

Censorship as a Determinant of Professional Journalistic Practices in the Cameroon Context

Nengieh Lizzie Wantchami

University of Buea, Cameroon

Kingsley Lyonga Ngange

University of Buea, Cameroon

Victor Cheo

University of Buea, Cameroon

Nana Célestin

Foundation of Applied Statistics and
Data Management (FASTDAM), Buea, Cameroon

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to assess the relationship between censorship and professionalism in the Cameroon media landscape. It employs a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design using, specifically, the concurrent-nested mixed method approach. A total of 270 journalists were interviewed from five of the 10 regions of Cameroon, covering the geographical diversity of the country with another purposive dimension of the sample targeting buoyant regions. These regions were Northwest, Southwest, Littoral, Centre and North and a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of open and close ended questions was used for data collection. The journalists were conveniently sampled and data was collected in their media houses. Quantitative data were processed using Epidata 3.1 and analysed with the support of SPSS 21.0. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was very satisfactory, with a value ranging 0.815 to 0.972. This therefore, implies that the internal consistency assumption was not violated, that items on the questionnaire were understood and answered to a satisfactory level of objectivity. Major findings revealed that there was somehow no relationship between professionalism and censorship ($R=0.026$; $P=0.676$). This implies that censorship is more content-related and action is triggered only when journalists deviate from the established or expected norms.

Keywords: Journalist, journalism, information, Cameroon, control, censorship, professionalism, democracy.

INTRODUCTION

Press freedom remains a measure through which a country's democracy can be ascertain. Cameroon press freedom has been variedly described, proportionately reflective of the governing regime and the country's historical, economic, cultural and socio-political stability. The high rate of political instability characterized by conflicts in the two Anglophone (English-

speaking) and Northern regions of the country has placed journalists in an arena where professionalism is not only questioned but new antiterrorism law (2014) that could limit press freedom enacted. More so, although freedom of expression, speech, information as well as association is guaranteed by the constitution and law, the watchdog functions of the media, essentially to inform and educate the government and citizenry, have been frustrated because security officials eager to obtain information, harass journalist and at times imprison them as accomplices of activists. Journalists access to official sources is virtually limited to state-owned media and most private media are not economically viable enough to sustain professionalism. Journalists now resort to corrupt practices primarily due to low wages. This study therefore, seeks to appraise journalists' perception of censorship in the Cameroon press in the midst of the challenging legal, cultural, economic and socio-political environment.

The relationship amongst democracy, the media and journalism can be described as a social contract (Locke, 1988; Kieran, 2000; McQuail, 1992; Stromback, 2004). According to this view, media and journalism require democracy as it is the only form of government that respects freedom of speech, expression and information, and the independence of media from the state. By respecting and protecting these necessary freedoms, democracy fulfils its part of the social contract with the media and journalism (Stromback, 2005). At the same time, democracy requires a system for the flow of information, for public discussion and for a watchdog function independent of the state. This is where media in general and journalism in particular enter the picture. In theory, the media fulfil their part of the social contract by providing citizens with the information they need in order to be free and self-governing, the government with the information it needs in order to make decisions in the common interest sensitive to public sentiments, an arena for public discussion, and by acting as a watchdog against abuse of power in politics and other parts of society (Stromback, 2005). Media, however, perform other functions like entertainment, advertisement and education (McQuail, 1994; Dominick 1994, Severin & Tankard, 1997). Democracy and journalism have a win-win relationship. Carey (1999, p.51) says, "without journalism there is no democracy, but without democracy there is no journalism either." Problems arise when democratic rights are not respected. In such a system, the media perish and journalists suffer to get accurate information needed to enhance democracy. On the other hand, when journalistic values and ethics are not respected in a medium where unprofessionalism flourishes, the media perishes and subjects itself to scrutiny.

Journalists' assessment of press freedom in Cameroon is essential as many questions arise in the practice of journalism in the state. Press freedom encompasses not only freedom of expression, freedom of information, commercial freedom but freedom from government control. According to Eribo (1997), the concept of press freedom abhors government control, censorship, interference, and under democratic regulations aimed at abridging the freedom of opinion, expression, and transmission of information or ideas through the mass media and other channels of communication. Asante (1997) similarly cites censorship, physical harassment, threat of lawsuits, press and journalist licensing requirements, appointments and dismissal of editors, government rewards and incentives, the practice of withholding newsprint allocations, quantitative decreases in the of advertisement support, and self-censorship as methods to quell press freedom. Kelley and Donway (1990) also believe that free press means performing the function of watchdog, preventing the state from aggrandise and abusing the rights of its citizens. The cultural and political environment of a society controls the media (Ashante, 1997) since the media do not exist in a vacuum. However, Rozumilowicz (2002)

argues that a non-monopolisation from any group (the government, market, or elite) is the key to a free and independent media. He claims that free and true media can be achieved only if the fundamental domains of society (legal, institutional, economic, and social-cultural) support the structure of demonopolisation of media sources. Ashante (1997) asserts that no country in the world has an absolute freedom of the press, which suggests that different countries possess different degrees of the freedom, Cameroon is no exception. The definition of press freedom varies for each country, society, culture, and people. This simple fact illustrates the difficulty of defining the freedom of the press in universal terms (Holtz-Bacha, 2004). Whatever the case, Cameroon has continually been ranked poorly under the World Press Freedom index with press freedom on progressive decline across the years from 2018 to 2021. Cameroon was ranked 135th out of 180th position in 2021, 134th out of 180 in 2020, 131th in 2019, 129th out of 180 in 2018, 130th out of 180 countries in the World press freedom index compiled by Reporters Without Borders in 2017. Cameroon lost 4 places from the 2016 classification in which she occupied the 126th spot in the world (rsf.org>ranking>2017; <http://apanews.net/en/news/cameroon-ranks-130th-in-world-press-freedom-index>, <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>).

UNESCO has argued that the construction of a modern media environment capable of supporting democracy and good governance may require a proactive role by the state – in providing infrastructure, funding a public broadcaster, and ensuring the right kind of regulatory environment (Puddephatt, 2011). Norris and Zinnbauer (2002) argue that independent journalism, as a potential check on the abuse of power, is a necessary but not sufficient means of strengthening good governance and promoting human development. They suggest that these goals are achieved most effectively under two further conditions. Firstly, in societies where channels of mass communications are free and independent of established interests; and secondly, where there is widespread access to these media. Both of these may require some action by the state.

Journalists' Assessment of Censorship on the Cameroon Press

Information coup through censorship is the first line of action against an imminent threat to a governmental power, such as in a revolt or rebellion. The press plays a crucial role in any conflict, it is also the first victim of war (Newth, 2010; Soengas, 2013). To maintain public ignorance during a rebellion or conflict, the press is censored through tactics such as suppressing reporters and closing or taking over the news outlet (Abbassi and Al-Sharqi, 2015). Abbassi & Al-Sharqi (2015) conducted a study entitled 'Media Censorship: Freedom Versus Responsibility'. The authors first of all clarified that media censorship is a global phenomenon that has foreshadowed information outlets for centuries. They explained that a common ground for censorship is the maintenance of an orderly state, whereas, the underlying motive is to keep public ignorant of the information that can potentially threaten authorities. The authors explained that the worldwide Internet connectivity in the contemporary era allows information to pass through, within and beyond borders in minimal time; therefore, an increasing number of media consumers depend on the internet for a wide variety of information. According to the authors, historically, the access to news has not been this easy; the press in most of Europe in the 18th century was under the draconian reins of censorship, which gradually abated by the 19th century due to public demand. The authors were of the vision that autocratic and heavily centralised governments still openly or subtly employ censorship as a tool to silence government opposition. The authors explained that to combat information coup, tech-savvy

journalists and independent reporters channel information through social media, blogs, and news websites. The governments survive by using stringent internet surveillance apparatus that effectively block websites and subtly filter information; hence only selective news is allowed to penetrate the firewall. The authors revealed that the governments also hunt down citizens and journalists accessing disallowed websites to create a ubiquitous atmosphere of fear, harassment, and persecution.

