

THE MAKING OF BUSINESS NEWS IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF CAMEROON
TRIBUNE NEWSPAPER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of Master of Arts in

JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES

of

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

NGAMALE EMMANUEL TAWE

Supervisor: ROBERT BRAND

April 2012

Abstract

Since the emergence of business journalism as a genre within the broad spectrum of news reporting, most of the scholarly works into its development have focused on growth in the western (that is developed) world. This indicates that very limited research has been done in the field of business journalism in the developing economies. Thus there exist gaps in understanding the practice of business journalism in Africa and part of this is rooted in how the practice is defined.

This study aims to shed light on the practice of business journalism in this African context. It explores the onset and development of business journalism and its evolution in Africa. The main focus in this case study was to understand the definition of business news in the specific context of the *Cameroon Tribune*. Individual in-depth interviews were used as the main (primary) data collection method along with observation and cursory reading as complementary (secondary) methods. This study is influenced by the sociology of news production which foregrounds theoretical frames such as news construction and gatekeeping.

Findings from this study reveal that business news at the *Cameroon Tribune* is elitist, essentially defined around personality and, is in the most part, development news. Additional findings indicate that the absence of any editorial guidelines leaves most reporters second-guessing how to please management with socialised values mostly acquired through peer learning.

In conclusion, this study advances the necessity for the Africanisation of business news. This would entail reporting financial, economic, consumer, and corporate affairs, from a vocabulary and composition context that unveils much exchange taking place in the lives of many Africans.

Acknowledgements

- ❖ To my supervisor, Robert Brand for his indefatigable intellectual support and thoughtful inspiration in the course of this study. Your input remains invaluable.
- ❖ To the Centre for Economic Journalism in Africa (CEJA) for the financial support without which such an endeavour would have remained a dream.
- ❖ To the management and journalists working at the news section of *Cameroon Tribune* for accepting to take part in this investigation. Their participation remains priceless.
- ❖ To my father, Linus Tawe and my mother, Ma Veronica Famoko Tawe for their untiring support behind my seemingly endless academic journey. This achievement is another epaulet to your achievements.
- ❖ To my brother Jude and sisters Louise, Esther, Josephine, Neola (for reading and formatting) and Mary for their continuous understanding and support without which I may not have been able to attain this goal.
- ❖ To my friend, MacDonald Kanyangale for his insightful critiques and thought-provoking contribution to this work. MacD, thanks is the least to say.
- ❖ To the academic and non-academic staff of the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University for their helpful support during my two year stay.
- ❖ To both full and part-time students of the MA 2009, our wonderful moments shall always be missed.
- ❖ To Leonie Munro for editing the text at short notice.
- ❖ To all those names or contributions I have not mentioned here. You know what you did, let it be.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Correspondence letter from the <i>Cameroon Tribune</i> .	122
Appendix 2: Interview guide	123
Appendix 3: Correspondence confirming field presence from the <i>Cameroon Tribune</i> .	127

Declaration

I, Emmanuel Ngamale Tawe, declare that this thesis has never been submitted by me for a degree at Rhodes University or any other institution of higher learning. This work is my own design and implementation. All materials contained herein have been fully acknowledged.

Table of contents

Abstract	i
List of Appendices	iii
Declaration	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND OF MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN CAMEROON	1
1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM	2
1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY	4
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY	4
1.5 DELIMITING THE STUDY	5
1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS	5
Chapter 2: Context of the study	7
2.1 THE STATE OF BUSINESS JOURNALISM	7
2.2 AFRICAN BUSINESS JOURNALISM	8
2.3 BRIEF POLITICAL HISTORY OF CAMEROON	11
2.4 MEDIA LANDSCAPE	13
2.5 LEGAL FRAMEWORK	15
2.6 REGULATION	16
2.7 CONCLUSION	18
Chapter 3: Literature review and theoretical framework.....	19
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	19
3.2 DEFINING NEWS.....	19
3.2.1 <i>Historical background of business news.....</i>	<i>21</i>
3.2.2 <i>Defining business journalism and practice in Africa.....</i>	<i>23</i>
3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIOLOGY OF NEWS PRODUCTION	27
3.3.1 <i>Schudson's model on the construction of news</i>	<i>29</i>
3.3.1.1 <i>Political economy</i>	<i>30</i>
3.3.1.2 <i>Social organisation.....</i>	<i>31</i>
3.3.1.3 <i>Cultural approach.....</i>	<i>32</i>
3.3.2 <i>News values.....</i>	<i>33</i>
3.3.2.1 <i>Critical review of Galtung and Ruge.....</i>	<i>36</i>
3.3.2.2 <i>Other news values.....</i>	<i>38</i>
3.3.3 <i>Lewin's gatekeeping theory.....</i>	<i>40</i>
3.3.3.1 <i>Advance gatekeeping: A model by Shoemaker.....</i>	<i>41</i>
3.4 CONCLUSION	48
Chapter 4: Methodology	49
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	49
4.2 PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDINGS	49
4.3 METHODS	51
4.3.2 <i>Sampling procedure.....</i>	<i>52</i>
4.3.2 <i>Data collection.....</i>	<i>54</i>

4.3.2.1	Cursory reading	54
4.3.2.2	Gaining access	55
4.3.2.3	Individual in-depth interviews	56
4.3.2.4	Observation	57
4.3.3	<i>Data analysis</i>	59
4.3.3.1	Data transcription.....	59
4.3.3.2	Open coding	59
4.4	ETHICS OF THE STUDY	60
4.5	LIMITATIONS OF STUDY	60
4.6	CONCLUSION	61
Chapter 5: Findings and discussion.....		62
5.1	INTRODUCTION	62
5.2	EXPLORING BUSINESS NEWS ACCORDING TO REPORTERS AT THE <i>CAMEROON TRIBUNE</i>	62
5.2.1	<i>Content-related definitions of business news at the Cameroon Tribune</i>	63
5.2.1.1	Newness as a determinant of business news	63
5.2.1.2	Business news a ‘scoop’	64
5.2.1.3	Truth-related understanding of business news	65
5.2.1.4	Purpose of business news in Cameroon.....	66
5.2.1.5	News as ‘events’	67
5.2.2	<i>Defining business news using referential standards in Cameroonian society</i>	69
5.2.2.1	Reference to persons and significance.....	69
5.2.2.3	Developmental focus.....	71
5.2.2.4	Economic and business activities.....	74
5.2.3	<i>Consolidating a definition of business news according to the Cameroon Tribune</i>	76
5.3	POLITICAL ECONOMY AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES	77
5.3.1	<i>Coverage and control</i>	78
5.3.2	<i>Sources and source cultivation</i>	81
5.3.3	<i>Target audience of the Cameroon Tribune</i>	83
5.4	GATEKEEPING STRUCTURES AND NEWS FILTERING AT THE <i>CAMEROON TRIBUNE</i>	85
5.4.2	<i>Routine behaviour and organisational constraints to news construction</i>	85
5.4.2.1	Editorial conferences at the <i>Cameroon Tribune</i>	86
5.4.2.2	<i>Cameroon Tribune’s</i> business news writing style	87
5.4.2.3	House policies and codes of conduct at the <i>Cameroon Tribune</i>	89
5.4.2.4	Socialisation of reporters.....	90
5.4.1	<i>Business journalist (individual) level</i>	93
5.4.1.1	Thinking models.....	95
5.4.1.2	Individual characteristics influencing selectors.....	96
5.4.1.3	Involuntary application of rules: second-guessing	98
5.4.1.4	Job roles and news making practices.....	99
5.5	CONCLUSION	103
Chapter 6: Conclusion		104
6.1	SUMMING KEY FACETS OF THE STUDY	104
6.2	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE <i>CAMEROON TRIBUNE</i>	106
6.3	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	108
References.....		110
Appendices		121

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of media landscape in Cameroon

This is an investigation into the sociology of business news production at the *Cameroon Tribune*. As an African country, Cameroon with its history of colonisation by Germany, France and Britain, has ended up with English and French as its official languages (DeLancey & DeLancey, 1999; Nyamnjoh, 2005). News is presented in these languages even though there are over 200 local languages emanating from the country's rich ethnic diversity comprising more than 250 tribal groups. The media landscape in Cameroon is diverse with over 500 registered newspapers (Nyamnjoh, 2005; UCJ, 2005). In the broadcast sector the state has one national television station, one national radio, ten regional radio stations and a number of commercial frequency modulation (FM) stations (Muluh & Ndoh, 2002). Added to these are a number of private radio and television stations and foreign news organs, for example, the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (the BBC) (Nyamnjoh, 2005). The mixed system of ownership (government, private and social/cultural organisation) exists in Cameroon since the government still considers the sector crucial for development (Muluh & Ndoh, 2002: 5).

