



# Press Freedom and Poverty Alleviation Indicators

*Some results from a research project between UNESCO and the  
Center for Peace and Human Security - Sciences-Po, Paris*

*1<sup>st</sup> of May, 2006 - Colombo, Sri Lanka*

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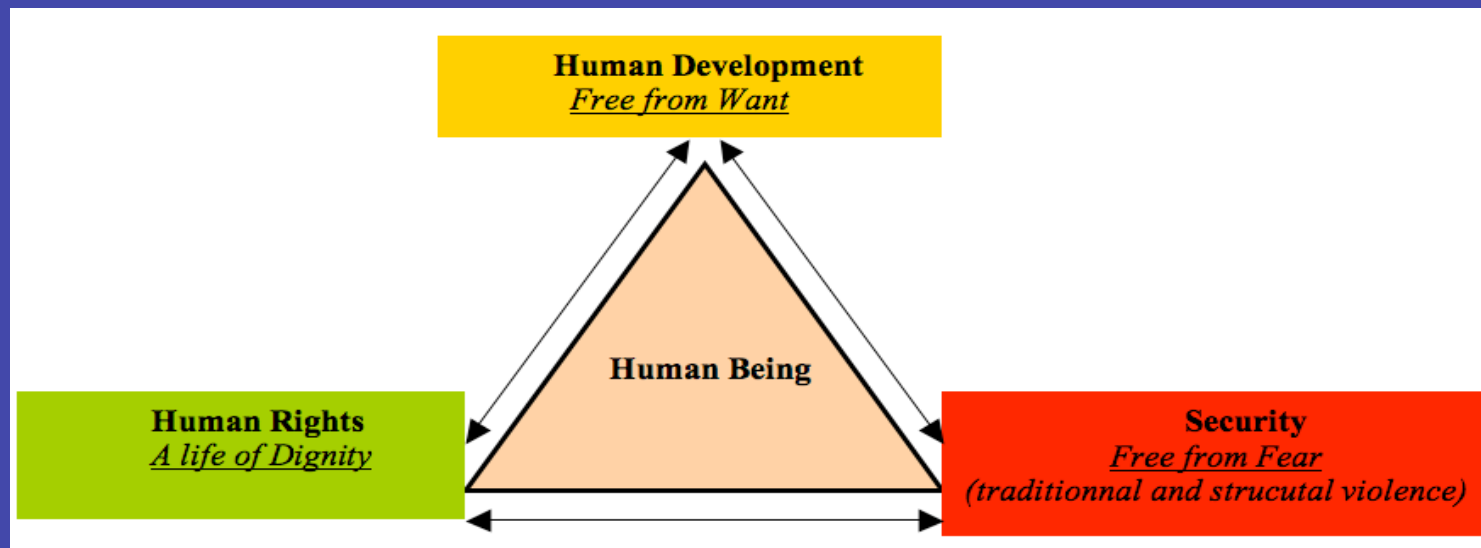


## Purposes of the Project

- Identify links and correlations between press freedom and human development
- Started in January 2006 - Relatively new results established by a team of 5 master students at Sciences-Po (Institute of Political Studies)
- This presentation: an extract of the main results - with a special focus on poverty

# Broad Human Development Approach

Human Being is at the core of the system

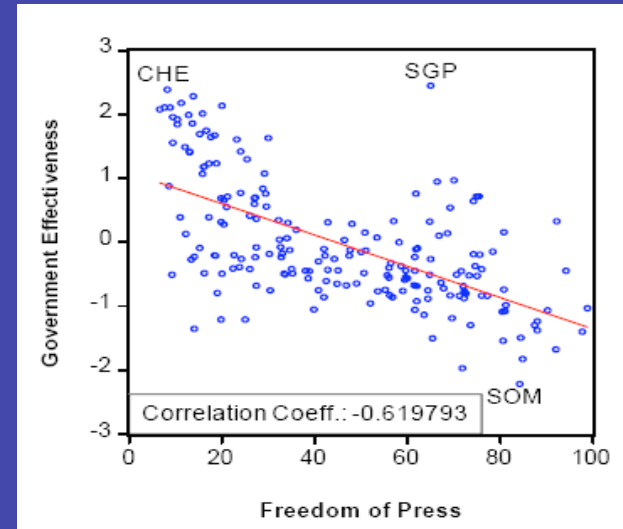
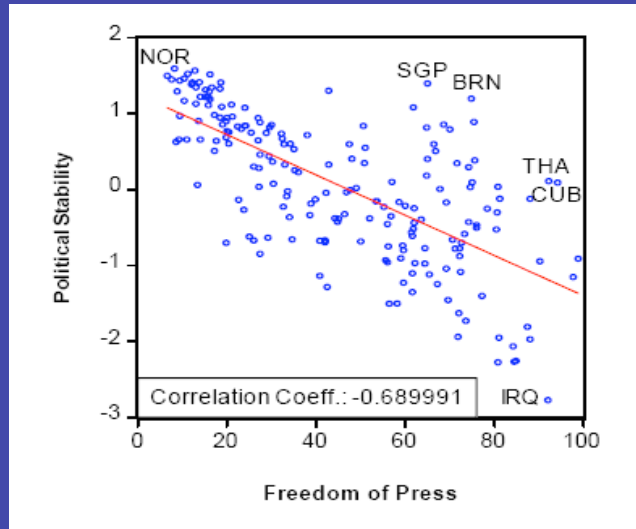