Ndongmo (2021) laments that while many countries have laws aimed at preventing online crime and terrorism; what was significant about the cybercrime and cybersecurity law in Cameroon of 2010 was that users of social media could be punished with fines (from five million to ten million francs CFA) or imprisonment (from six months to two years) or both fine and imprisonment (Section 78(1), Law No 2010/ 012 of 21 December 2010) if they shared information that could not be verified or attest to its veracity. This according to her, places local citizens at a disadvantaged as they may be forced to accept government accounts of events or to face legal punishments for disseminating information from other sources. Also, the Government controls the internet like the shutdown of internet in 2017 into 2018 has been political with justification to prevent dissemination of misleading or harmful information as well as the government at times 'throttled' internet access by deliberately reducing band width (Netblocks, 2018).

Pechulano (2017) appraised the impact of the government concealing information on the practice of journalism with particular reference on Anglophone Cameroonian journalists. This study seeks to understand how a press freedom-related issue such governmental controls of governmental information affect journalism practice and made use of a survey of 172 practicing Anglophone Cameroonian journalists from private and state media, and in-depth interviews. Interviewees were heads of journalism unions/associations, a media regulatory agency (the National Communication Council), and media owners, publishers, and editors. Journalists reveal that low salary 70.9% (122) strongly impedes the practice of journalism profession followed by lack of access to information 67.4% (116) and lack of finances to sustain media institutions 57% (98) with the least impediment to professional practice being lack of necessary technology 29.7% (51). This implies economic factors greatly impede the practice of journalism profession in Cameroon. lack of press freedom/government censorship 52.9% (91), no freedom to information laws 48.3% (83) and inadequate training 39% (69) were also mentioned as factors that impede journalism practice. Also, findings show that the Cameroon government hoards information more from the private media 29(42%) than the public media 11 (20%). Results also show that the government uses a combination of legislative and administrative practices mostly through sanctions from the media regulatory body and police harassment to effectively enforce and monitor control of information. Barriers to accessing government information according to degree of influence were found to be: long wait times during appointments with officials, unending referrals to bosses/superiors, delaying press conferences until state media are present, and delaying replies to requests for information, among others. This study argues that coupled with legislative and administrative practices, these barriers lead to imbalanced reporting and ethical compromise. While governmental control of information was sometimes explained by lack of training and unprofessionalism, the practices stifle the development of responsible journalism, shrinking audiences and creating widespread cynicism about local journalistic ethics. The cynicism can also be explained by the fact that some reporters have been known to accept bribes from government officials and

agencies, and rich business owners in exchange for not running scandal stories. This practice has been named "gombo journalism" in Cameroon.

Bakata, Ngange, Assala and Nnode (2023) carried out a study on governmental information hoarding and its effects on journalism practice. The study, like Pechulano (2017), examined the extent to which government news sources in Cameroon hoard information and how it affects journalism practice. The agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and gatekeeping (Lewin, 1947) theories were used to understand and explain the problem. 170 journalists selected based on their experiences in working for news sources were surveyed in Buea, Limbe, Douala, Yaounde, Bamenda and Garoua. In order to understand the government sources that have a higher tendency to hoard information from journalists and those that are more likely to collaborate with journalists in the information-sharing process; findings reveal that out of the 17 sources examined in government regarding accessibility to information, mayors are the most accessible (57.6%) while journalists rarely get information from the presidency (50.6%). Generally, a significant relationship ($p=0.000$) exists between access to government news and journalism practice. The authors affirmed that lack of information access promotes unprofessionalism in practice (biased reporting, sensationalism, armchair journalism, fake news) and recommended that government news sources be more accessible to journalists.

Yuyu and Yang (2018) investigated the impact of media censorship from evidence obtained from a field experiment in China. Media censorship is a hallmark of authoritarian regimes the authors insisted. The authors employed an experimental design whereby the access treatment provides students with a free 18-month subscription to a censorship circumvention tool. The tool establishes a fast and stable connection to the Internet unrestricted by the Great Firewall, and enables students to access websites that are otherwise blocked. The tool does not affect connections to websites that are not blocked by the Great Firewall. The authors conducted this field experiment in China to measure the effects of providing citizens with access to an uncensored Internet. The authors then tracked subjects' media consumption, beliefs regarding the media, economic beliefs, political attitudes, and behaviours over 18 months. The authors unfold four main results: (i) free access alone does not induce subjects to acquire politically sensitive information; (ii) temporary encouragement leads to a persistent increase in acquisition, indicating that demand is not permanently low; (iii) acquisition brings broad, substantial, and persistent changes to knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and intended behaviours; and (iv) social transmission of information is statistically significant but small in magnitude. The authors then calibrated a simple model to show that the combination of low demand for uncensored information and the moderate social transmission means China's censorship apparatus may remain robust to a large number of citizens receiving access to an uncensored Internet. Olshevskaya (2013) equally emphasised government censorship over the internet in Russia.

Apuke (2016) and Akinwale (2010) highlight the fact that there are a lot of factors in Nigeria that hinder press freedom ranging from secrecy, legal pressure, direct censorship, force, government refusal of Freedom of Information Bill (FIB), owner's influence, funding/low remuneration, self-censorship, harassment and lack of professionalism/corruption. Jefferson was an avid supporter of a free press, however, he also pointed that "... the press is impotent when it abandons itself to falsehood..." (p. 368). Forcha and Ngange (2022) carried out a study on Beyond Public and Private Ownership: Analysis of Media Ownership Patterns in Cameroon

and Implications on Journalists' Professional Aptitude and supports the findings of Apuke (2016) and Akinwale (2010) on media owners influence on professionalism. They explained that the concentration of the media in the hands of a few individuals/tycoons has been noted to have a negative effect on journalism. Thus, who owns and runs the media matters. Their research went beyond the established patterns of media ownership like public and private to examine salient media ownership patterns within these two grand patterns and to establish the relationship with professionalism in Cameroon. The study made use of a mixed methods approach utilising both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Guided by Altschull's media ownership theory and the social responsibility theory of Siebert et al., (1956). The study found out that beyond private and public media ownership, other salient media ownership patterns exist, such as horizontal ownership (Newspaper 29.3%, Radio 27.9%, TV 11.1%), conglomerate ownership (8.9%) cross ownership (8.1%), sole proprietor ownership (4.3%), vertical ownership (3.3%), religious ownership (2.4%), community ownership (1.4%) regional line ownership (1.1%), political line ownership (0.5%) and co-ownership (0.3%). With this diversified ownership pattern, Cameroon portrays a unique ownership trend similar to those of many African countries but very different from ownership trends in the USA, Europe and other parts of the world where media concentration lies in the hands of one family or a few individuals. Though media concentration is not very visible in Cameroon, some key players in the likes of the Cameroon government (CRTV and SOPECAM), the Groupe l'Anecdote, La Nouvelle Expression, TV+, Spectrum Group, BT Media Group and DASH Media Group are dominating the media landscape in Cameroon. The research established a significant relationship (p -Value = 0.038) between journalists' professional aptitude and media ownership patterns. However, when it comes to specific media ownership patterns the relationship among these variables varies. Media owners were found to have an influence on journalists and media content which affects professional aptitude by using various means, including media policy, direct instructions in the editing of news stories, sanctions and orientation of new recruits to the editorial policy of the media house. As a result, basic elements of professional ethics like truth, verification, relevance, balance, fairness and objectivity are compromised in favour of the owner's interests. The study therefore, recommends strict respect for professional norms and canons by both journalists and media owners. Additionally, the government's policy of administrative tolerance on setting up a media organ should be accompanied by strict follow-up measures such as the readiness of such organs to operate in terms of acquiring the necessary equipment, qualified personnel (who will perform their functions freely and objectively) and budget to sustain it.