The state-owned *Cameroon Tribune* is the only national bilingual newspaper (French and English) and the oldest daily in the country with a print run of 60,000 (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 155). It has existed through a series of political and economic changes: the change from one-party to a multiparty democracy; economic liberalisation; and the introduction of private media institutions across the different media sectors. Unlike the *Cameroon Tribune* the other newspapers publish business news in one of the two official languages and their circulation is restricted to the provincial capitals. Furthermore, these papers also experience huge challenges in terms of personnel and other resources necessary in the production of news. The *Cameroon Tribune's* link to the government opens its reporters to important news sources therefore the news staff has access to the national news agency, Camnews, and the government information units all over the country (Funge et al., 2002: 57; Paquot & Ponthieu, 2000: 11). The *Cameroon Tribune* is tightly linked to the government which remains suspicious of the local independent press and treats them as subversives (Tansa cited in Kareithi, 2005: 115).

1.2 Research problem

Contemporary studies on media news production have focused on functionalist models prevalent in the United States of America (USA) and other societies embracing the dominant American popular culture (Curran & Sparks, 1991; Dahlgren, 2000; Tuchman, 2002). This research draws on a combination of theories relating to political economy and symbolic interactionism. According to Tuchman (2002:78) these theories focus on the entire social system and the interactions between and among individuals and institutions: what sociologists label macro and micro-theories. Therefore, this study takes stock of news production with reference to how business news is defined and published at the *Cameroon Tribune*. The departure point of this study is to seek to understand how business news is defined at the newspaper. Against this background the study proceeds to investigate the decision-making processes accompanying the creation of business news.

Although business news has been variously defined, the question of what is business journalism is not an easy one for many scholars since they have different understanding of business journalism which foregrounds various aspects. Kareithi (2005: 98) defines it in terms of reporting the economy, business and consumer news. Other scholars relate business journalism to the fourth estate role (watchdog). For example, Tambini (2008: 8) suggests that business journalism should hold both business and public authorities to account and should investigate malpractice. According to Parker (1997:3) business journalism is economic coverage providing information about the economy with explanations for its performance. Parker (1997:3) argues that the differences in defining business journalism are partly a reflection of differences in well-defined economic interest.

While acknowledging this diversity of perspectives this study accepts that business journalism is what is written about both business and the economy (Roush, 2006: 8). The choice of this definition enables us to take a broad view of the practice of business journalism on the African continent and what has been often referred to as its critical role in development (Kareithi & Kariithi et al., 2005: ix). Despite the role of economics in our daily lives African business journalism relies on the government which remains a major player in its development and often withholds information vital to an understanding of the economy with the excuse of protecting national interest (Mogekwu, 2005: 69; Parker, 1997:4-7). Compared to narrow definitions of business journalism an inclusive approach does not uphold the

differences in the usage of the terms financial, economic or business journalism. Studies of the latter have generally focused on the western world. There are no systematic studies of the production of business news in developing countries that do not have a vibrant stock exchange. Kareithi et al. (2005: ix) describe the state of African media research as a “regrettable short catalogue”, and Cameroon is no exception. Media research in Cameroon has focused on politics, democracy and identity (Boyomo-Assala, 1995; Nyamnjoh, 2005), the evolution of media (Muluh & Ndoh, 2002), and public relations (Fungeet al., 2002).

Furthermore, there has not been a systematic study on Cameroon’s longest surviving political newspaper that once had the highest print run and readership. Recent studies have mainly focused on the media’s contribution in the democratic process (see Boyomo-Assala, 1995; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1993a). Another group of researchers investigated the state of the press law in Cameroon (see Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 1993b: Ewumbe-Monono, 1992). Some scholars have probed the troubling question of ethnicity and its reflections in the Cameroonian media (see Chindji-Kouleu, 1997). From these examples it can be noted that most of the studies look at the media in general without any critical insights to the production of news. This study therefore seeks to open an aperture through which scholars can draw insightful understandings of the different media operating in Cameroon.

There is a particular slant of business news reflected in the *Cameroon Tribune*: it emphasises information provided by the ministry of economy and finance. Since the continued ownership of the biggest newspaper by government is at variance with the notion of economic liberalisation (privatisation) it influences the understanding and making of business news. It tends to ignore key economic players in the private sector. The *Cameroon Tribune* was selected for this study because it has the highest print run amongst local newspapers and its news staff has unlimited access to sources of business news (Abega, 1999; Tansa cited in Mokegwu, 2005: 115). In addition its coverage and distribution is the highest when compared to competing newspapers in the country (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 166). The *Cameroon Tribune* reports business news under the heading of the ‘economy’ which is usually secondary to political news coverage. Business news seldom comprises more than a page of the entire newspaper hence it would be of benefit to research since its content is different from the western (more industrialised) perspectives of business news. Stock markets and stock exchanges tend to be the focus of business news in terms of western perspectives.

Furthermore, with the exception of countries like South Africa, most African countries have a similar context in the production of business news using poorly trained business journalists. This leads to the presentation of indigestible and complicated business news which further obscures the workings of a young stock exchange and the development of the economy.

1.3 Purpose of study

The main goal of the study is to examine how business news is produced in the African context. The study focuses on actions and perspectives of business journalists in Cameroon. In view of the fact that the Cameroonian stock market was created in December 2001 it is still in its infancy. Furthermore, the economy and business sector in Cameroon are relatively undeveloped. This study uses the *Cameroon Tribune* as a case study to address the main objective of understanding the making of business news. The key research question is: How is business news made in the state owned newspaper in Cameroon, a developing country? The specific objectives of the study are:

- To establish what is termed business news according to the *Cameroon Tribune*.
- To understand how business journalists in Cameroon make decisions on what to cover.

The primary objective is to understand how business journalism is defined in the context of this case study. In this light, the study draws theoretical support of scholarly works on news values and coverage. For example, Galtung and Ruge's (1965) study on the coverage of international news and Gans (1980) and others (see section 3.3.2). Secondly, this research seeks to investigate the decisions guiding journalists and news managers as they engage in the process of producing business news. The guiding theoretical underpinnings are borrowed from the sociology of news as expounded by Tuchman (1978) and Schudson (2000) as well as gatekeeping theories (Lewin, 1951; Shoemaker, 1991).

1.4 Significance of study

A study into business news production in Africa can be heralded for many reasons. Firstly, this study seeks to define business news from an African perspective and in the process revealing the abundance of business news on the continent. This study contradicts previously held beliefs that there is very little business news on the African continent thereby championing a new scholarship that asserts the abundance of economic news. It challenges

the assumptions of a shortage of African business news by proposing that this erroneous supposition was based on a failure to define and understand business news from an African perspective. Secondly, while previous research studies have always over-emphasised the difficulty of linking ownership and the news product, this research shows that there is a direct and clear relationship on how ownership impacts on the news product. This study explains how economic news ends up being reported as politics and also why most of the time it is overshadowed by political news coverage. The study provides important facets for further research in a similar context which could be deemed as inapplicable in previous research. In addition it provides some recommendations that the management of the *Cameroon Tribune* could consider in its news organisation.