Each dimension can be assessed through various indicators  
Here we focus on the last two dimensions - directly linked to poverty

# Methodology

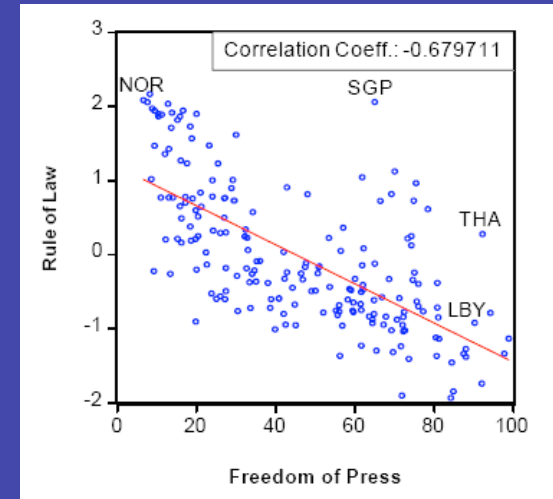
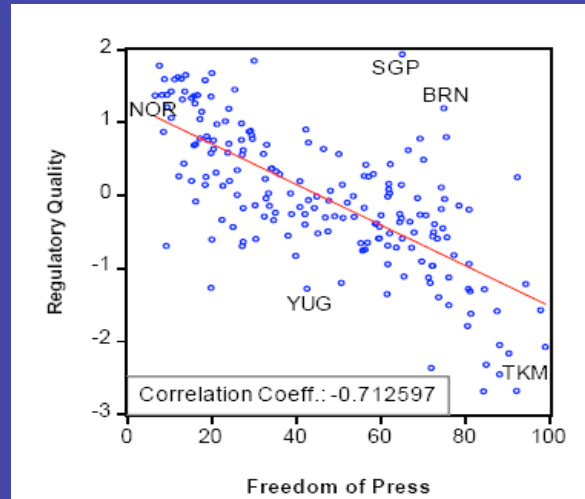
- Freedom House Indicators of Press Freedom (FOP) in 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2004
- Indicators of Governance - World Bank (1996-2004)
- Indicators of Deprivation - Various sources such as UNDP (MDGs), World Development Indicators, UNESCO (ISU)
  
- Simple Econometrics: look at the correlation coefficient between FOP and each of these indicators + estimation of the regression line.
- Correlation coefficient measures the intensity of the linear relation between the variables + scatter-grams with the regression line  
 $Y = a \text{ FOP} + b$  where “a” is the estimated effect of FOP on indicator Y.
- $R^2$  is the determination coefficient - n% of Y variations are explained by FOP
- *Attention: we look at the linear correlation, not at the causality! Y and FOP can be well correlated but nothing says if Y plays on FOP or FOP on Y or if another variable plays on Y and FOP*

# Governance



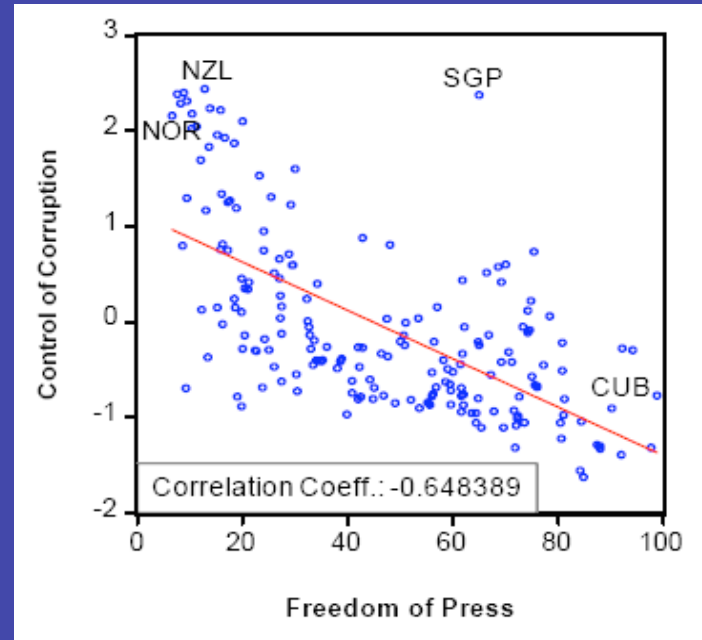
- Very significant results and high correlation coefficients
- Political Stability is positively correlated to FOP - if people have a free press, they have a possibility to debate in a non violent way and thus governments have a good tool to manage eventual social tensions (civic forum function)
- Government effectiveness and FOP are also strongly correlated - FOP is a tool for the population to assess and judge public policies and services (agenda and policy makers' dimension)

