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Global Index of Bribery for News Coverage

Dean Kruckeberg, Katerina Tsetsura and Frank Ovaitt¹

At a time when the accuracy and reliability of the media have come under intense scrutiny around the world, the International Public Relations Association and the Institute for Public Relations in the United States has developed a comprehensive index that ranks 66 nations according to the likelihood that print journalists will seek or accept cash for news coverage from government officials, businesses or other news sources.

While bribery is also known to occur with broadcast and other types of media, the researchers confined their focus to print media to ensure a common frame of reference. The researchers suspect that each country's numerical score and ranking for daily consumer newspapers is very similar for other news media, but this was not measured because of the range of possible media programming formats, for example, print magazines, free-circulation 'shopper' newspapers, websites, radio and television.

The index provides a numeric-value score and ranking of 66 countries. The countries were selected primarily for their global economic and political importance and - to some extent - the availability of reliable data for variables in the index.

Because of the virtual impossibility of measuring the phenomenon of cash being paid for news coverage through direct observation, the researchers employed a composite index methodology. They sought a surrogate set of measures that would be predictive and correlated, but not necessarily causative. A critical challenge was how to select these factors.

To solve this problem, an email survey instrument was used to seek the collective expertise of two worldwide groups affected by bribery for news coverage. These were the International Public Relations Association's board and council; and the International Press Institute's board, national committee members and fellows. Representing public relations practitioners and journalists respectively, the worldwide leadership of these two institutions were asked for their expert views on the relevance of potential index factor they were asked what are the leading factors that they - through their observation as years of experience - believe correlate with the phenomenon of 'cash for news coverage This approach is somewhat analogous to a physician who is unable to examine a patie directly, and who instead asks questions about factors that point to the probability a specific disease by isolating and identifying those variables that are believed to correlated with the presence of the illness.

The researchers thereby selected eight variables for which objective data available. The data on each factor was numerically scored on a scale from 0 (light to a high likelihood of bribery) to 5 (low likelihood), and the eight scores were

averaged in order to generate a rank order of the 66 countries. The variables, and the

- length of tradition of self-determination by citizens (derived from the CIA World Factbook 2001, with scoring according to the number of years)
- perception of comprehensive corruption laws with effective enforcement (as measured by TI's 2001 Corruption Perceptions Index)
- accountability of government to citizens at all levels (involving evaluation of government type, legal system, suffrage and elections, as reported by the CIA
- adult literacy (as reported by UNESCO's Institute for Statistics database)
- liberal and professional education of practising journalists (scored according to the reports in the World Press Encyclopedia: A Survey of Press Systems Worldwide,
- the existence of well-established, publicised and enforceable codes of professional ethics for journalists (derived from the International Journalism Network)
- free press, free speech and free flow of information (taken from Freedom House's
- media competition (gathered from World of Information Business Intelligence Reports 2001 or Walden country reports, and from Editor & Publisher International Yearbook: The Encyclopedia of the Newspaper Industry 2002).

The study did not attempt to justify or explain the specific impact of any single variable. It is possible, for instance, that a low score on 'free press, free speech and free flow f information' might in some instances indicate the extent to which journalists are ntimidated by governments, rather than the extent to which journalists are bribed. The dudy simply measured those variables that experts believe to be positively correlated

as shown in Table 16.1, of the 66 countries in the study, bribery of the media is most ely to occur in China, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Pakistan. By contrast, se countries with the best ratings for avoiding such practices are Finland (first place); Denmark, New Zealand and Switzerland (tied for second place).

complete study and a detailed description of the methodology is available at www. tuteforpr.com/international.phtml?article_id=bribery_index

an Kruckeberg is a professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the versity of Northern Iowa (contact: kruckeberg@uni.edu). Dr Katerina Tsetsura is an stant professor in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the versity of Oklahoma (contact: tsetsura@ou.edu). Frank Ovaitt is President and Chief utive Officer of the Institute for Public Relations (contact: iprceo@jou.ufl.edu).

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-	Self-determin	ation Perception law	s Accountab	oility Literacy P	rofessional ed	ucation Ethics cod	es Free pres	s Competition	n Mean s
Finland	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4.88
Denmark	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	
New Zealand	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4.75
Switzerland	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.75
Germany	5	3	5	5	5	5	5		4.75
Iceland	5	5	5	5	3	4		4	4.63
UK	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.63
Norway	5	4	5	Miss, data	4		4	5	4.63
Austria	5	3	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.57
Canada	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	4.5
Netherlands	5	4	5	5		5	4	3	4.5
Sweden	5	4	5		5	5	5	2	4.5
Belgium	5	2	5	5	5	3	5	4	4.5
USA	5	3		5	5	5	5	4	4.5
Australia	5		5	5	5	5	4	4	4.5
		4	5	5	3	5	5	3	4.38
Ireland	5	3	5	5	5	3	4	2	4
Israel	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	4
Italy	5	1	5	5	5	5	4	2	4
Spain	4	2	4	5	4	5	4	3	3.88
Cyprus	4	Miss. data	3	5	3	3	4	5	3.86
France	5	2	5	5	4	4	4	1	
Portugal	4	2	4	5	3	4	3		3.75
Chile	3	3	3	5	3			5	3.75
Greece	4	0	4			4	4	4	3.63
Estonia	3	1	3	5 5	4	3	4	5	3.63
Japan	4	3 .			3	4	4	5	3.5
Bosnia & Herz	3	Miss. data	4	5	3	4	4	1	3.5
Brazil			3	5	2	5	2	Miss. data	3.33
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a. Some data are missing ('Miss. data') because they were not available from the standardised sources. The researchers eliminated the categories for these variables in determining the mean scores for those countries for which such data were not available.