1.5 Delimiting the study

This study investigates the production of business news at Cameroon's lone bilingual state newspaper, the *Cameroon Tribune*. It focuses on interviewing and observing those (journalists and news editors) involved in business news production and not the general news production process of the newspaper. This study does not include the *Cameroon Tribune's* representatives in provinces who report on news with business content. All of the business journalists and news managers who participated in this study were based at the newspaper's head office in Yaoundé. The study focuses on the actions leading up to and during production and not on the textual analysis or the news product. In the same vein the study is not concerned about issues at the consumption end. Issues of reception are put in the background in this study.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

There are six chapters in this thesis. They are presented in a synchronised manner that eases reading and understanding. The first chapter states the case and sets other necessary parameters required to carry out such a study. Chapter two basically situates the research context. This is followed by the theoretical framework which builds from existing theory in chapter three. In chapter four the study presents an argument in favour of the chosen methodology which satisfies this research endeavour. This is followed by the findings and discussions in chapter five where the contents are sub-divided and arranged to answer the main research goal and subsequent objectives. In chapter six the major tenets of this study are

revisited and recommendations for further research are made. Some meaningful suggestions are presented for consideration by the management of the *Cameroon Tribune*.

Chapter 2: Context of the study

Studies of business journalism have mainly focused on the western world. There are therefore no systematic studies of what makes business news in developing countries that do not have a stock exchange. This chapter seeks to briefly understand the state of business journalism in the industrialised countries before presenting a more detailed examination of the situation in Africa. The chapter then focuses on the context in which business journalism produces news in Cameroon. The reasons for choosing the *Cameroon Tribune* for this study are then discussed.

2.1 The state of business journalism

The importance of writing about business and the economy and how both have changed our lives has been over-stated in media research (Reed & Lewin, 2005; Roush, 2004 & 2006; Thompson, 2000). Business news has moved from the back pages of newspapers because of its central role in our lives. It has been argued there is a business angle to almost every story covered by the media. With this in mind the research focuses on literature which is geared towards ameliorating the practice of business journalism in today's world. This follows from shortcomings noted in the field of business reporting (see Reed & Lewin, 2005; Roush, 2004).

Although this study focuses on how business news is produced in Cameroon, an African country, it is deemed necessary to understand some of the important scholarly works on the prevailing tensions between business journalism and various stakeholders, such as businessmen and economists, in the western (West) world. For example, in an effort to understand the growing tension between businessmen and journalists covering the beat, MacDougall (1981) investigated three metropolitan USA newspapers and three television stations. The investigation examined how businessmen disseminate business news and how journalists gather and present such news. It also considered complaints from major corporations and business trade associations, respectively, and matched them against media performance. The study took cognisance of the flood of free products and unlabelled corporate advocacy appearing on newspapers and television as news. The analyses found an in-built media bias for negative business news. It argued this normalcy is also prevalent in other news and asserted that it is the area needing attention while positive news takes care of

itself. The study noted that while the media are blamed for ignorance and ill-will in covering business, the most deplorable form is exhibited in television news. The researcher understands the accusations: its encounter between businessmen and reporters can be explained by the limited knowledge of business reporters of how business work on the one hand, and on the other, the limited understanding of businessmen on how the divergent media operate.

In an informative study reflecting the state of business journalism in the West, Wood (1985) argued that to improve business reporting would be to upgrade the understanding of the audience. The study noted that journalists are sensitive to their audience and any economic sophistication valued by the audience would be met by the economic reporter. Wood (1985) stated that economists consider most economic matters reported in the press to be uninformed and sometimes misleading. The study looked at economic coverage focussing on its influences operating on the news organisations. The investigation accused reporters of covering stories with closed minds and looking for preconceptions that help maximise profits. It argued it is cost-effective for the news organ to associate inflation with individual prices rather than analyse the underlying macroeconomic forces. Likewise it is more profitable to interview an individual than to examine policy in responsible detail. Furthermore, the study accused the journalists of an inherited 'mind-set' to function in low-costs methods that result in cutting complexity into usable news products. The eventual outcome is bias or error laden information that is further intensified through incomplete analysis.

A study by Parker (1997) on journalism and economics highlighted that the profession needs to reform since it has served as an infinite source of frustration and criticism. The study acknowledged that how well we tell stories plays no small part in the stories we tell. Business journalism in the West is unique as it seems to straddle business, economics and journalism. In view of this an overview of the state of business news in Africa is required.

2.2 African business journalism

A study of the development of the business press in Africa sets some of the major predicaments which still plague the practice. One of the seminal works in economic (financial or business) journalism is a report based on the training of business journalism to fill the information vacuity created after independence with the change from colonial to national and local ownership in African media. According to Thomas (1978) in developing African countries, economics and finance are in a state of development hence economic and

financial (business) journalism is development journalism. The role of business journalism becomes paramount irrespective of any ideological lineage in view of the importance of development to African governments. Thomas (1978) argued that business reporting can either assist or thwart development. To fulfil this role the media must understand the economics of development. The report underscores the need of specialisation and the upgrading of business journalism. Thomas (1978) alluded to inadequate resources in news gathering, political obstacles, lack of status for the reporters, lack of access and poor use of sources as some of the factors impeding the professionalisation of African economic journalism. Similarly, Mabu (cited in Thomas, 1978: 48-49) lends credence to economic, political, social, and personal problems, which stand in the way of agreed norms in business journalism practice in Cameroon.

Asserting the dubious role political patronage and instability have impacted on business reporting, Kareithi et al. (2005:121-145) delineate material and the social environment as main concerns hindering the progress of reporting business in Africa. Low private capital investments and state dominance have negatively contributed towards enhancing business coverage in broadcasting. In the print sector insufficient print facilities, poor communication, and low literacy have hindered its distribution and consumption thus suffocating growth. The study pinpoints the main impediments in some countries: financial instability in Kenya, and lack of trained journalists in Tanzania, Ghana, and Zambia, for example. In Nigeria, a country that prides itself as one which has produced some of the finest minds in Africa's media, these resources are however being lost to public relations departments in other industries (Kareithi et al., 2005: 121-150).

Mogekwu (2005), in an investigation carried out on economics journalism in developing democracies in Africa, lodged the inability of journalism to reach out and effectively address socio-economic disparities to the different types of authoritarian regimes that the continent has harboured in the post-independence era. While highlighting the omnipresence of economics (production, distribution and consumption) in the daily lives of Africans, business news is described as boring, too technical, and irrelevant, due to the manner it is understood (by journalists). This problem is further aggravated in reporting business news. Mogekwu (2005) argues there are three levels of challenges. Firstly, business reporters fail to interpret business event, contextualise distant happenings, understand economic principles and make an effort to understand how immersed their audience are relative to the subject. Secondly,

the dilemma facing business news practice is also caused by the state which often hoards information in the name of 'national interest'. This triggers fear and dissuades journalists from reporting 'facts' deemed as demeaning to some figures in government. Thirdly, (economic) illiteracy amongst the population, their distrust in government, and lack of confidence in the surrounding environment, contribute in making communication with business journalism a difficult one to redress. While discarding 'copycatism' from western ways and advancing an African approach in African business journalism, Moge kwu calls for 'personalist' (see Merrill, 1996), namely a 'people-oriented' approach in African business reporting. This 'personalist' stance in journalism requires business journalists to make decisions based on the feelings and sensitivity of how it will affect both their audience and themselves.

Kariithi (2005) undertook a critical thematic analysis of online economic (business) news in print media from eight African countries and found that contrary to popular views there is actually an abundance of such news. However, the study noted the coverage of business was of poor quality, unreliable, episodic, and ideologically highly charged. The analysis recommended that media organisations on the continent should develop clear and coherent coverage strategies of business, use multiple and diverse sources, and be reflective. It criticises the celebratory tone of African business media towards private capital accumulation without connecting to the economic environment. Kariithi (2005) advocates critical proactive business reporting and proposes the media maintain a distance from economic policy-makers to critique and provide necessary checks.

Kareithi (2005) moved away from content and spotlighted some of the institutional hurdles facing business news in African. Major donors, like the World Bank, have favoured business journalism to cover foreign investment and national economic policy which tend to limit business journalism to coverage of corporations and government. Furthermore, this approach considers the state and not the people hence limiting the practice of business reporters to attendants of press conferences and re-writers of press releases. Business journalism must consider the multiplicity of economic players (these includes rural workers and consumers, retailers and special interest groups) fighting for better welfare. This follows from the complexity of the modern economy in which the state becomes less of a dominant player in an increasingly 'messier' environment. However, consumer news, which is "news dealing with events or ideas that affect readers in their role as buyers of goods and services in the

market place” (Kareithi, 2005:98) is under-reported in comparison to reporting on the economy and other business news beats. Emphasising the need to reverse this Kareithi (2005) warns of the danger of libel suits and advertisers’ counter-attacks. Furthermore, he highlights that lack of adequate resources and information access as well as poor training and education remain the main stumbling points to developing business journalism in Africa (Kareithi, 2005). The study recommends training, research, the creation of regional economic information network and data bases, and the formulation of ethical codes for African business journalism. Musa (cited in Kareithi, 2005:111-116) admits poor knowledge and understanding of the economy, low salaries, and ownership, are contributory factors that frustrate business journalism to positively contribute towards economic development in Cameroon.