# Governance



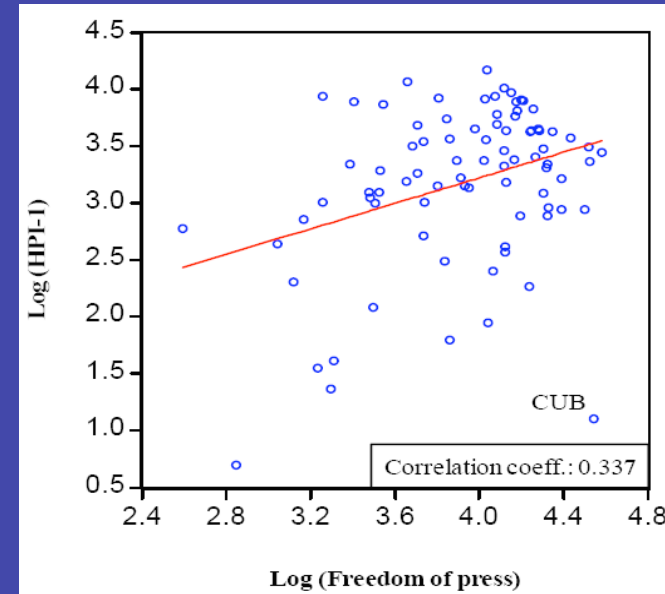
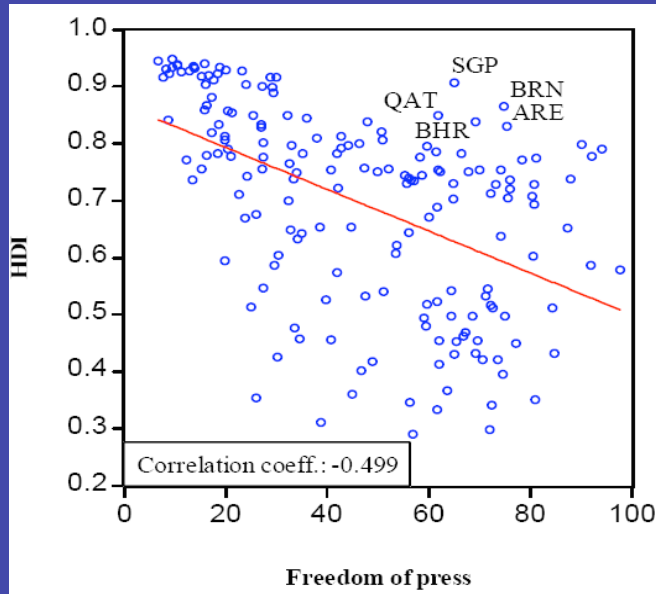
- Significant results and good correlation coefficients
- A good economic environment is strongly correlated to FOP: rules and reliability of the system are watched true the press
- The rule of law is also positively related to FOP: respect and application of the law, assessed through the press, are a guarantee of good governance