Similarly, results of Nyamnjoh (2004/12) study on "media ownership and control in Cameroon: constraints on media freedom" reveal that Cameroon journalists perceive the real threat to their freedom and independence comes from the government as the government is directly responsible for repressive laws and their day to day application and have consistently engaged in maintaining a divided press through the sponsoring of the creation of pro-government private papers or thwarting attempts to create strong unions of media practitioners (Guiffo, 1993; Nyamnjoh, 1996a; Nyamnjoh et al., 1996). Nyamnjoh (2004/12) study was based on historical analysis and review of literature used to establish media ownership and control in Cameroon. Findings were also that the government in Cameroon shows more interest in containing the media politically than providing its proprietors and practitioners the enabling economic environment needed for professional excellence and financial independence resulting to an underdeveloped press. Even though some of the constraints to a vibrant

professional and financial viable press in Cameroon are obviously internal including: inadequacy in professionalism and unity among journalists stemming from failure to organise themselves into a strong union capable of defending and promoting their interest – non recognition of Union of Cameroon Journalists (UCJ); squabbles among publishers/proprietors and journalists, lack of job security and poor salaries leading to news commercialisation and bad practices such as blackmailing, Nyamnjoh (2004) explains that such internal constraints can be explained by the overt political control and administrative determination to stifle all forms of creative and liberating difference from the status quo that a free press of any kind might seek to encourage which means privileging ignorance over knowledge and encouraging media practitioners who know little or care little about professionalism. Citing Konings (1996), he reiterates that the first and main threat to free-flow of information is still largely from wielders of political power while control by big businesses or financial magnates is perhaps a future danger, because overt political interference has made it too risky for the business world to contemplate any meaningful partnership with the press in particular. The survival of the press is largely determined by the political tone it takes. More so, Nyamnjoh (1990) states that although technical, professional and financial problems are common features of underdeveloped press in Cameroon, like in most African countries, such problems either result from and/or compounded by rigid government control. Examining regulatory statements and official declarations as well as talking about his interviews with media practitioners, he finds out that censorship is a core problem facing the Cameroon press. While the private press is directly muted by repressive laws and arrogance of the censor, the state-owned press is forced to adopt self-censorship by being part of the civil service either way, the consequence is a non-conducive atmosphere to the development and pursuit of professionalism as an ideal or practice in the west.

The Issue in Context

It is a truism that journalism, media and democracy exist as a social contract in which without journalism there is no democracy and without democracy, there is no journalism (Carey, 1999). The media facilitates democratic activities by initiating a system for the flow of information, for public discussion and by performing its watchdog function independent of the state. The media provides: citizens with free and self-governing information; the government with information necessary to make informed decisions sensitive for common good; the public, with an arena for public discussions and debate. Consequently, censorship is often regarded to conflict with democracy as information is restricted and knowledge required to make informed decisions is curtailed.

The progressive decline of press freedom in Cameroon is problematic and needs to be redressed. The state of the media in a country is a representation of its democracy. Journalists' independence (from media owners, the government); access to information (by journalists and from public) and absence of restrictions on the media (be it on the side of the government, advertisers and non-state groups) is relevant to improve on the outcome of the declination of press freedom in Cameroon. This is possible when the necessary freedom rights are respected (freedom of expression, association as well as freedom to access information). The absence of government intervention is not possible as the media exist within a social system and should respect the rights of the citizens as well as the democratic laws and treaties that guides the existence of the nation. As a reflection of the country's democracy, the media ought to be socially responsible, ethical and professional without which criticisms from the public and government

control is eminent. This study therefore seeks to examine the influence of censorship on professionalism of journalists in Cameroon. It identifies the issues that practically inhibit press freedom in Cameroon, which are relevant thematically/academically, theoretically as well as policy-wise. Kothari (2004) says the significance which relates to importance of the research, highlights how the research is beneficial to the development of science and the society in general. Thematically, the study uncovers aspects of media professionalism; concepts that add knowledge and literature to an understanding of press freedom in Cameroon; knowledge relevant to journalism academia, professional journalists, governments and those aspiring to become journalists. Theoretically, this research helps in advancing the theories that explain professionalism and censorship by contextualizing the theories to the Cameroon setting. Based on policy, this study informs journalists on the influence of censorship on professionalism and provides coping mechanisms for journalists' survival. It will equally serve as a white book for government officials and other actors to understand their influence on the press as it should be noted that the state of the press is a reflection of a country's democracy. This study also serves as a medium to enlighten journalists on the need for a representative and independent trade union that self regulates the media system in order to improve on the state of journalism practice and intervene for journalists under attack. Finally, the research is relevant to journalism trainers as it reflects the state of journalism practice in Cameroon and trainers need to reinforce practice by re-evaluating the state of journalism practices.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theories used to study censorship in the practice of journalism in Cameroon are the dependency theory (Defleur and Rokeach, 1975), the legitimate theory (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975) and the social responsibility theory (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956) of the press. Bearing in mind that there is no country that enjoys 100% freedom of the press, these theories are relevant to understand, explain and predict the state of censorship in the Cameroon context. Although, McQuail (2005, pp. 85-6) provides a set of normative principles base on his own four models on the freedom of the press: 1) the *liberal-pluralist or market model*, which "identifies freedom of press with the freedom to own and operate the means of publications without permission or interference from the state"; 2) the *social responsibility or public interest model* that gives a wider freedom obligation to the society with high media standards through envisaged self-regulation with no exclusion of government intervention; 3) the *professional model*—gives the autonomous professional journalism the power to watch the misuse of media; and, 4) the *alternative media model*, which emphasizes "the rights of subcultures with their particularistic values and promotes inter subjective understanding and a real sense of community," this thesis borrows more from the social responsibility or public interest model, focusing on the media obligation to the society using the legitimacy theory.

The dependency theory acknowledges the power of the media, but that such power is largely dependent on the audience members' dependence on the mass media. Since audience members are rational and thoughtful, they are likely to depend on a credible media system. Ironically, the audience members' dependency on the media somewhat encourages those in power to want to control what the media publish. This is because the ruling class is often unwilling to cede freedom (power) to the mass media (Nwanne, 2014). This theory is relevant to understand power control over the media as government may frustrate the efforts of the media as a credible source of information to create disbelief from the public and gain control over the public sphere.

Dowling and Pfeffer (1975, p 122) derive the legitimacy theory under the concept of organisational legitimacy and describes it as: “a condition or status which exists when an entity’s value system is congruent with the value system of a larger social system of which the entity is a part. When a disparity, actual or potential, exists between the two value systems, there is threat to the entity’s legitimacy.”

Legitimacy theory posits that organisations such as the media, continually seek to ensure that they operate within the bounds and norms of their respective societies (Guthrie, Cuganesan, & Ward, 2006). Every media system does not exist in a vacuum but within a larger social system controlled by a government. Suchman (1995) considers legitimacy as a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially construed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions. Grey, Kouhy and Lavers (1995) asserts that the legitimacy theory is best used in explaining strategies adopted by organisations to gain legitimacy from stakeholders. The theory explains that organisations gain legitimacy by respecting the cultural, social, legal and geographic norms of their environment. In other words, a social contract exists between an organisation and its immediate society. Deegan (2000) explains that the contract is an embodiment of societal expectations on the operation of the organisation. Hence, organisations would continue to enjoy legitimacy as long as they keep respecting and fulfilling expectations found in the contract. Media have certain obligations to the society as well as democracy. As long as the media meet these obligations, they maintain their end of the contract. When organisations such as the media fail to meet their expectations, their existence is threatened in different ways. Society may reduce its demand for the organisations’ product or services, citizens may advocate to government to sanction, closedown or fine the organisation for non-conformity (Deegan, 2000). The legitimacy literature suggests that the survival of an organisation depends on its legitimacy processes and on how continuous pressures and challenges are managed. The purpose of the legitimisation processes is to obtain and maintain the stakeholders’ approval (Burlea & Pupa, 2013).