The general direction of blame roots economic journalism malaise to one of education. Brand (2008) proposes that a change in existing curricula for business journalism training is needed for the practice to yield the required and desired social change. The current practice is an outcome of the present curriculum that does not inculcate the zeal to question or challenge accepted practice or procedures nor query some of the routine practices of their work (Brand, 2008). Based on the philosophy of teaching and learning Brand (2008) highlights good teaching needs to be ‘performative’: a praxis or social intervention that seeks to test and renovate contemporary journalistic practice. As such an integrated teaching strategy challenges the existing theory/practice dichotomy and upholds an approach to teach and question widespread practice. Brand (2008) also notes that the task of producing self-reflexive and critical graduates whose contribution should lead towards achieving social change is a difficult but attainable task. In the light of this the current study focuses on how business journalists produce news in Cameroon.

2.3 Brief political history of Cameroon

Cameroon is geographically situated in Central Africa sharing borders with Nigeria to the west, Chad to the north, Central African Republic to east with Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon and the Republic of Congo to the south. It accesses the Atlantic Ocean at the gulf of Guinea making it a key strategic port in the Central African sub-region. Cameroon’s nineteen million population consists of over 200 ethnic groups. Nevertheless the Anglophone-Francophone and the North and South divide remain as two potential tensions which result from the pre-

colonial, colonial and post-independence history of the country (DeLancey & DeLancey, 1999: xiv).

Cameroon has a rich colonial history starting with the arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th century even though the country only became colonised in 1884 by the Germans. This marks the creation of the first infrastructures, the positioning of Cameroon as a territory within the capitalist economic system and establishment of dependence upon Western Europe for development. The Germans also began the administrative attitude of dominance and paternalism over the population which have continued to be practiced up to current times. However, the Germans lost Cameroon after losing the First World War: the country was then divided between the two liberating allied nations, namely, France and Britain. The country moved from mandates of the League of Nations to the United Nations trust territories in 1946 at the end of the Second World War. French Cameroon gained independence in 1960 and was joined by Southern British Cameroon in October 1961 while the Northern British region became part of Nigeria. French and English were adopted as the official languages and news is produced in these languages. Unlike the French, the British paid less attention to improvements in their territory; this difference is due to their assessment of the trusteeship status of their mandates. However, both countries never really developed Cameroon in the interest of the local population creating a bifurcated state (Mamdani, 1996:16-18). Many scholars argue this inherited structure is being reinforced by post-colonial leaders resulting in a slow rate of development and oppression of the populace. Furthermore, Cameroon, like many other African countries, has internal political tensions which sometimes lead to violent confrontation between the people and the government. Fortunately the situation has not reached a worst case scenario as seen in other African countries leading to civil wars or multiple coup d'état attempts. However, these tensions have resulted in relative political instability in Cameroon with continuous exploitation of the natural and other resources while anticipated development suffers

Understanding Cameroon's political structure remains important in this research since it can be argued that the political arrangement has succeeded in cutting communication between the rural masses and the government. Post-independent president Amadou Ahidjo created a highly centralised state beginning in 1972 which his designated successor Paul Biya, who came to power in 1982, reinforced until the new wave of political liberation began blowing across the continent in the 1990s with the liberation of Nelson Mandela in South Africa

(DeLancey & DeLancey, 1999: xxv). This repressive machinery had its effects on free speech and free press which suffered under specially designed laws to destroy political opponents, rival organisations and censor the press. This background is useful in an attempt to trace the developments that have occurred in the media landscape in the Cameroon.

2.4 Media landscape

Muluh and Ndoh (2002:3) posit that the mass media in Cameroon are amongst the symbols of modernity in Africa. According to them, in Cameroon, the print, radio, and television (and one may logically include the new media) were introduced to facilitate political, social and economic development. An opposing perspective denotes the introduction of broadcasting was to serve the interest of Western powers (Nyamnjoh, 2005:44). However, this research highlights that this involvement has not been smooth from its insertion up to the present day. The first printing press in Cameroon began 450 years after its invention. Most of the newspapers that were in circulation before the introduction of the first printing press were evangelical ones. These include *Das Evangelische Monnatsblatt* (The Evangelical Newsletter), *Mulee-Ngea*, *Mwendi Ma Musango* and *ElolombeYa Cameroun* that was published in 1908. Tudesq (1995) notes most of these were published in local African languages. In current times there is hardly any newspaper that publishes in any of the local African languages. The first administrative newspaper was the *German Amtsblatt* (The Official Gazette) which was launched in 1914.

The first non-German paper to be published in Cameroon was the *L'Eveil du Cameroun* which was launched in 1919 to serve French interest. *Cameroon's News Sheet* became the first local newspaper containing mainly administrative news and was founded in Buea in the 1930s. Only two newspapers which began publication before independence exist today. *L'Effort* which was launched in 1955 survives because of its apolitical nature and is mainly used by the Catholic Church for evangelical purposes. The other is the *La Presse du Cameroun* which began as a 12 page weekly in 1955 and today is published as the *Cameroon Tribune*. Newspapers such as *La Voix du Peuple Cameroun*, *Le Journal des Villages*, *L'ExpressWonja*, *Kamerun Mon Pays*, and *La Liberte* were publications that openly disliked the French administration and were seen as a source of conflict (Tudesq, 1995:54). Such newspapers all disappeared at the dawn of independence since national interest became the unwritten rule which at the time favoured the loyalist who took power at the end of colonisation.

In Anglophone Cameroon, the *Cameroon Times* and *Cameroon Champion* were politically biased newspapers and both ran out of business after the plebiscite of 1961. Their main foci were both consumed after reunification. This marks the beginning of unfavourable media laws for papers whose mission did not seem to ally with those of government. This led Tanjong and Ngwa (2002: 20) to argue that the Cameroonian media tended to “operate in the framework of the socio-economic and political context within which it is found.”

Mixed ownership was the favoured policy in the Cameroonian media sector. The government became a key player in the news production industry. It owns the largest and most influential media outlets alongside individual and corporate ownership (Wete, 1986). The history of broadcasting dates back to 1941 with the creation of *L'Enfant de la Guerre* (The child of war) to keep the colonial administration informed about the war. Today the state owns one national radio, ten provincial (today regional) and several frequency modulation (FM) stations. In Cameroon the state considers all forms of radio (and television) communication as public property. Furthermore, it claims it regulates these in the best interest of the people. Within this framework rural radios were established in Cameroon following an appraisal that the national and FM radio services never achieved nationwide coverage especially in the remote areas (Muluh & Ndoh, 2002:8).

There are three international broadcasters with FM transmitters: the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC); the *Radio France Internationale* (RFI); *Africa Number One* (Africa No 1) (Campbell, 1996: 18-20; Nyamnjoh, 2005:54). There are many locally owned private radio stations that cover mostly the cities and towns. These include the missionary, community, rural and commercial radio stations. Most of these, however, operate without licenses or incomplete registration formalities. This administrative setback nonetheless works against media freedom since these lapses are used to keep it under check (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Most of the private radio services commenced after liberalisation in 1990.

The state owns the national radio-television corporation, the CTRV. The CRTV is the only broadcaster with almost nation-wide coverage. Its market share in the urban centres is only challenged by new entrants into the sector. Cameroon has a number of privately owned television stations amongst which Spectrum Television (STV) and Canal II are the leaders. There are also several cable television providers accessing signals from a company called AEA which began operations in the 1990s. These cable television providers include DSTV

through Multi-choice South Africa and Canal Horizon from France (Muluh & Ndoh, 2002: 15; Nyamnjoh, 2005:151).