# Corruption



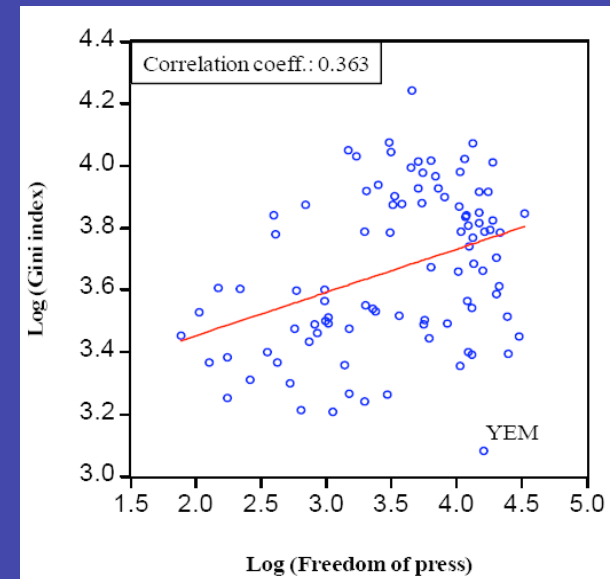
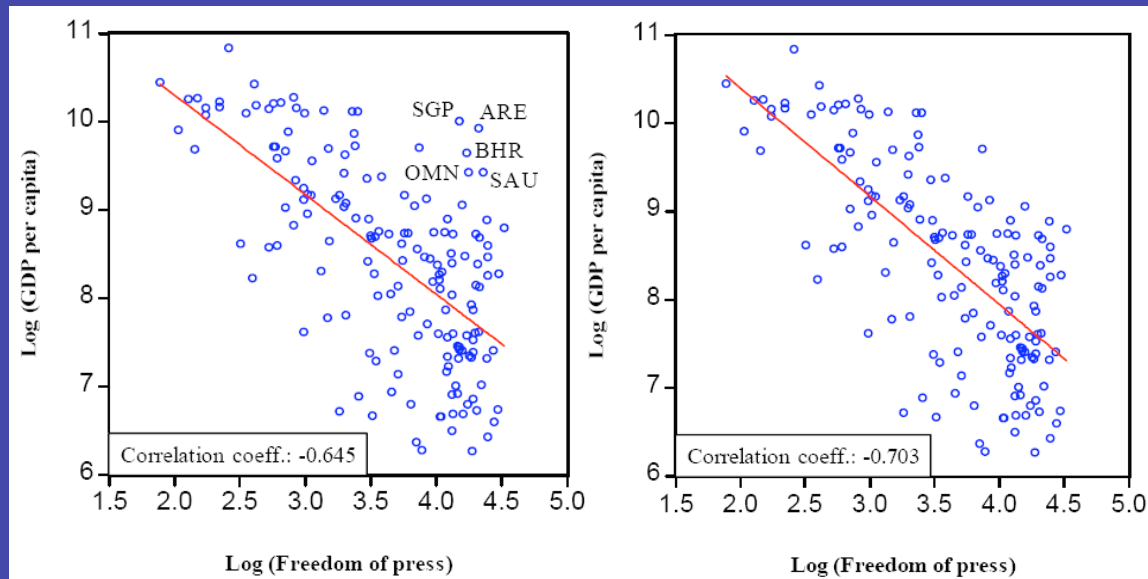
- Significant and strong results
- Watchdog function of the press is again proved here - also shows that state censorship and the use of the press as a way to reinforce the power of autocratic regimes still exist

# HDI, HPI-1 and FOP



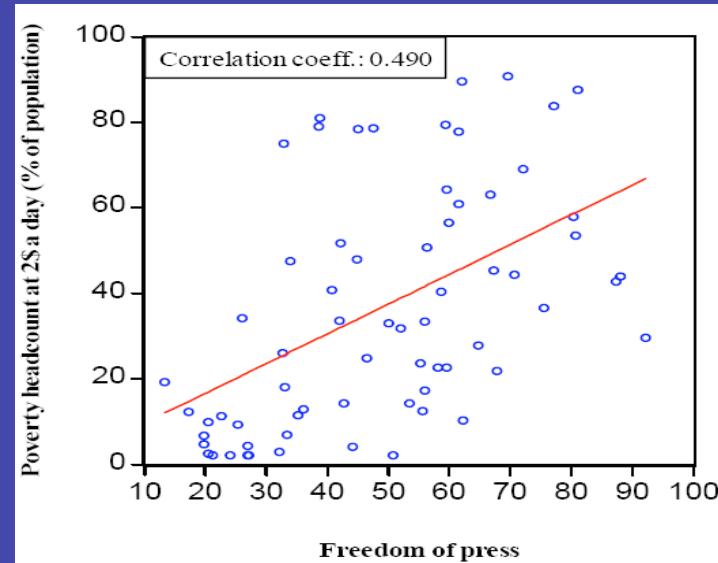
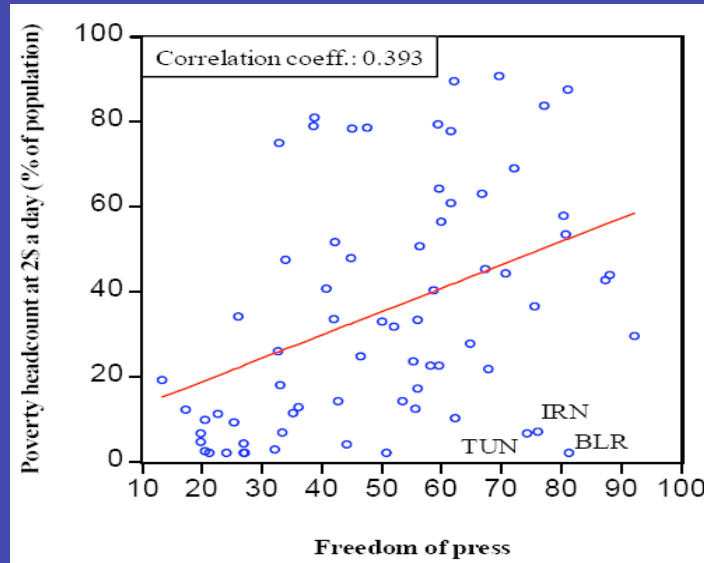
- Significant results and good correlation coefficients
- FOP and human development are well correlated: when HDI is over 0,8 FOP is very good (indicator < 20)
- HPI and FOP are clearly linked as the majority of countries are situated in the top right hand corner
- $R^2$  are weak, further explanations are needed to go over this broad picture