This theory is relevant in explaining censorship in the Cameroon context as media freedom and practices are dependent on the contract between the media, the society and the government in the Cameroon democracy. The media operates within a social system bound by laws, cultures, customs and beliefs that it reflects as the media is a reflection of a country’s democracy and value system. The legitimacy theory emphasises on the necessity for an organisation such as the media to interact with all members of their environment in order to survive and achieve success and non-conformity to the system values may lead to censorship otherwise control on the media.

The social responsibility theory presents media institutions at the centre of societal existence and therefore the functions of the media must be manned by professionals who have obligations to meet. McQuail (2000, p.150) sums up the obligations by highlighting the basic assumptions and components of the social responsibility theory as: the media have an obligation to the wider society, media ownership is a public trust, news media should be truthful, accurate, fair, objective and relevant, media should be free but self-regulated and the media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional conduct as well as under some circumstances, government may need to intervene to safeguard the public interest.

This theory presents media institutions at the central or germane to the existence of the society; and for the media institution to perform its social responsibility function, it must be peopled by professionals who understand and uphold central tenets such as impartiality, truthfulness, balanced reporting, fairness to all parties, essential values required for media institutions to live up to professional expectations (Nkanu & Okoi, nd). This theory is relevant to this study as it ascertains the need for journalist responsibility in the quest for freedom to practice journalism.

To conclude, the dependency theory, the legitimacy theory and the social responsibility theory explains why the media is controlled, reflecting the power of the media on the individual, the government and the larger social system. The power of the media therefore attracts control of the government that has legitimate power of control and to protect the public sphere as reflected in the legitimacy and the dependency theory. Therefore, for media to be free, professionalism reflected in high professional standards and self-regulation of the media is paramount without exclusion of responsible government intervention as the legitimate power structure in order to oversee the excesses of the media.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used the descriptive cross-sectional survey research design employing specifically the concurrent-nested mixed method approach whereby both open and closed ended questions are used in gathering data for the study. More explicitly, after evaluating a concept through well-defined indicators structured as close-ended questions, an open-ended question can be asked in relation to the same concepts as to give room for concepts or indicators that were not considered to emerge. The initial vision behind such study is quantitative, but the qualitative findings are equally integrated in the interpretation phase as the themes or concepts that emerged from thematic analysis complement those that were initially considered in the study (Creswell, 2003; Nana, 2018). The sample size was estimated probabilistically using sample calculation for one population proportion with the support of EpiInfo 6.04d (CDC, 2001) as explained by Nana (2018), considering a population of 2000 journalists. A nonprobability sampling method was used to select participants for the survey. Altogether, 270 journalists were sampled purposively and conveniently from television stations, radio stations, newspaper organisations and online bloggers in the Southwest, Northwest, Centre, Far North and Littoral Regions of Cameroon. These five regions were sampled purposively because they are socio-politically and economically more buoyant, and four of which constitute the media rich regions (South West, North West, Centre, and Littoral) and with the North region purposively sampled in order to cater for a fair distribution of cultural and religious diversity and experience in journalism practice, thus offering an environment proper for the entanglement of journalistic objective and subjective dynamism. Journalists that were involved in the study were conveniently sampled from this purposively defined population (at least three years of work experience in Cameroon to improve the quality and validity of the data). The main socio-demographic characteristics such as category of journalist, professional language and sex were included in the questionnaire as to ensure sampling representativeness.

The reliability of the questionnaire was measured using the estimate of internal consistency or internal reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients ranging from 0.725 to 0.905 was obtained. This satisfactory internal consistency implies that participants understood the

questions, responded objectively and that the process of data collection met the methodological technical requirements. Below is the table for the reliability analysis:

Table 1: Reliability analysis for the final study

Conceptual components	Cronbach's Alpha	N _{cases}	N _{items}
Law guarantees	0.776	270	23
Information accessibility and protection of information sources	0.863	270	20
Government control on cyberspace	0.879	270	9
Government control on media (censorship, journalists' freedom of practice)	0.835	270	11
Government control on media content and journalists' respect of code of ethics	0.725	270	32
Government control on media staff	0.905	270	5
Government control on media, violence and abusive treatment on journalists	0.806	270	41
State's role in combating impunity for those responsible for violence and abuses	0.822	270	9
IVM	0.904	270	150

Method of Data Processing and Analysis

Quantitative data was entered using EpiData Version 3.1 (EpiData Association, Odense Denmark, 2008) and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Standard version, Release 21.0 (IBM Inc. 2012). The questionnaire was made of categorical variables and data were analyzed using counting techniques; namely frequency and proportions while Multiple-Responses- Analysis was used to calculate the aggregate score for conceptual components (Nana, 2018). Spearman's Rho Correlation test was used in the bivariate relational analyses. The test of normality was used to assess whether the variables that were involved in the correlation test follow a normal distribution or not. In this line, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test for normality were used concurrently to test the normality assumption. These two tests using the measures of central tendencies and dispersion assume a theoretical normal distribution for the data and plot the real distribution against this theoretically assumed normal distribution. A non-significant asymptotic significant (P-value > 0.05) is expected for the distribution of a variable to be assumed not deviating significantly from the theoretical assumed normal model. In the other sense, the real distribution shall not deviate significantly from the theoretically assumed normal distribution that logically follows the Gaussian shape.

FINDINGS

To Assess the Relationship Between Censorship and Professionalism

Table 2: Journalists' appraisal of their freedom of practice (collapsed likert-scale)

Censorship	Very low low & average	High and very high	Neutral	Mean	SD
To what extent does prior censorship or monitoring exist in the print press	70.0% (189)	30.0% (81)	0.0% (0)	3.0	1.0
To what extent does prior censorship or monitoring exist in radio and television	62.6% (169)	37.4% (101)	0.0% (0)	3.1	1.1

To what extent are media owners' conflicts of interest (political ideology, tribal leanings) a frequent cause of journalists' self-censorship	49.6% (134)	50.4% (136)	0.0% (0)	3.4	1.0
To what extent does a journalist practice self-censorship for fear of Civil lawsuits or criminal prosecution (fines, imprisonment)	54.8% (148)	45.2% (122)	0.0% (0)	3.3	1.1
To what extent does a journalist practice self-censorship for fear of Professional reprisals or attacks on reputation	51.5% (139)	48.5% (131)	0.0% (0)	3.4	0.9
To what extent does a journalist practice self-censorship for fear of threats to physical safety of the journalist or his family and friends, to his workplace or his home	41.9% (113)	58.1% (157)	0.0% (0)	3.6	1.1
To what extent does a journalist practice censorship on highly sensitive subjects (politics)	41.1% (111)	58.9% (159)	0.0% (0)	3.7	1.0
To what extent does a journalist subdue to censorship on subjects which might anger authorities	48.1% (130)	51.9% (140)	0.0% (0)	3.5	1.0
To what extent do public media ignore some news that is sensitive for the government, but which private media cover	38.9% (105)	61.1% (165)	0.0% (0)	3.8	1.1
To what extent is a journalist copy (article), read, amended and even altered (usually an interview) before publication	63.7% (172)	36.3% (98)	0.0% (0)	3.2	1.0
To what extent is a journalist copy (article), or pictures used in the article; read and approved or chosen by news sources (usually an interview) before publication	68.9% (186)	31.1% (84)	0.0% (0)	3.1	0.9
To what extent are citizens afraid to directly and freely contact journalists, due to government controls or monitoring, especially in order to provide information	65.6% (177)	34.4% (93)	0.0% (0)	3.1	1.0
To what extent are government subsidies suspended when journalists are very critical of government	61.5% (166)	38.5% (5)	0.0% (0)	3.2	1.1
To what extent do editors or media owners intervene or disrupt the publishing of information that portrays their business (media) or business partners (advertisers) in a negative light	48.5% (131)	51.5% (139)	0.0% (0)	3.6	1.1
To what extent is the public often through social media networks flooded with false or misleading information by state actors	42.6% (115)	57.4% (155)	0.0% (0)	3.7	1.1
MRA	54.0% (2185)	46.0% (1865)	0.0% (0)	3.2	1.0

A weak majority opinion weight (54.0%) actually agreed with journalists' freedom of practice. They mostly highlighted the fact that public media ignore some news that is sensitive for the government, but which private media cover 61.1% (165) while they least perceived that prior censorship or monitoring exist in the print press 30.0% (81).

