As long as these practices remain accepted as part of *quid pro quo* relations between government and the press, investigative journalism will continue to face constraints.

Moreover, despite the consolidation of democracy in the region, authoritarianism remains a crucial obstacle for investigative journalism in some countries. In Peru, for example, although many laws theoretically support investigative reporting, the authoritarian position of the Fujimori administration regarding press issues had been one of the most fundamental adversaries for investigative journalism. Government and intelligence officials were responsible for nurturing a climate of intimidation and persecution. Certainly, investigative journalism managed to survive. It produced a number of exposes that had tremendous impact, but at a great cost for news organizations and reporters who denounced abuses.

Violence also puts constraints on investigative journalism. In countries such as Colombia and in parts of Brazil, Mexico and Peru, widespread violence has been one of the main obstacles for investigative journalism. Data on threats and murders indicate a clear pattern: it has been in those countries, particularly in rural areas, where the majority of fatal attacks have taken place. Paramilitary organizations, guerrilla groups, drug traffickers, and local politicians have been responsible for violence. Moreover, impunity not only fails to put a stop to this situation, but, arguably, it also breeds further violence.

“Investigative journalism is believed to be a personal nuisance.”

Economic constraints

Studies have indicated that only news organizations that are economically independent from governments are in a good situation to practice investigative journalism. It is inconceivable that organizations that rely on government advertising can denounce the hand that feeds them. The advertising weight of governments, particularly in countries with small advertising markets, has historically deterred news organizations from investigative journalism. Plenty of examples illustrate this old pattern in which governments respond to press criticisms by threatening or actually stopping official advertising, which in most cases is vital to the economic health of news organizations. Consequently, it has been argued that only market-strong news companies can truly support investigative journalism.

Recent experiences in Latin America suggest that this argument is partially correct. Certainly, some news organizations with a solid economic base have produced a number of exposes on a variety of subjects. Some of them are divisions of large, advertising-rich media companies, and have little to fear in terms of the economic consequences of investigating officials who have little or no control over advertising budgets. Privatization of formerly state-owned companies arguably has even further decreased the advertising power of officials, thus opening better conditions for investigative journalism.

The economic reality of investigative journalism, however, is more complex than what this argument suggests. First, publications with little economic muscle have also practiced investigative journalism. For them, it has brought negative economic results. Some advertisers decided to withdraw advertising monies from such publications for two reasons: they fear that advertising in muckraking publications would endanger their relations with powerful officials, and believe that those publications offer a controversial environment for their business. Second, investigative journalism can step on many political toes and, consequently, hurt the economics of news organizations. Attracting a great deal of commercial advertising can potentially offer a solid base to create distance from governments, but it often means that investigative reporters can uncover wrongdoing as long as they do not affect advertisers and the interests of their employers. The fact that many news organizations are currently divisions of large businesses with vast economic interests means that investigative journalism faces limitations in investigating some subjects (particularly economic and financial issues).

In addition to external constraints, some internal limitations on investigative journalism need to be briefly mentioned. One of the most important internal constraints is the ambiguous commitment of news organizations to investigative journalism. Ambiguity is reflected in the scarcity of resources allocated to investigative journalism and constant editorial pressures on journalists. First, quality, in-depth investigative journalism requires human and monetary resources that media companies are rarely willing to assign. Much of investigative journalism has actually been the product of the initiative of reporters with little or no support from their employers. Investigative reporters often have to battle against sources, legal problems, and editors and executives who are reluctant to assign human and monetary resources to follow stories. This means that journalists are frequently expected to produce stories quickly and cheaply. Under these circumstances, the quality of investigative reports suffers.

Second, the lack of newsroom autonomy is also detrimental to investigative journalism. Fears that reports may irritate publishers and board members drive reporters to self-censorship. In situations when unemployment is high among journalists, self-censorship becomes a survival mechanism to maintain job security. Unless they get editorial support, journalists have few incentives to risk their jobs in uncovering wrongdoing.