# Income per capita, Gini index and FOP



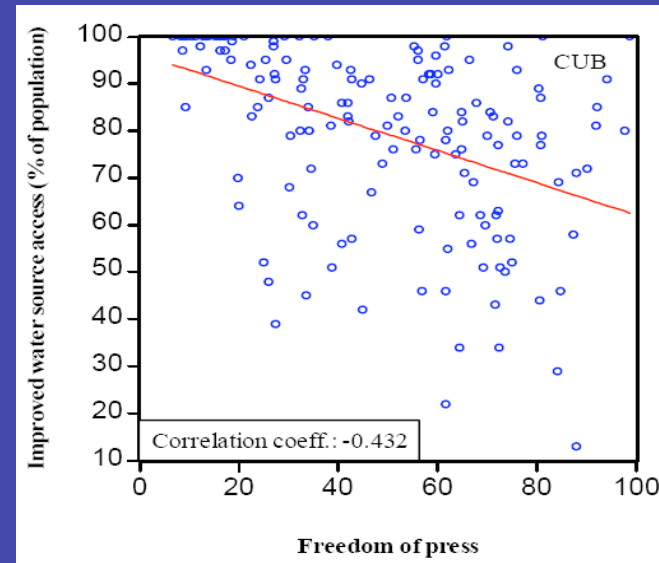
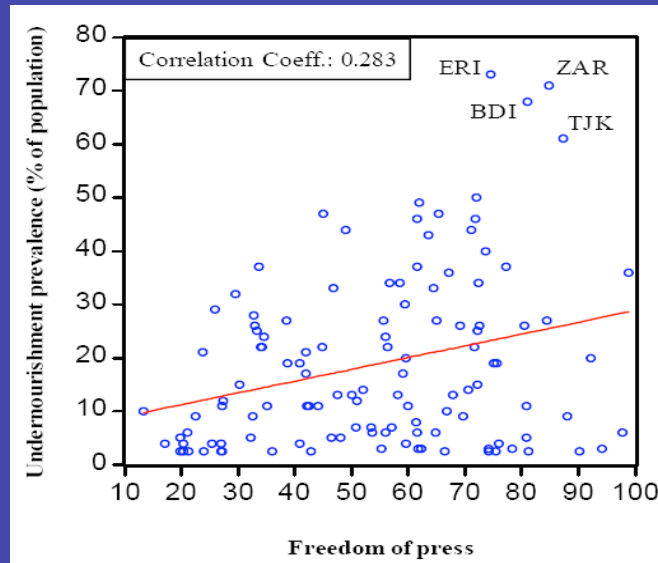
- The correlation is very high between logged GDP per capita and FOP - confirming Pippa Norris' findings (top right hand corner)
- By showing how unequal are the situations between human being, the press, if free, can reduce their influence
- Exceptions also show that economic development and FOP do not always go along together

# Poverty Headcount ratio and FOP



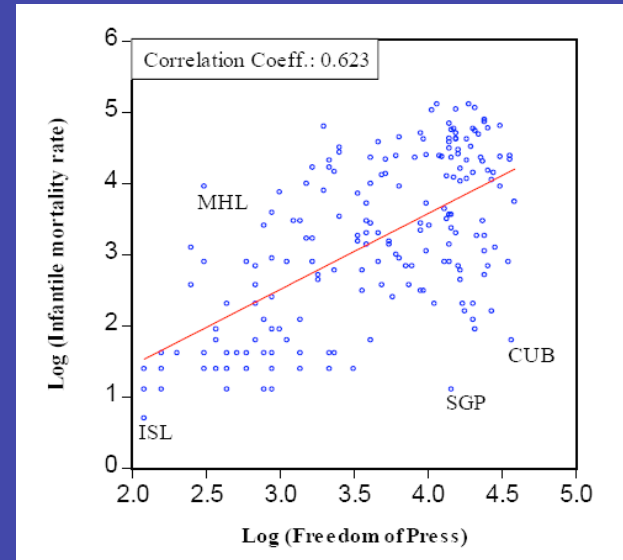
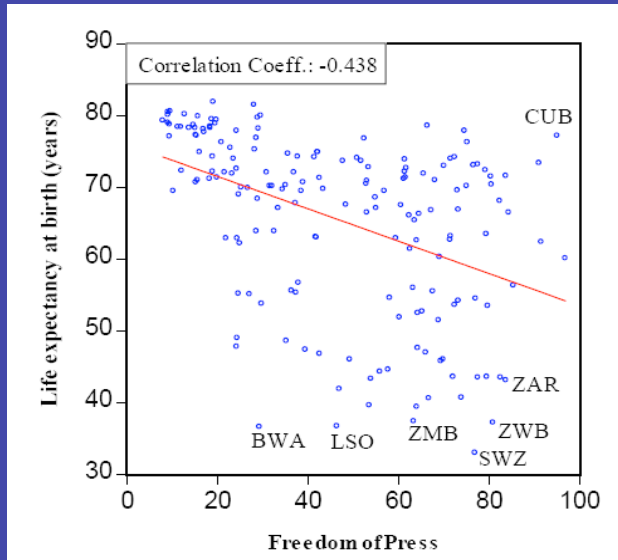
- The threshold of 1\$ a day is interesting but less concluding than the threshold at 2\$ a day. FOP can difficultly exist in situation of extreme poverty
- The freer the press, the more the percentage of people living under the poverty line is shrinking. Without outliers countries, the correlation coefficient is even bigger
- R2 are weak: FOP can help reduce the amount of economically poor people but it does not explain poverty in its totality