Analysis further revealed that many journalists practice censorship on highly sensitive subjects 58.9% (159); they also practice self-censorship for fear of threats to physical safety of the

journalist or his family and friends, to his workplace or his home 58.1% (157) and many journalists assert that the public are often through social media networks flooded with false or misleading information by state actors 57.4% (155).

Table 3: Journalists' appraisal of government control on media content (collapsed Likert-scale)

Overall, to what extent are media free to publish revelations concerning...					
Media contents	Very low, low & average	High and very high	Neutral	Mean	SD
Politics	56.3% (152)	43.7% (118)	0.0% (0)	3.3	1.2
Economic	53.0% (143)	47.0% (127)	0.0% (0)	3.4	1.0
Health	48.1% (130)	51.9% (140)	0.0% (0)	3.5	1.1
Education	40.0% (108)	60.0% (162)	0.0% (0)	3.7	1.1
Religions	53.7% (145)	46.3% (125)	0.0% (0)	3.3	1.3
The judiciary	60.4% (163)	39.6% (107)	0.0% (0)	3.1	1.2
The military	61.9% (167)	38.1% (103)	0.0% (0)	3.0	1.4
Police and gendarmerie	62.6% (169)	37.4% (101)	0.0% (0)	3.0	1.3
Secret services	64.8% (175)	35.2% (95)	0.0% (0)	2.8	1.5
Organised crime	61.9% (167)	38.1% (103)	0.0% (0)	3.1	1.2
Socio-cultural issues	51.5% (139)	48.5% (131)	0.0% (0)	3.4	1.2
Security issues	54.4% (147)	45.6% (123)	0.0% (0)	3.3	1.2
Research	55.6% (150)	44.4% (120)	0.0% (0)	3.2	1.2
MRA	55.7% (1955)	44.3% (1555)	0.0% (0)	3.2	1.2

Majority opinion weight 55.7% (1955) actually believed that government controls media content.

This control was mostly emphasized on information concerning secret services 64.8% (175), police and gendarmerie 62.6% (169), and on an equal weight the military 61.9% (167) and organised crime 61.9% (167) as well as the judiciary 60.4% (163). Journalists reveal that government control on information was least emphasised on education 40.0% (108). Findings reveal that government control is basically concentrated on sensitive information.

Table 4: Journalists' appraisal of government control on media staff (Collapsed likert-scale)

What influence does the government have on the staff of the following media?	Very negative influence	negative & very positive	Positive & very positive	Neutral	Mean	SD
Media category						
Government-pro media	35.2% (95)		37.8% (102)	27.0% (73)	3.1	1.3
Opposition media	43.7% (118)		23.3% (63)	33.0% (89)	2.8	1.2
Public media	30.0% (81)		39.3% (106)	30.7% (83)	3.2	1.2
Private Media	24.4% (66)		28.1% (76)	47.4% (128)	3.1	1.0
Internet (blogs, face book channel, YouTube channel)	31.5% (85)		18.1% (49)	50.4% (136)	2.8	1.0
MRA	33.0% (445)		29.3% (396)	37.7% (509)	3.4	1.1

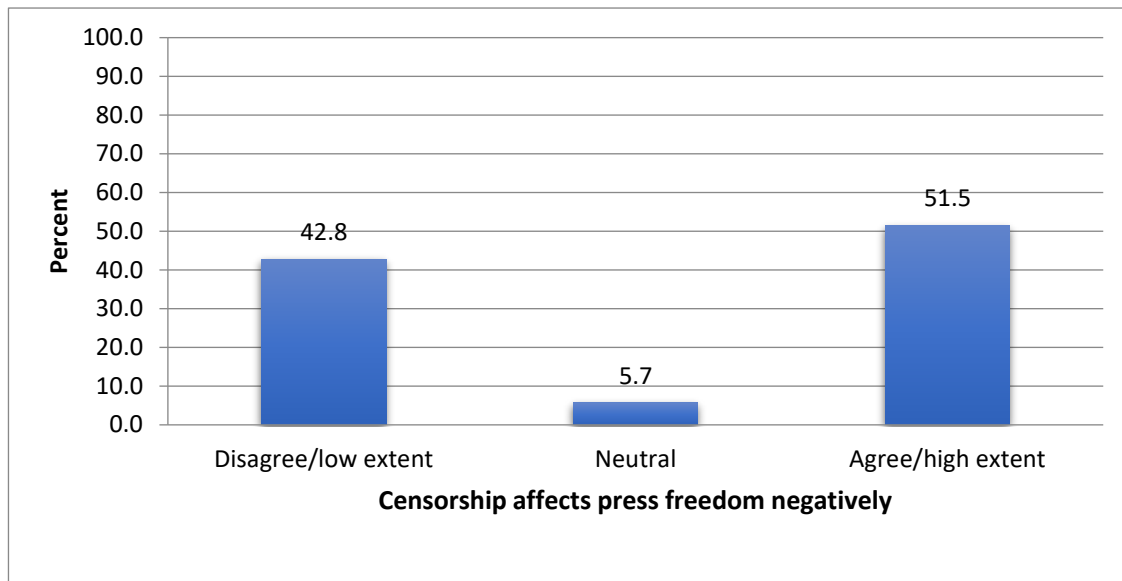
Less than majority opinion weight (29.3%) positively perceived government influence on media staff while the greater share (37.7%) was neutral or refused to take stance.

Journalists perceived that government influence on media staff was mostly positive for public media 39.3% (106) while control was least positive on internet (blogs, face book channel, YouTube channel) 18.1% (49). Notwithstanding, findings reveal that government influence is most negative for the opposition media 43.7% (118) and least negative for government-pro media. Government best reflects its ideology on media that supports its agenda accounting as reflected in the results.

Research Hypothesis: Cameroon Journalists Perceive a Significant Level of Censorship Which Affects Press Freedom Negatively.

Table 5: Journalists perceived censorship which affects press freedom negatively

Conceptual components	Disagree/low extent	Neutral	Agree/high extent	Mean	SD
Journalists' assessment of their freedom of practice	46.0% (1865)	0.0% (0)	54.0% (2185)	3.2	1.0
Journalists' assessment of government control on media content and journalists' respect of code of ethics	44.3% (1555)	0.0% (0)	55.7% (1955)	3.2	1.2
Journalists' assessment of government control on media staff	29.3% (396)	37.7% (509)	33.0% (445)	3.4	1.1
IVM (Censorship)	42.8% (3816)	5.7% (509)	51.5% (4585)	3.3	1.1



Chi-Square Goodness-Of-Fit: $\chi^2=67.37$; $df=1$; $P=0.000$

Figure 1: Journalists perceived censorship which affects press freedom negatively

The weight of journalists that were of the opinion that government does not exercise censorship was 42.8% significantly below the acceptable threshold / cut point set at 80% for strong professional impact or satisfaction ($P=0.000$). The hypothesis here stated is then accepted thus portraying a significant level of censorship which affects press freedom negatively in Cameroon.

Table 6: Comparing the level of impact among categories of censorship

Group	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Freedom of practice	270	3.2010	
Government control on media content	270	3.2274	
Government control on media staff	270		3.3783
Sig.		.616	1.000
Duncan: Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.			