Unlike broadcasting there is a high activity in the print media sector in Cameroon. The Union of Cameroonian Journalists (UCJ) records a leap in the number of newspapers and magazines from 50 to 500 between 2000 and 2005 (MINCOM 2005b; UCJ: 2005). The leading *Cameroon Tribune* which is the state newspaper was launched in 1974 and has nationwide coverage and the highest print run of 60,000 copies a day (Nyamnjoh, 2005:155). It is the only national daily published in English and French with a readership of 20.02% (Cretes, 2005). Most of the other papers are published in one of the two official languages. These include newspapers like *Le Messenger*, *La Nouvelle Expression*, *Mutation*, *Le Popoli*, *The Herald*, *The Post* and *L'Effort Camerounais*. Most Cameroonian newspapers are tabloids and are regionally based. There are two news agencies in Cameroon: CAMNEWS which is state-run and Reuters (Cretes, 2005).

2.5 Legal framework

The environment in which the media operates today in Cameroon still leaves much to desire. Prior to the promulgation of the 1990 Freedom of Social Communication Law (Republic of Cameroon, 1990b) that liberalised free speech, the media in Cameroon were practicably very tough terrain for journalists and others working in this sector. Some analysts acclaim this law as liberating by citing transparency and the large number of independently owned media outlets as measuring yards sticks (Paquot & Abega, 2000:6) but others think otherwise. Nyamnjoh (2005:168-9), for example, argues the legislation on 'Freedom of Mass Communication' should not be taken at face value even though it is an improvement on the previous measures because critical analysis betrays the good faith in the document. He highlights that of the 90 articles there are 35 articles that remain repressive to the press but that the very nature in which the laws are created makes it somewhat difficult to demonstrate this. According to Munzu (1993) the law treats journalists as people who are always working against state interests or harbouring the intention of hurting others.

This law does not oblige public authorities to give journalists access to administrative documents. It allows unwarranted seizure of newspapers by the administration without prior notification, violation of newspaper offices and premises by law enforcement personnel without the consent of a judge. It allows the banning of some newspapers in pre-election periods; it gives the minister of communication the power to censor and suppress the

appearance of opposition candidates during presidential elections (N'Thepe, 1993). This legislation does not allow citizens who are based outside the country the right to operate newspapers in Cameroon. The legal demands of newspapers to deposit two copies of each publication at several ministerial departments twenty-four hours after publication indicate the government's intentions to police information coming from abroad (Nyamnjoh, 2005:169).

Nyamnjoh (2005) posits that although the 1990 laws were revised in 1996 to water down the thorny issue of censorship most of the stiff sanctions remain. He notes the process of starting a newspaper has been tightened. Additionally, this turbulent relationship between the government and the private press takes to the fore the fear of the administration to handle dissident views and its blatant detest for critical publications (Nyamnjoh, 2005). As such, according to Eribo and Tanjong (1998) Cameroon is ensnared in a vicious loop of a gagged press and underdevelopment. However, attempts have been made by both the government and journalists to bridge the tension through the creation of regulatory media bodies. To appreciate how much can be done requires an understanding of the mission of some of the key media regulators in this present dispensation.

2.6 Regulation

The National Communications Council (NCC) was created in conformity to the existing legislation went operational in February 1992. This move conforms to a policy framework for Africa proposed by Blake and supported by other African scholars (Blake, 1997:262). This body constitutes elected members who hold a consultative status. However, its capacity to function as an independent body is seriously compromised by the appointment of key officials by the government. It is arguably true that most of the national communications councils/commissions or authorities in Africa are not independent even when some purport to be autonomous (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 269). The NCC has thus failed to take any initiatives of its own (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 151) and remains close to the powers in place. Its initial recourse to hide behind the unavailability of both means and offices has been partially resolved by UNESCO (Paquot & Abega. 2000:7). The second state created regulator, the Cameroon Media Council (CMC), is essentially similar to the NCC. Its functional difference is that unlike the NCC which reports to the head-of-state, the CMC reports to the prime minister. To counter this administrative regulatory pressure journalists have organised self-regulatory bodies but the prevailing working conditions are making self policing unattainable.

The Union of Cameroon Journalists (UCJ) stands as one of the biggest and most influential self-regulatory unions of journalists. Its former president now manages the state radio and television corporation, the CRTV. Others remain small and fractured by in-house fighting plunging the sector into a crisis. Amongst these are Cameroon Association of English Speaking Journalist (CAMASEJ), the National Syndicate of Cameroonian Journalists (SNJC), the Association of Independent Journalists of Cameroon (AJIC) and the Association of Professional African Women in Communications (APAC).

Paquot and Abega (2000) noted economic hardship, public disillusionment, and lack of trust, as some of the problems resulting from this debacle. The devaluation of the francs CFA caused sales of newspapers to plummet resulting in journalists and news organs taking to unorthodox methods for survival. Bribery and hand-outs inserted themselves and is now a scar on the face of news journalism in the country. They assert that failure to democratise the political sphere and its eventual setbacks on the economy has somehow been blamed on the media's failure to play its watchdog role. The end product is lack of trust among the public vis-à-vis the media due to its poor quality especially in providing trustworthy information and on corruption both in the media and other state organs.

This study chose the state-owned newspaper the *Cameroon Tribune* because it has gone through tough political and economic situations such as the transition from a one-party to a multiparty democracy. It has also survived the introduction of private media organs across the different media sectors and economic structural adjustment. There are three cardinal reasons for this choice:

- The *Cameroon Tribune* is the only bilingual daily with a print run of 60,000 (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 155). The other papers publish in one of the two official languages with circulation mostly in provincial capitals. Furthermore, these papers also experience huge limitations in terms of personnel and other resources necessary in the production of news.
- The *Cameroon Tribune* is linked to the government and this opens its reporters to important news sources and its staff-link is supported by the national news agency, Camnews, and the government information units all over the country (Funge et al., 2002:57; Paquot & Ponthieu, 2000:11). The newspaper is tightly coupled to the

government which remains suspicious of the local independent press and treats them as subversives (Tansa cited in Mokegwu, 2005:115).

- Furthermore, there is a unique view of business news reflected in the *Cameroon Tribune*, which emphasises the economy and information provided by the ministry of economy and finance.

Additionally the continued ownership of the biggest newspaper by government is at variance with the notion of economic liberalisation (privatisation) and influences the understanding and making of business news which ignores the key economical players. The *Cameroon Tribune* reports business news under the broad spectrum of the economy which is usually secondary to political news coverage.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter gives an overview of some of the tensions and challenges that business journalist's face in the West, in Africa and, Cameroon in particular. The basis contention of this chapter is that the African context in which business journalists operate is different and unique from that of the West. Furthermore, Cameroon's unique regulatory media landscape and legal frameworks both play a key role in how business journalist produce business news. In view of this it is very interesting to use the *Cameroon Tribune* as a research site.

Chapter 3: Literature review and theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

The background to news conceptualisation and a definition of business news are presented in the chapter. Theories that are relevant and useful in this study are presented. Several studies are reviewed and synthesised in an attempt to understand the nature of business news in Africa. This study uses different understandings of news as variously define in combination to the background and evolution of business news to arrive at a workable definition of business news. Focusing on Schudson's model insights from the sociology of news production are used to explain the construction of business news at the *Cameroon Tribune*. This investigation draws from Shoemaker's gatekeeping model to elucidate how the daily practices of journalists, interviewed for this case study; affect the way events get processed and become business news. The practice of business news in Africa is presented and discussed. A theoretical framework is developed to guide the study.

3.2 Defining news

To unpack the definition of news warrants its justification in the first instance. Everyone needs news in their daily lives since it helps to tell what we experience directly and somehow renders remote happenings observable and meaningful (Malotch & Lester, 1974: 101). "News is what a chap who doesn't care much about anything wants to read and its only news until he's read it and after that it's dead" (Waugh, 1943: 66). However such definitions leave theoretical gaps in understanding news. Attempts to define news can be traced from three different key theoretical perspectives. Firstly, empiricist scholars work from the assumption that news is a presentation of a series of facts (Dahlgren 1992; Soloski 1997; Tuchman, 2002). Similarly, many researchers have argued that journalism is committed to writing about what occurs in the world. This realist perspective holds that journalists go out into society, make observations about what is done and what is said, and report them accurately. Put simply, news allows the 'facts' to speak for themselves and reflect reality.