# Undernourishment, Access to clean Water and FOP



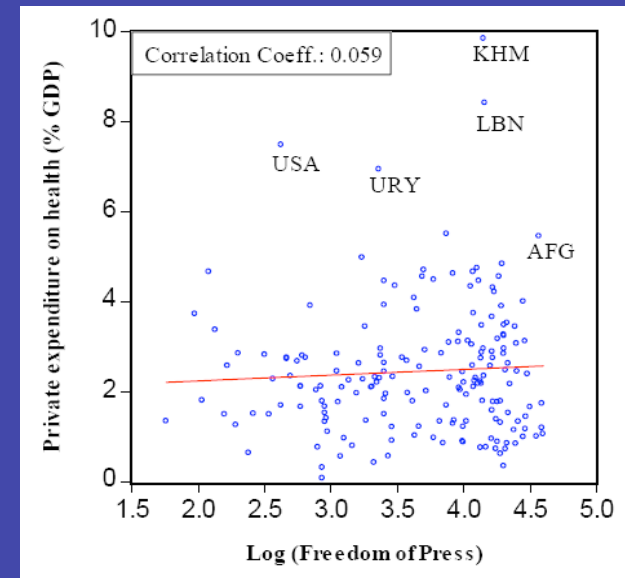
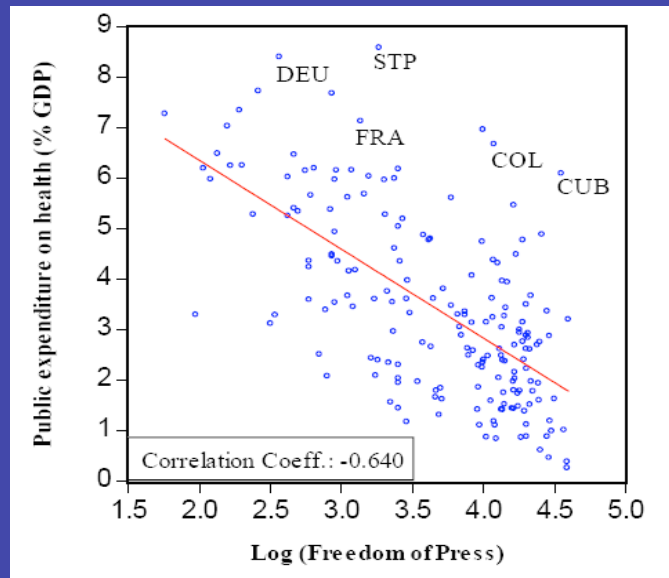
- Significant results and good correlation coeff.
- Undernourishment: no country in the top left hand corner - FOP is a guarantee against malnutrition and famine (cf. Sen's theory: no famine in democratic countries)
- Access to clean water: bottom left hand corner - same observation
- To be noticed: some countries have good access to primary resources but no FOP (or reduced FOP) - when access to resources is ensured, nothing guarantees that the press is free