ANOVA: $F=6.618$; $P=0.001$.

There was a significant ($P=0.001$) difference among the categories of censorship, namely freedom of practice, government control on media content and government control on media staff. Post-hoc test indicates that government control on media staff was perceived significantly more problematic than government control on media content and freedom of practice ($P<0.05$). However, there was no significant difference between government control on media content and freedom of practice ($P>0.05$). This therefore implies government targets their control on media staff who are the backbone to exercise the journalism profession as well as make content available to media audience. Such control resorts to journalists engaging in practices such as self-censorship that limits government reprisal.

Table 7: Relationship between professionalism and censorship

Spearman's rho	Correlation	Professionalism	Censorship
Professionalism	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.676
	N	270	270
Censorship	Correlation Coefficient	.026	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.676	.
	N	270	270

There was somehow no relationship between professionalism and censorship ($R=0.026$; $P=0.676$). This therefore implies censorship is independent of professional practice as journalistic practices are not dependent on censorship and censorship could be a performance-based regulation that journalists employ prior publication or broadcast of media content that infringes on authorities, individuals or other media audiences.

There was a significant ($P<0.05$) relationship between laws that guarantee the protection of journalists during crisis reporting and censorship or monitoring of journalists' activities, thus implying that the activities of journalists are systematically censored according to the laws that have been set. However, the laws do not necessarily push authorities to systematically put journalists under surveillance, but journalists' action or activities. This make sense because the means are not first of all there to systematically put journalists under surveillance and only isolated actions can trigger surveillance and reprimands as supported by the relationship between laws and surveillance which is not significant ($P>0.05$). Still in this logic or action reaction, the relationship between prior-censorship and self-censorship is significant ($P<0.05$), thus implying journalists themselves starts adjusting when they have been cautioned. In this very perspective of action reaction, surveillance is more likely to lead to harassment, thus the significant relationship ($P<0.05$). This still explain the fact that government can only put a journalist under surveillance if there is an established issue since there is no systematic surveillance mechanism, thus the likelihood for that journalist to face harassments is high. This analysis can also apply to surveillance and prior-censorship whereby the relationship is also significant ($P<0.05$).

Table 8: Inter-item correlation depicting how censorship is activated more by journalistic actions

Spearman's rho	The Law guarantees the protection of journalists during crisis reporting	To what extent have Authorities placed journalists under surveillance (tap their phones,	To what extent have journalists been harassed through their email, phone or social network	To what extent does prior censorship or monitoring exist in radio and television	To what extent does a journalist practice self-censorship for fear of Professional reprisals or attacks on reputation

			follow them and so on)	like Facebook		
The Law guarantees the protection of journalists during crisis reporting	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.047	.017	.126*	-.052
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.	.438	.782	.038	.393
	N	270	270	270	270	270
To what extent have Authorities placed journalists under surveillance (tap their phones, follow them and so on)	Correlation Coefficient	-.047	1.000	.314**	.293**	.078
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.438	.	.000	.000	.201
	N	270	270	270	270	270
To what extent have journalists been harassed through their email, phone or social network like Facebook	Correlation Coefficient	.017	.314**	1.000	.058	-.053
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.782	.000	.	.339	.388
	N	270	270	270	270	270
To what extent does prior censorship or monitoring exist in radio and television	Correlation Coefficient	.126*	.293**	.058	1.000	.172**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.038	.000	.339	.	.004
	N	270	270	270	270	270
To what extent does a journalist practice self- censorship for fear of Professional reprisals or attacks on reputation	Correlation Coefficient	-.052	.078	-.053	.172**	1.000
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.393	.201	.388	.004	.
	N	270	270	270	270	270

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To Assess Journalist Appraisal of Censorship on The Cameroon Press

Government control on media/ censorship was tailored by three component-indicators, namely: freedom of practice; control on media content and journalists' respect of code of ethics; and government control on media staff.

With respect to journalists' assessment of their freedom of practice, a weak majority opinion weight (54.0%) actually agreed with journalists' freedom of practice. They mostly highlighted the fact that public media ignore some news that is sensitive for the government, but which private media cover. The work of Eribo and Tanjong (1998) corroborate these findings and the authors equally highlighted the imbalance in freedom of press between private and public media. Olshevskaya (2013) in line with Eun Suk (2009) and Tiako (2016b) concluded that government exerts such control on the media by signing several laws that reduce the freedom of speech through the limitation of public assembly, criminalisation of defamation in the mass media, and intensification of governmental censorship on the internet, and the use of powerful oligarchs who used pro-government media to spread and support their political influence, thus suppressing the impact of other media generally those under financial stressed. Abbas & Al-Sharqi (2015) perceived censorship as an old autocratic practice as they substantiated that historically, the access to news has not been this easy; the press in most of Europe in the 18th century was under the draconian reins of censorship, which gradually abated by the 19th century due to public demand. In this study, journalists' least perceived, quite below majority, that prior censorship or monitoring exist in the print press.

As far as government control on media content and journalists' respect of code of ethics was concerned, majority opinion weight 55.7% actually believed that government controls media content. Nyamnjo (2004/12) study equally resolved that the government in Cameroon shows more interest in containing the media politically than providing its proprietors and practitioners the enabling economic environment needed for professional excellence and financial independence resulting to an underdeveloped press. This control was mostly emphasized on information concerning secret services 64.8% (175), police and gendarmerie 62.6% (169), and on an equal weight the military 61.9% (167) and organised crime 61.9% (167) as well as the judiciary 60.4% (163). These are sensitive areas of governance as reflected in findings which revealed that many journalists practice censorship on highly sensitive subjects 58.9% (159). Nyamnjo (1996) supports this finding and points out article 113 of the penal code that highlights sensitive news that threatens the current regime or the people coherence such as public authority, public order, national cohesion and unity. According to AMB (2008, 2011, 2014) report, journalists can be jailed for providing government administrative documents such as in court because such documents could be considered violating rules of administrative secrecy or confidentiality or publication seized if the administrative authority judges its content likely to bridge public order. Findings also reveal control on media content based on the extent to which editors or media owners intervene or disrupt the publishing of information that portrays their business (media) or business partners (advertisers) in a negative light 51.5% (139). Forcha and Ngange (2022) in their study support that media owners in Cameroon have an influence on journalists and media content which affects

professional aptitude. They use various means, including: media policy, direct instructions in the editing of news stories, sanctions and orientation of new recruits to the editorial policy of the media house. As a result, basic elements of professional ethics like truth, verification, relevance, balance, fairness and objectivity are compromised in favour of the owner's interests. As for government control on media staff, less than majority opinion weight actually perceived as positive government influence on media staff 29.3% while the greater share was neutral or refused to take stance 37.7%. Journalists perceived that government influence on media staff was mostly positive for public media. In overall, the weight of journalists that were of the opinion that government does not exercise censorship was 42.8% significantly below the acceptable threshold / cut point set at 80% for strong professional impact or satisfaction. Abbassi and Al-Sharqi (2015); Pechulano (2017) and Nilsson and Örnebring (2016) highlights that censorship is imperative to maintain public ignorance using tactics such as suppressing reporters, intimidation, closing media outlets; applying legislative and administrative practices such as sanctions from media regulatory body and police harassment with due consequences, both professionally and personally, such as fear and self-censorship. The question of censorship was equally emphasized by Yuyu and Yang (2018) and Mouton (2018) in China, Olshevskaya (2013) in Russia and Apuke (2016), Akinwale (2010) in Nigeria and Nossek & Rinnawi (2003) in Palestine.