A perspective termed post-structuralism is rooted in constructivism. This view emphasises the use of language in the construction of news. According to Hartley (1982: 13) news is received or realised (in both senses of the word it is made real and understood as such) in

language. Similarly, Hall (1997: 25) contends that things on their own do not mean anything unless we construct meaning using concepts and signs. Furthermore, Hall (1997) notes that it is not things in the material world that convey meaning but we make such meaning as social actors through the use of our language systems. Hall (1997:33) concludes that Saussure's greatest achievement has been to make us focus on language itself, revealing how it works and the role it plays in production of meaning. However, the news, as has been noted, does not select itself. Other questions are raised to question journalists' assertion of the existence of ground rules that lay claim on news values, importance, significance and news worthiness (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001: 261). Actually no such rules may be written or codified by news organisations but it is acknowledged that they only exist in daily practice and in knowledge gained on the job (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001: 261)

News has been and is still being commonly described using diverse news values as propounded by Galtung and Ruge (1965). Some of these values include: frequency, unambiguity, negativity, and reference to elite nations/persons (see section 3.3.2). To some news draws on contemporary understandings of significance of events as rules for human behaviour, institutional behaviour and motives (Tuchman, 1978:209). In the words of Malotch and Lester (1974: 101) news is "... a kind of accounting procedure, accomplished according to the occasioned event of those in the media". A less procedural definition of news by Gauthier (2005: 52) proposes that "... news is not self-referential: it is always supported by something else". This brings to the fore biases in news which tend to represent views of people in high position as validated by news-workers to the detriment of the less privilege in society (Manning, 2001). On the other hand less privileged views get media attention only through the consent of hegemony (Hall, 1989; Hartley, 2002). News then becomes a discourse used to govern the way a topic can be talked about and reasoned about thus influencing how ideas are put into practice and used to control the conduct of others (Foucault in Hall, 1997: 36). At this point the news revolves around some values which journalists prescribe to as news which also have a bearing on the views of the news organ and intended audience.

A third perspective acknowledges news as a construct (Fishman, 1980; Schudson, 2000 & 2003; Tuchman, 1972, 1974 & 1978). In the words of Gauthier (2005:51) this perception "...justifiably opposes a naïve, pre-critical empiricism which identifies news journalism as a

result of the natural order of things or reflecting a totally given environment”. These structuralists (see Fishman, 1980; Gauthier, 2005; Schudson, 1978) believe there are no ‘facts’ out there apart from human observers. The assumption is that events are not events until they are interpreted by human beings. From this constructivist point of view, news is the construction of events by media organisations (Manning, 2001). In this vein, Hall (1973) states the media do not simply and transparently report events which are naturally newsworthy in themselves. He concludes news is the result of a process requiring sorting and selecting events. The discourse of constructivism is based upon the assumption that absolute truth is impossible. In other words we as human beings are inescapably biased (Poerkson, 2008: 295). Scholars (such as Hall, 1973; Tuchman, 1978) question what guides the selection of news stories, how news angles get chosen and why so many other events never make their way to be reported as news. In essence the notion of news as a construct is useful to this study to critically understand exactly how business journalists in the context of Cameroon construct news from events that unfold.

3.2.1 Historical background of business news

The origins of business journalism can be traced as far back as the mid 15th century Europe to the Fugger family who founded a banking dynasty which loaned money to emperors and dukes (Roush, 2006: 14). Business journalism began as a private recourse for the Fuggers as they required the latest information about the interest rates in lands afar to keep them in business. Thus the first business reporters were hired correspondents for this family sending private letters that conveyed the current prices for products and services, the deaths of kings and queens, and the arrival and departure of ships (Roush, 2006).

Roush (2006: 16) notes that growing interest in the type of services started by the Fuggers progressed into building the first two stock exchanges: Antwerp in Holland and London in the United Kingdom. Prior to the stock exchange, newsletters called ‘*price currents*’ styled along the lines of the Fugger’s letters developed in 17th century Amsterdam made Holland the European business centre before being overtaken by London. He posits, as most historians have argued, that the hundreds of letters sent to the Fuggers helped them decide whether to lend money or not and this is what has developed into the complex system reporting about business today, such as the news about stocks and bonds. This marks the shift in business journalism from the private interest of some wealthy and privilege individuals to a public

enterprise of professional reporting backed by the interest to sell business news as a commodity in the market place. These are exemplified in news of ship movement, during wars, during the colonisation, and during coup plots (in recent African history).

However, there are some key turning points in the development of business journalism. At the beginning of the 19th century, the railroads, such as *The Railway Express*, *The Railway Standard*, *The American Railroad Journal*, and *The Railway Mail*, catered for business interest. They covered the steam engine and its technological developments to the amount and types of goods freighted along each rail line. Business reporting had another boost with the arrival of the penny press. These low-cost newspapers increased readership, with sales of papers such as *The Herald*, situated on Wall Street in New York, devoting sizable space to news about business (Roush, 2006: 25). At the dawn of the 20th century muckraking gave another important twist to business reporting. This form of journalism started what is today known as investigative journalism. The muckrakers departed from rumours and hearsay style of reporting to the use of personal documents, interviews and observations, to report about bribery, corruption and other forms of economic and political scandals. Business news writing was given another stimulus with the coming of television that also began reporting about companies and the economy and how they affect people's lives.

It can be argued the most important transformation in this form of journalism came in the 1990s. The dramatic turnaround is explained by the huge rise in stock markets and the use of the internet as a business tool. Business news and information were travelling at the same high speed online as the selling of goods and services. As a consequence, the numbers of journalists and editors took an unprecedented rise from 4,200 to over 12,000 (Henriques cited in Roush, 2006). The space allotted for business in newspapers more than doubled from seven (7) to 15% in the same period (Simons cited in Roush, 2006). Despite this growing interest of business media for the corporate world, the relationship between both has never been cordial. Roush (2006: 225) describes it as a love-hate relationship while MacDougall (1981:2) notes business executives accuse journalists of giving profits a bad name. Today, the media and the business it covers are adversarial; many scholars have argued that while the relationship improves by the day the existing status quo is better to avoid errors of the past. Business journalism has made a significant impact on society: whereas many fail to recognise its watchdog role, it needs to be there to improve growth in society (Reed & Lewin, 2005:9; Roush, 2006:235). Carey (2007:7) notes that 19th century journalism has been invented to

satisfy the thirst for a modern desire of experience. Merchants, bankers and tradesmen need the latest, fastest and most reliable information to be certain about their business deals. As the focus of business becomes centred on the market, fortunes change overnight as the stock rise and fall (Carey, 2007: 6). In terms of the African business media Brand (2010:25) stated that early business newspapers were arguably the purveyors of business intelligence. For example, *The Cape Town Gazette* and *African Advertiser* carried government proclamations and weekly reports of Cape Town markets (see Brand, 2010). This brief history opens our understanding to both the evolution of the business press and how its role and function is changing over time.

3.2.2 Defining business journalism and practice in Africa

There are different terms that scholars use to describe business journalism. Tuchman (1978: 163) notes in the early 20th century practice, news about the corporate sector of the economy became known as financial news and was separated from the rest of the news product. However, this early business news reporting had its setbacks since as a separate product, “...economics journalism is charged with being factually sloppy; oversimplifying, sensationalizing; focusing on personalities over issues, discrete events over trends, the short-run over the long-run, and bad news over the good” (Reese et al., 1987: 137). Parker (1997:4) notes that economics journalism should report information about the economy and offer explanations for its performance. While arguing that the business press should provide information to investors to help them make successful decisions Tambini (2008: 8) sees the business journalism’s role as that of the ‘fourth estate’ in relation to corporate power, holding both business and public authorities to account and to investigate malpractice.

This study understands business news as being what gets written about business and the economy (Roush, 2006: 8). It is apt at this point to note this study does not make any difference in the usage of the terms business/financial/economic/consumer news. The reasons for this confluence are explained by the way in which business journalism is practiced in Africa. The researcher does later on attempt to define some of the components which for now are jointly termed ‘business journalism’.