# Life expectancy, infant mortality rate, FOP



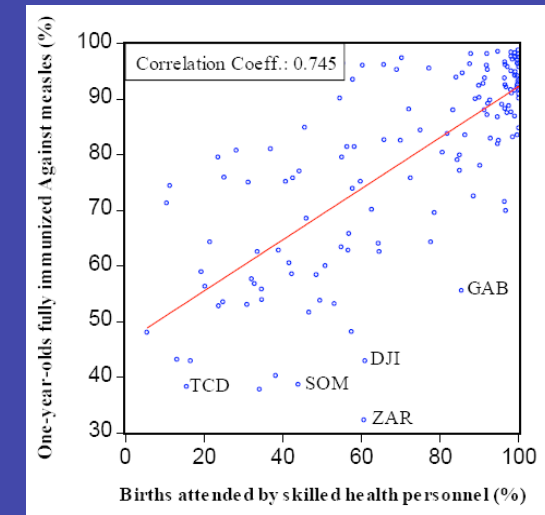
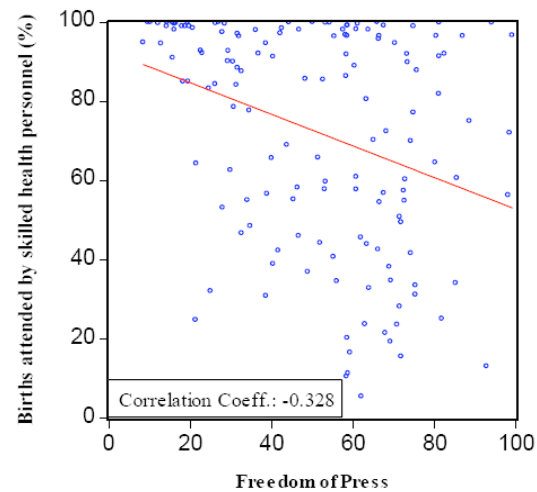
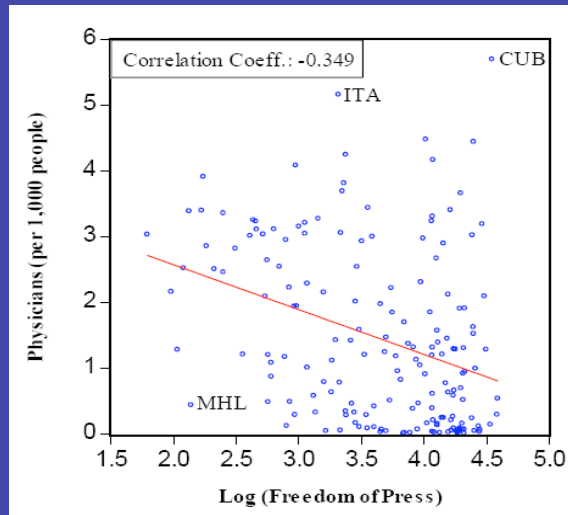
- These two correlations are reflecting the reverse relation between the two variables: the better the FOP, the weaker is the infant mortality and the better is the life expectancy at birth. These results suggest that FOP has a positive impact of the health situation of a country
- The press has a crucial role on a country's health situation: a free press can help fight some diseases and denounce early some constraints on people's life

# Health Expenditure



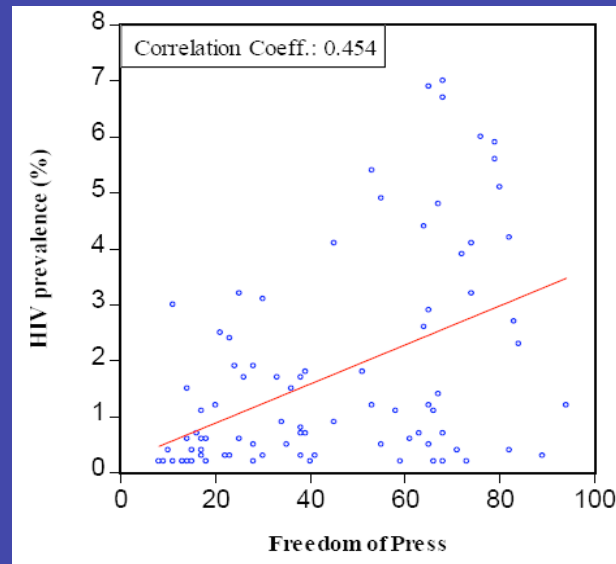
- Correlation is very significant and positive concerning public expenditures, but really not interesting when looking at private expenditures on health.
- When FOP does not exist, press cannot play any role on health: it does not serve public needs and public policies are lacking information on the real state of health in the country at stake. Freedom of press is good in promoting the fundamental right to which every human being should have access: access to health.