There was a significant ($P=0.001$) difference among the categories of censorship, namely freedom of practice, government control on media content and government control on media staff. Post-hoc test indicates that government control on media staff was perceived significantly more problematic than government control on media content and freedom of practice ($P<0.05$). Control on media staff have direct implications on journalism practice and media content production. Reports of African Freedom of Information Exchange (2020) supports the findings, highlighting that often times journalists live in fear due to threats and intimidation by local and even national authorities, sometimes having programmes run by their media outlets suspended threatening their independence. This result is also supported by Makwen (2022); Tiako (2019b); Ferrier (2018) and Mouton (2018).

There was somehow no relationship between professionalism and censorship ($R=0.026$; $P=0.676$). This therefore implies censorship is independent of professional practice as journalistic practices are not dependent on censorship and censorship could be a performance-based regulation that journalists employ prior publication or broadcast of media content that infringes on authorities, individuals or other media audiences. This finding is reflected in the 1990 Social Communication Law of Cameroon which oblige newspaper and magazine publishers to forward two signed copies of each edition to the state prosecutor and local administrative authority "within two hours" of publication with Article 17 of the Law giving powers to an administrative authority to seize a publication if he/she judges its content likely to bridge public order (AMB, 2008, 2011).

Journalists perceived that journalist are systematically censored based on enacted laws, though these laws do not necessitate authorities to systematically put journalists under surveillance but journalists' actions and activities. Journalists also practice self-censorship when they have been prior-censored. These findings are supported by (AMB, 2008, 2011); Makwen (2022); Tiako (2019b); Ferrier (2018) and Mouton (2018) and further elucidated by the dependency theory which explains that due to the power of the media on individuals and public sphere,

government may frustrate the efforts of the media as a credible source of information to create disbelief from the public and gain control over the public sphere. Journalists were generally dissatisfied with the level of censorship in the Cameroon press. Many loopholes accounted for this. All investigated factors that could concurrently act to control for censorship were below actual satisfaction as to help achieve professional satisfaction, output with commendable political and socio-economic impacts. A weak majority opinion weight actually agreed with journalists' freedom of practice, journalists were generally of the opinion that censorship affects the practice of journalism negatively, censorship was perceived by majority opinion weight, government control of media staff was a concern expressed by majority opinion weight.

All these loopholes in the journalistic setting leads to many setbacks (Apuke, 2016; Che Tita, Wantchami and Mulu, 2016)), as they hinder good practice of journalism, objectivity and fairness, destabilise mindset or morale, delay investigation and acquisition of information, corrupted practices or 'gombo journalism', brain drain as journalists flee to go abroad, and abandon of profession. If censorship highly deplored by journalists in this study could be limited to forbidding to invade private rights or disrupting social structures, this would not have been a problem; but the issue is that in most cases, the same as the law, it is tailored to meet political agenda as emphasized by Tiako (2019a) and Nyamnjoh (2004/12). This atmosphere that heavily contradicts the Theories of the Freedom of the Press (Baran and Davis, 2003) is worsened by the financial stress and poor working conditions faced by most media houses and journalists in Cameroon, and the socio-political context marred by whereby the country is dotted with several socio-political crises with extreme violence in most instances. The *democratic-participant* media theory presented by Denis McQuail (2005) suggests that media content should not be controlled by the state nor by any elite group but in the Cameroonian context, authors corroborating the research findings complained of powerful oligarchs who used pro-government media to spread and support their political influence Olshevskaya (2013).

CONCLUSION

Journalists concluded in this study that they least perceived prior censorship or monitoring in the print press but highlighted that public media ignore some news that is sensitive to the government which the private media cover. Majority of the journalists believe that government controls media content especially sensitive areas of governance such as information about secret services, police and gendarmerie, military, organised crime as well as the judiciary. The study further concludes that though the law does not ascribe for prior censorship, the press laws subject journalists to prior censor their activities or actions; thereby, practice self-censorship for fear of attacks (harassment, intimidation and so on). The study also concludes that a significant relationship exists between prior-censorship and self-censorship, between surveillance and harassment, between surveillance and prior-censorship while the relationship between laws and surveillance was not significant. This implies that journalists' start adjusting themselves when they have been cautioned for fear of harassment. Also, the study suggest that government can only put a journalist under surveillance if there is an established issue thus the likelihood for that journalist to face harassments.

References

- Abbas, I., S. & Al-Sharqi, L. (2015). Media Censorship: Freedom Versus Responsibility. *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution*. DOI: 10.5897/JLCR2015.0207
- Achuen, A A (2013). Influence of News censorship on the performance of media houses in Nigeria: A study of NASARAWA Broadcasting Service, LAFIA. Department of Communication, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, CARITAS University, ENUGU State. Unpublished
- African Freedom of Information Exchange (2020). Analytical Report on the Safety of Journalists in Cameroon between (2017-2019). African Freedom of Information Exchange.
- African Media Barometer (AMB), Cameroon Report (2008). Windhoek, Friedrich – Ebert Stiftung (FES). www.fesmedia-africa.org
- African Media Barometer (AMB), Cameroon Report (2011). Windhoek, Friedrich – Ebert Stiftung (FES). www.fesmedia-africa.org
- African Media Barometer (AMB), Cameroon Report (2014). Windhoek, Friedrich – Ebert Stiftung (FES). www.fesmedia-africa.org
- African Media Barometer (AMB), Cameroon Report (2018). Windhoek, Friedrich – Ebert Stiftung (FES). www.fesmedia-africa.org
- Agence de presse Africaine APA (April 26, 2017). Cameroon ranks 130th in world press freedom index. <http://apanews.net/en/news/cameroon-ranks-130th-in-world-press-freedom-index>
- Ahmad, A. R. (2019). The effect of media censorship on freedom. International conference on Accounting, Business, Economics and Politics. ISBN: 978-9922-9036-3-7.
- Akinwale, A. A. (2010). Repression of Press Freedom in Nigerian Democratic Dispensations. *Africa Development*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, 2010, pp. 47 – 70.
- Altschull, J.H. (1984) *Agents of Power: The Role of the news media in human affairs*. New York, London: Longman
- Apuke, O.D. (2016). Exploring the Factors Affecting Press Freedom in Nigeria. *Higher Education of Social Science*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2016, pp. 32-34, DOI:10.3968/8850
- Asante, C. E. (1997). *Press Freedom and Development*, London, Greenwood Press.
- Bakata, N. B., Ngange, K. L., Assala, L-C. B., & Nnode, S. N. (2023). Governmental information hoarding and its effects on journalism practice. *Corporate Law and Governance Review*, 5(1), 129-150. <https://doi.org/10.22495/clgrv5i1p12>
- Baran, S., & Davis, D. K. (2003). *Mass communication theories*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Burlea, S.A. and Popa, I. (2013). *Legitimacy theory*, in *Encyclopaedia of corporate social responsibility*, Editors Samuel O. Idowu, Nicholas Capaldi, Liangrong Zu, Ananda das Gupta, springer-verlag Berlin Heidelberg, pp. 1579 – 1584, <http://www.springerreference.com/docs/html/chapterdbid/333348.html>
- Carey, James W. (1999). "In defense of public journalism," in: Theodore L. Glasser (Ed.), *The idea of public journalism*, New York: Guilford Press.
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2001). A Word-Processing, Database, and Statistics Program for Public Health. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, Georgia and World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and mixed methods Approaches*. London, Sage Publications, 2nd ed.

Deegan, C. (2000). *Financing Accounting Theory*. McGraw Hill Book Company, Sydney.

Dominick, J. R. (1994). *The dynamics of mass communication*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Dowling, J. and Pfeffer, J. (1975). Organisational Legitimacy: social values and organisational behaviour. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 18, pp. 122 – 136.

Downing, S. M. (2004). Reliability: On the producibility of assessment data. *Medical Education*, 38, 1006-1012.
Eribo F (1997) Internal and external factors affecting press freedom in Nigeria. In: Eribo, Jong-Ebot W (eds.) *Press Freedom and Communication in Africa*. pp: 51-74.