Corruption in journalism also limits investigative journalism. It is difficult to estimate the extent of corruption. Newsroom grapevine is full of rumors about stories that were killed in return for monies and other favors.

Expanding and improving the quality of investigative journalism

The expansion of investigative journalism is vital for improving the quality of Latin American democracies. If the press fails to gain support, the press gives up one of its key functions in democracy. Investigative journalism is particularly necessary considering the weakness of accountability mechanisms, and the centrality of the media to contemporary politics.

The persistence of a number of political and socio-economic problems in the region requires the actions of diverse organizations, including the press. The press can make very important contributions by presenting information about those problems, highlighting issues that need attention, providing forums for debate, and inviting solutions. These actions require a press that actively identifies areas that require public attention instead of a

“Lack of newsroom autonomy is detrimental to investigative journalism.”

“Investigative journalism is vital for democracy.”

press that passively relays information produced by governments and other sources.

Future actions should aim to facilitate the work of investigative reporters. Programs need to work towards training reporters as well as mitigating or removing conditions that suppress and limit investigative journalism. The goal should be, then, the creation and maintenance of conditions for the consolidation of a journalism that responsibly uncovers wrongdoing in diverse social areas.

In summary, future activities should focus on several external and internal constraints that make investigative journalism difficult. Different actors should be invited to participate in meetings, identify problems, and discuss solutions. If the emphasis is only on training reporters, broader changes are unlikely to happen. Little would be achieved if activities only focus on providing learning opportunities for reporters who are likely to continue facing the same problems inside and outside newsrooms. Solutions to legal, economic and political problems require participation from different national and regional actors, and the commitment of governments and news organizations.

Excerpt from
The Challenges Democracy Created for Journalism Education in Latin America

BY ROSENAL CALMON ALVES, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Journalists and media organizations recently started to face new kinds of ethical and professional dilemmas, including deciphering the role journalism should play in a democratic society. The political and economic environment of the region is more complex than ever, demanding higher levels of training and expertise from journalists. Rapid technological changes in industry, demand for higher quality journalism and greater competition are among the factors that have already pushed some media companies to prioritize the establishment of training programs for journalists. However, even those companies rarely, if ever, attempt to establish strategic alliances with local universities with decades-old journalism programs. In fact, the old antagonism between journalists and schools of journalism is still alive and well in Latin America.

Antagonism between industry and academia is a vicious cycle. The industry criticizes the university and the university criticizes the industry, while both find ways to ignore the situation. Scholars say the divisions are not a problem, arguing that distance between academia and the working press is healthy, since the role of academia in society goes far beyond serving the industry with qualified and skilled workers. They appear to enjoy this “critical distance,” not realizing the downside: that they are too removed from the practical problems of journalism. As a consequence, they immerse themselves in abstract theories, disconnected from reality, which allows them to ignore the genuine concerns of the practice of journalism. In the name of this specialization in mass communications science, universities are sacrificing the minimum journalism skills that students need to become successful professionals.

Forming part of the vicious circle, the industry’s antagonism towards communication and journalism schools also works against its own interests. It contributes to worsen the already poor quality of journalism education. Consequentially, some media companies feel obliged to devise their own methods for re-educating journalists who have just received degrees. By distancing themselves from the universities, the industry misses a vital opportunity to tap into the academic resources that could help them cope with the uncertainties created by today’s rapid political, economic and technological changes. Democracy has

made Latin American societies much more complex, and a strategic alliance between the media and academia could facilitate the journalistic endeavor of explaining that complexity.

The quality of journalism and journalism education would benefit if the vicious cycle was broken and replaced by a virtuous cycle of dialogue, cooperation and synergy between both sides, all within a framework of independence and mutual respect. There is nothing wrong with the science of mass communication. On the contrary, today it may be more important than ever. Mass communication and journalism are separate disciplines, but with obvious interconnections. A journalism curriculum must balance theory and skills. This is one of the most important goals for journalism education in Latin America.

Appendix II

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Advancing Democracy through Press Freedom in the Americas

A Project of the Inter-American Dialogue: 2000 to 2002

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