# Medical Personnel, vaccination vs. FOP



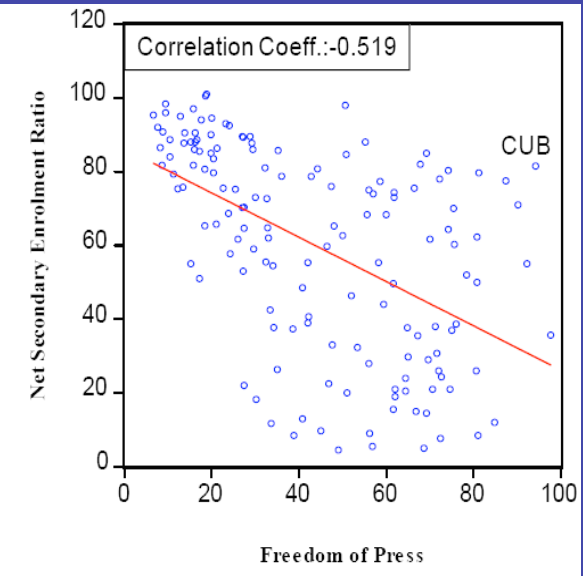
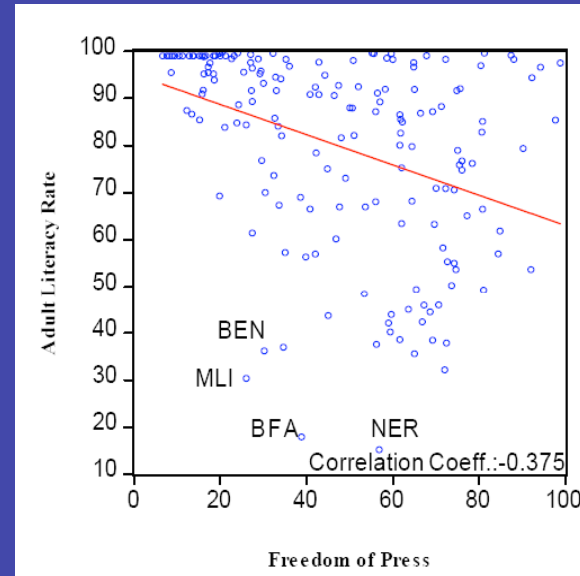
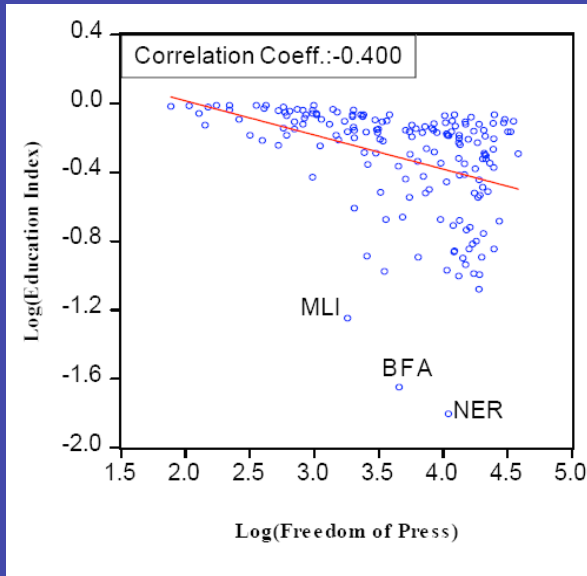
- FOP helps insisting on the fact that some countries lack medical assistance and personnel
- Determination coefficients ( $R^2$ ) are not that high in these regressions: some other variables such as education must have a stronger effect on the number of physicians, and then on the number of children that are vaccinated
- Still, the results are that FOP plays positively on medical personnel

# AIDS and FOP



- When considering all the countries affected by HIV, the correlation is very weak. But when dividing these countries in three subgroups, the results are much more interesting: in countries where HIV prevalence is situated between 0.1% and 8%, the correlation coefficient is very strong.
- For the other groups, it is difficult to conclude as countries having a prevalence inferior to 0.1% either have a free press or do not have any. The same is true for country having a prevalence rate superior to 8%.

# Education



- Correlation coefficients are significant and positive: education is essential to development and FOP - the relation is twofold: education plays more on FOP than FOP does on education
- Adult literacy rate is well correlated with FOP but results have to be interpreted carefully: this indicator is too simplistic as it only divides the population in literate and illiterate people and some people are often ashamed to say they are not literate.
- Primary and secondary enrolment ratios are interesting too, though the correlation is better with secondary enrollment ratio

# Conclusions

- FOP is strongly associated to good governance but also with a good level of development and a reduced poverty. Access to primary goods and better nutrition also coexists with a good FOP. However, some countries, even if they reach some decent standards of living, still do not have a free press.
- FOP is well associated with decent medical environment: where medical staff is missing, a free press can help spreading the word about it, and thus help improve the situation.
- FOP and education have a double relationship: education seems to play more on FOP than FOP does on education. But of course, people do care of their education when they are free from fear and free from basic needs, from want. This means that in under-developed countries, to exist first, and become free secondly, press needs some educated people who use their capacities to help their counterparts reaching some other freedoms.
- A free press is not a luxury good only available to developed country or rich country: the proof is that some rich countries do not necessary have a free press! Press is a tool for development as effective as investment or education.

# Further Research

- The causality question cannot find any resolution in this approach. Without press freedom, the development of a country, and what's more the development of individuals, can only be restricted in their freedoms.
- Media access should have been used to obtain stronger correlations. However, comparisons show that the conclusions obtained are quite close. Beside, media diffusion can only be ensured if infrastructures are available, as well as economic resources to get this access.
- Some control variables should be brought into the regressions
- Go further in the studies of some countries such as Cuba and Singapore and see if they can, by their peculiar situation, explain a part of the nexus.
- Add some correlation on gender equalities as women, especially in the poorest countries, are a key to development: with a better education, they can improve their contraception, they can organize themselves to ask for more health services, etc.
- Look at correlation by year and compare the evolution of each of them in the time: some evolution could tell a lot on the mechanism existing between press freedom and poverty alleviation, press freedom and human security.
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