From an African perspective, business journalism is “... making economic or business news available to all” (Mogekwu, 2005:62). He argues that the multi-layered approach of news flow that has been problematic on the continent from independence, has unfortunately

plagued business reporting in Africa making it an issue for a selected few. He articulates this position along three main foci. Firstly, economics journalism in Africa is boring because of present day journalistic attitudes. The business reporters do not treat economic news as a 'beat' with a difference. The 'beat system' allows media organisation to assign reporters to potentially newsworthy areas (Ettema et al. and Tuchman cited in Mabweazara, 2011). Moge kwu (2005) notes that economic reporters on the continent lack the required knowledge to report on the economy and thus cannot indulge in interpretative writings. Secondly, the state is blamed for hoarding information, the use of euphemisms or double speaking, and in some cases, using scare tactics to dissuade effective coverage of the financial situation of the country. Thirdly, impediments toward the 'massification' of business journalism can be related to the public and this hinge on issues of high level of illiteracy, their perception and confidence in government. In this context Moge kwu (2005) recommends that business journalist on the continent should improve on their economic reporting skills, give business journalism fair treatment and make it humane to increase its consumption.

According to Kareithi (2005: 98), who is one of the authorities on business journalism in Africa, business news is "... about a new kind of product that would be of interest not just to the share holders of the company producing it, but also to potential buyers". Kareithi (2005) further breaks down this all encompassing definition of African business news into three broad categories. Firstly, economic reporting means covering the economy with a focus on reports about formulation and implementation of government policies. Similarly, economic news may centre on the impact of social policies and how the public reacts to such policies. Secondly, business news may constitute reports on the operation and management of corporate organisations. This requires the media to give details about important happenings in companies and other business establishments and their eventuality on the shares for stakeholders and the general public as end consumers. Thirdly, consumer news is coverage of events and ideas affecting readers in their role as buyers of goods and services. Kareithi (2005) describes business reporting in Africa as fitting into the dictates of undemocratic social theory. According to Kareithi (2005) journalism training from Bretton Woods and other institutions has oriented financial reporters to emphasise the state, and not its people, is the engine of economic prosperity. Their news emphasis covers foreign investments, corporations, government bureaucracy and the comings and departure of aid agencies. Small

scale farmers and enterprises, retailers and distributors as well as the small civil society groups lobbying for the welfare in some small communities are not included.

Following up the development of the business press in Africa, Kareithi et al. (2005) undertook empirical studies of several African countries, such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria. In their work they arrived at similar findings to obstacles faced by the economic press in African. Their studies highlighted that apart from political greed to rule, social and material conditions have a significant role to play. Amongst these are limited capital investment, shortages of raw materials, and an inadequacy in infrastructural distribution; fragile economies and their consequent weak advertising income upon which the media depend for survival. Their study notes that in Kenya, even though investigative news and other opinion columns are commonplace in business news coverage today, financial reporting has gone through some very difficult times. When the financial beat started in the 1970s there was no distinction between financial and business news. Economic news reporters had to focus on government funded projects because of the absence of a vibrant private sector for business stories. This definitional mix meant most of the early financial news was development stories coming from the agricultural sector. In addition the reporters lacked the required training and skills to give in-depth reports on the economic issues in the developing economy. That notwithstanding the economic press in Kenya has been treated with a lot of heavy-handedness by the government and its survival has been achieved through conditions making newsroom activities none desirable. Government hostilities towards this growing beat (and this can be likened to general media) included interference with the processes of news gathering, intimidation, proscription and sometimes impounding of published copies.

Likewise the actions of untrained economic and reporters of other news beats in Tanzania have been the source of tension between the government and the media on one hand and between the media and the public on the other. Kareithi et al. (2005) note that 'poaching' of reporters heightened in 1993 after the enactment of the Broadcasting Service Act allowing the operations of private media houses alongside existing public media organs. The sudden rise in demand for media personnel peaked when high-paying media organs began competing with state-owned media outlets. This scarcity was further worsened by academic staff in journalism training institutions because they accepted better salaried jobs in the media industry. The situation meant anyone with some flair in writing of finance and economics

could easily rise up the editorial ladder. This had devastating implications on business journalism. Defamation and sensational journalism flourished with the sole ambition of increasing readership and eventually attracting more advertising revenue. While litigation against defamation resulted in the closure of some newspapers, the present fate of business journalism in Tanzania is bleak. The country only has two 'serious' business newspapers thriving alongside more than ten high-circulating sensational newspapers flourishing on rumours and sex scandals (Kareithi et al., 2005).

The progress in Zambian financial journalism has been slow in the last decade. This is contrary to the expectations of the public at the dawn of multiparty politics and imposed economic liberalisation that gripped the country in the 1990s. This saw the privatisation of over 200 state corporations which meant the government no longer controlled commodity prices and interest rates. However, Zambia faced the same predicaments as other African countries in contextualising the fast developments in its economy to the rest of the citizenry. Kareithi et al. (2005) noted the Zambian media lacked the sophistication, human and material resources, to stay abreast with the unfolding economic scenario. Despite the similarity of the situation in most of the countries reported in this study, a very different scenario unfolded in Nigeria.

Whereas most African newsrooms were void of well equipped personnel in Nigeria almost every news organ ran a business news desk. Its defining moments came in the 1980s following the country's debt crisis, falling commodity prices, and national mismanagement that the country went through in the 1970s and 1980s. Trading boomed again after Nigeria accepted the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) currency devaluation, privatisation, debt rescheduling, and removal of subsidies culminating with it embracing free market conditions which disregarded local realities (Kareithi et al., 2005). The preference to import, rather than produce, and its failure to hinge development on agriculture, sowed the seeds of future economic trouble. This uncertainty however meant an explosion for the business press. The disappointments of the imposed measures to heal the Nigerian economy had negative effects on local business journalism that had encouraged economists and business graduates to join the ranks of specialist writers. Subsequent military regimes targeted particularly business journalism; closures occurred due to their clampdown on the press. Kareithi et al. (2005) cite the *Business Concord* and *Financial Guardian* (both produced by the Concord and Guardian

groups) as examples of specialised business newspapers that disappeared during this difficult period. While there is hope of rekindling Nigerian business journalism from its slumber there is a need to increase the purchasing power of potential buyers and curb the brain drain for business journalism to succeed. Most experienced reporters and editors are leaving the country for better paying jobs abroad.

In Cameroon business journalism is still in its embryonic stages. The practice, like elsewhere in Africa, has its hurdles and setbacks. While an economic reporter is treated with a lot of caution by state resources' persons, the practice has been criticised for inaccuracies and misrepresentation of facts (see Tansa in Kareithi, 2005). Cameroon's business journalism suffers from lack of understanding of basic economic concepts which is later compounded in news reports. Another hindrance to the Cameroonian business reporter is the very low level salaries which encourage the practice of 'gombo' reporting wherein reporters do cover business events in return for 'taxi money'. 'Gombo journalism' is the common name for 'brown envelopes' and other forms of incentives given to reporters and media organisations after covering an event (Ndangam, 2009). These few cases however do not represent the rest of Africa. We must be mindful not to make the same mistake as other previous media scholars by treating Africa as a country and therefore assume that since the state and media relationships are alike in a few countries these characteristics and interactions can be generalised across the continent (Nyamnjoh, 2005).

3.3 Theoretical framework: sociology of news production

Studies on the sociology of news have generally focused on investigating the ways in which news organisations manage the process by which information is gathered and transformed into news. Studies have also explored the pressures encouraging journalists to follow similar patterns in news construction (Manning, 2001). This indicates that a long term relationship exists between sociology and the evolution of some journalism scholarship (Zelizer, 2004). According to Schudson (2000 & 2003) many of these studies have delved into approaches seeking to understand news from economic, organisational, cultural, political, and historical perspectives. This study seeks to understand the relationship between journalists, namely 'gatekeeping' and how this relates to the wider socio-political environment within which news is sourced.