Eribo, F. and Tanjong, E. (1998). Reporting under civilian and military rulers: journalists' perception of press freedom and media exposure in Cameroon and Nigeria. *Ecquid Novi*, Volume 19, Number 2: p. 39 – 55

Eun Suk S. A. (2009). Factors Influencing Freedom of the Press in South Korea: A Survey of Print Journalists' Opinions. *Asian Social Science*; Vol. 5, No. PP 3-24.

Ferrier, M. (2018). *Attacks and Harassment: The Impact on Female Journalists and Their Reporting*. International Women's Media Foundation and Troll-Busters.com.

Forcha, D. and Ngange, K. (2022) Beyond Public and Private Ownership: Analysis of Media Ownership Patterns in Cameroon and Implications on Journalists' Professional Aptitude. *Advances in Journalism and Communication*, 10, 307-335. doi: 10.4236/ajc.2022.103019.

Gray, R., Kouhy, R. and Lavers, S. (1995). Constructing a research database of social and environmental reporting by UK companies. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, Vol 8, No 2, pp. 78 -101

Guiffo, S. L. (1993). Challenge Hebdo et Le Patriote dans la Transition Democratique au Cameroun: Deux Approches du Traitement de l'information Politique Nationale du 1er Octobre 1992. DSSTIC dissertation, ASMAC/ESSTIC Yaounde (mimeo).

Holtz-Bacha, C. (2004) What is "good" press freedom? the difficulty of measuring freedom of the press worldwide. *International Association for Media and Communication Research*. Porto Alegre, Brazil. Hachten, W.A (1987) *The World News Prism: Changing Media, Clashing Ideology*. Ames: Iowa State

Holtz-Bacha, C. (2004) What is "good" press freedom? the difficulty of measuring freedom of the press worldwide. *International Association for Media and Communication Research*. Porto Alegre, Brazil.
http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=26032&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.billofrights.html>

Kelly, D & Donway, R. (1990) Liberalism in free speech, in J, Lichtenberg (ed), *Mass media and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University press.

Kieran, Matthew (2000) "The Regulatory and Ethical Framework for Investigative Journalism", in: Hugo de Burgh (Ed.), *Investigative Journalism. Context and practice*, London: Routledge.

Nyamnjoh, F. (2012). Media ownership and control in Cameroon, constraints on media freedom in Cameroon. Promoting communication for social change. https://www.nyamnjoh.com/2004/12/media_ownership.html

Kothari, C. R. 2004. *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. 2nd ed. India: New Age International.

Locke, John (1988) *Two Treaties of Government*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Makwen, M. A. (2022). Journalism in Cameroon: A Brief History and Phases. TAM Akademi Dergisi 1 (1), 1 – 15. <https://tamde.org>
- McQuail, D. (2010) *McQuail's Theory of Mass Communication*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- McQuail, Denis (1992) *Media Performance. Mass communication and the public interest*, London: Sage Publications.
- McQuail, Denis (1994) *Mass Communication Theory. An introduction*, London: Sage Publications
- Mouton, G. (2018). Journalism, Censorship, and Press Freedom. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501500084-024>.
- Nana, C. (2018). *Research Methods and Applied Statistics: Beginners and Advanced Learners (3rd Edition)*. Buea: GOOAHEAD.
- Ndongmo, K. (2021). *Digital rights in closing civic space: lessons from ten African countries; Cameroon digital landscape report*. Institute of Development Studies. DOI: 10.19088/IDS.2021.015
- Netlocks (2018). Facebook and WhatsApp restricted in Cameroon on eve of elections results, 21 October (accessed 6th September, 2020).
- Newth, M. (2010). The long history of censorship. Retrieved from http://www.beaonforfreedom.org/liste.html?tid=415&art_id=475
- Nilsson, M. L. & Örnebring, H. (2016). Journalism Under Threat: Intimidation and harassment of Swedish journalists. *Journalism Practice* 10(7):1-11.
- Norris, Pippa and Dieter Zinnbauer (2002), *Giving Voice to the Voiceless: Good Governance, Human Development & Mass Communications, UNDP Human Development Report Office* (available at: http://hdr.undp.org/docs/publications/background_papers/2002/Norris-Zinnbauer_2002.pdf)
- Nossek, H. & Rinnawi, K. (2003). Censorship and Freedom of the Press Under Changing Political Regimes: Palestinian Media from Israeli Occupation to the Palestinian Authority. *Sage Journal*. (sagepub.com). Visited 29/04/2021.
- Nwane, B. U. (2014). Another look at press freedom in Nigeria. *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, Vol 2, No. 4.
- Nyamnjoh, F. (2004). Media ownership and control in Cameroon, constraints on media freedom in Cameroon. Premalink
- Nyamnjoh, F. (2005). Africa's media democracy and the politics of belonging. London and New York, Zed Books, UNISA Press Pretoria.
- Nyamnjoh, F. B.; Wete, F. & Fonchingong, T. (1996). Media and Civil Society in Cameroon. *Africa Media Review*. 10 (3) – via Michigan State University Libraries, African e-Journals Project.
- Nyamnjoh, F. (1996). *Mass Media and Democratisation in Cameroon*. Yaoundé: Fondation Friedrich-Ebert.
- Olshevskaya, O. (2013). Factors that Influence Freedom of Speech and Self-censorship in Mass Media in Contemporary Russia. *Journalism Research, Science journal (Communication and information)*, Nr. 6. PP 110-120.
- Pechulano, N. A. (2017). The Impact of the Government Concealing Information on the Practice of Journalism: A Study of Anglophone Cameroonians. A Thesis Submitted to Michigan State University In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements For The Degree Of Journalism--Master Of Arts.

Puddephatt, A. (2011). The Importance of self-regulation of the media in upholding freedom of expression. Brazil, Ford Foundation, UNESCO publication.

Rokeach, S. and Melvin DeFleur (1976). A Dependency Model of Mass Media Effects. *Communication Research* 3. pp. 3-21

Rozumilowicz, B. (2002) Democratic Change. IN Price, M. E., Rozumilowicz, B. & Verhulst, S. G. (Eds.) *Media Reform*. London, Routledge

RSF (2016). *RSF Survey 2016*. https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/rsf_survey_en.pdf. Visited 27/04/2021.

Severin, Werner J. and Tankard, James W., Jr (1997) *Communication Theories. Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media*, 4th edn, New York: Longman

Siebert, F., Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press: The authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet communist concepts of what the press should be and do*. Urbana: University of Illinois.

Soengas, X. (2013). The role of the internet and social networks in the Arab uprisings – an alternative to official press censorship. *Comunicar*, 21(41), 147-155. doi:10.3916/C41-2013-14

Stroömbaöck, Jesper (2004) *Den medialiserade demokratin. Om journalistikens ideal, verklighet och makt*, Stockholm: SNS Förlag

Stromback J (2005) Search of a standard: four models of Democracy and their normative implications for journalism. *Journalism studies* 6: 331-345.

Suchman, M. (1995). Managing legitimacy: strategic and institutional approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, Vol 20, No 3, pp 571 – 610.

Tiako, N. P (2019a). Media Regulations in Cameroon. Issue 3, Vol 40. *African Journalism Studies*. P. 10 -25.

Tiako, N. P. (2019b). The 'trumping effect' of anti-terrorism Legislations: the case of Cameroon. [Usidus.us.es>bitstream>handle](https://www.usidus.us.es/bitstream/handle/10.1016/j.asj.2019.05.001)

Tita J. C, Wantchami N.L, Muluh, H. (2016) Understanding Cameroon_Press Freedom According to African Media Barometer from 2008-2014. *J Mass_Communication and Journalism* 6(6), 314. doi: 10.4172/2165-7912.1000314

Yuyu, C. & Yang, Y. D. (2018). The Impact of Media Censorship: Evidence from a Field Experiment in China. *Job Market Paper*.1984bravenewworld_draft.pdf (stanford.edu). Visited 26/04/2021.