Tuchman (1978: 182) states people from a sociological perspective are social actors. Two approaches to news construction emanate from this assumption. First, the traditional (positivist) position argues that it is after an objective study of social structure that the works of news-workers are products of socialisation. The underlying belief is that society creates consciousness. Opposing this is the interpretative position which assumes norms exist in society which restrain or enhance the projects of social actors. This study departs from the positivist position because it assumes news to be dependent on the social structure and not on the activities of news-workers and news organisations (Roscho, 1975; Tuchman 1978:183). According to the traditional view there are norms and attributes in the social structure which intrinsically stipulate what is either of importance or interest to citizens. If news were to perform such a role then they conclude news reflects society. Hence the news becomes a mirror through which societal needs, interests, and concerns are thus reflected upon. It logically follows that society's structure and institutions must first change in order for the definition of news to change.

This study departs from this approach and embraces the interpretive view which discusses news using the window frame metaphor. This approach gives agency to news-workers and news organisations in the production of news. Berger and Luckmann (1964; 1966) speak of these as the world we were born in while Schultz (in Schudson, 2000) asserts the world is shared by our contemporaries and co-associates. This more active position argues news-workers do not only simultaneously invoke and apply but help to define these attributes. Situating this in news production it is the conscious decision of the news managers to decide which business stories make the headlines or front pages.

Unlike the traditionalists, the interpretivists understand news not just as being descriptive but something that defines and shapes events. Berger and Luckmann (1964) stress institutions objectify meaning through socialisation. They argue that social meaning constituted in social relations becomes incorporated into institutional and organisational rules which may become transformed as resources to justify action (in Tuchman, 1978: 195). These words may later be modified, codified and taken out of context and may become ahistorical when passed on without their history. Tuchman (1978) depicts this ideology in the structure we fail to realise as we take for granted the emergence of news from legitimate institutions, namely banks or government sections involved in finance and economic activities, and from a centralised sources (wire agencies) handed down from the 19th century.

Another key attribute favouring this interpretative approach, in relation to this study, is the concept of social change. A common strand between interpretative views and traditionalist views revolves around the consensus that deviant acts should be considered as news. However, these two views differ on how societal change can be achieved. Interpretative scholars do not buy the traditional hypothesis that deviants may 'modify' the social structure (Tuchman, 1978:184). These scholars uphold that news stories paradoxically advances what is deviant and what is normative. Stories about positively sanctioned acts and their actors carry the resources for defining both conformity and deviance in society. Malotch and Lester (1974) posit that stories about striking women groups, generally reported as soft news, may become hard news and described as a gathering of people in an inappropriate place and at inappropriate times. Using this interpretative logic it becomes evident that each story without recourse implies or affirms the presence or absence of the other type. Business journalists construct news from social interactions in society. This perspective is significant in the current study bearing in mind that business news in Cameroon has been criticised for failing to report on corruption and since perpetrators go unpunished thus their acts have become fashionable or the norm (Nyamnjoh, 2005:123 & 2001: 45).

The sociology of news however has its own weakness. Although each strand in this body of theory is a useful and valuable way of framing the operations of journalism, they are not individually or collectively exhaustive. One major flaw in this approach is that it ignores the possibility of change in the nature of news production even though news production itself is in a constant state of flux. For example, new communication technologies have offered challenges that unsettle the working practices and routines of journalists. Additionally, Schudson (2005) highlights traditional weaknesses of the several unilateral approaches within existing theory that have failed to synergise.

3.3.1 Schudson's model on the construction of news

The concept 'constructing the news' has been referred to variously by different scholars; Gieber (1964: 173) says "News is what newspapermen make it." Cohen and Young (1973: 97) write news is "... manufactured by journalists". Fishman (1980: 14) notes that "News is the result of the methods news workers employ. Newsmen report the world as they see it -the facts, facts and nothing but facts" while conceding occasional bias, sensationalism, or inaccuracies. Journalists view the social science approach as offensive forcing them to

fiercely defend and maintain that news is never faked (Schudson, 2000: 176). Tuchman (1976: 97) however states that “To say the news report is a story, no more, but no less, is to demean news, or to accuse it of being fictitious”. Constructionists argue that like all public documents, the news possesses its own internal validity as a constructed reality. This study incorporates new insights advanced by Schudson (2005) which proposes four main approaches to sociological research into journalism. By discussing the political and economic factors separately, Schudson (2005) departs from his earlier position in which he conflates the two under political economy. He argues that political economy overlooks the fact that economic and political spheres interrelate by drawing from the traditional Marxist approach which argues the economies constitute the primary base and politics constitutes the secondary superstructure. This oversight leads to analysis of media institutions that condemns them for their profit orientations and overlooks the way other factors such as political institutions and markets structure their operations. With these understandings however, this study uses Schudson (2000: 177) which advances three perspectives through which news making can be investigated and these are presented below.

3.3.1.1 Political economy

The political economy perspective relates the outcome of the news process to state institutions, the economy, and the economic foundation of the news organisation. According to Murdock (1982) this strand of the British media studies is the most theoretically sophisticated. Murdock (cited in Schudson, 2000:178) states that the link between the larger political economy of the society and the daily practice of journalism is ‘oblique’. The notion of ownership and its influence on news coverage is further complicated due to rapid growth and different systems of ownership mix within the sector (Noam 1997 in Schudson, 2000: 178).

Bagdikian (1997) observes that only a few corporations control most of American media. On the other hand Schudson (2000:180) advances that where the media are not controlled by corporations they are generally the voice of the state. Focusing on business, Schudson argues further that links between market and ownership, and ownership and news content, is not obvious. Demers` (1996) comparative study on the impact of chain ownership and independent ownership of American newspapers on news content did not reveal any conclusive differences. To Baker (1994: 19) these differences are “tepid, hardly motivating any strong critique of chain ownership or prompting any significant policy interventions”.

Some scholars contend that corporate ownership in the media tends to compromise the democratic promises as less voice are heard (McChesney, 1997). Conversely, other scholars dismiss the above view and suggest that what actually prevails in the near absence of commercial organisation, or in the worst scenario, is the total domination of the media by the state (Schudson, 2000). The notion of political economy in the case of the *Cameroon Tribune* is essential to throw light on how news is produced bearing in mind that it is owned by the state.

From an ideological point of view the distinction between ‘market’ and ‘state’ organisation of the media is vital and informative. However, there are other important differences that can be effectively unmasked by an ideological approach. As Hallin and Mancini (1984) argue, media organisations may offer dissenting voices and publicise scandalous news mainly to attain self legitimation and in the process further the legitimation of the capitalist system as a whole. For instance readers in Eastern Europe (and today most of sub Saharan Africa) have come to subscribe that the only reading worth doing of the official media was reading ‘between the lines’ (Schudson, 2000: 182).

3.3.1.2 Social organisation

The social organisational view originating from sociology, as the second perspective, concerns itself with understanding how the efforts of journalists are restricted by professional and organisational requirements. Drawing from organisational or bureaucratic theory, Schudson (2000:186) posits that if news is seen as a production of social ‘reality’ then it can be taken to be the social manufacture of an organisational product. Hence, it can be studied like any other manufactured goods.

Based on the premise that members of an organisation ‘modified their own personal values in accordance with the requisites of the organisation’, Epstein (in Schudson 2000: 186) postulates that, “one can study organisations, not individuals, to analyse the ‘output’ they produce-in this case, news”. For example, this relates to how some of the technical and logistical features of news production which are take for granted in advanced economies, limit news coverage in developing countries (Schudson, 2000:186). This is evident in Africa where business and business media outlets are limited to the towns and cities because of breakdown in transportation (for the Ghanaian case see Twumasi, 1985). According to

organisational theorists it does not matter who these journalists are since the news remains the same. Schudson (2000: 186) maintains they shall all be quickly socialised into the values and routines of day-to-day journalism. A cross national culture study of professional patterns of education and labour patterns attest that there is little difference in professional values of journalists (Sparks & Splichal, 1989). This suggests that there is a sense of some shared professional culture resulting from the 'global newsroom' (Gurevitch et al., 1993). Inasmuch as this new culture may increase western style business and promote a liberal model of market-based journalism in Eastern Europe (Mickiewicz in Schudson, 2000: 187), there is evidence that most journalists, from different countries, who cover the same political event, share common themes (Hallin & Mancini, 1984).

However, some American scholars argue that professional bias cannot protect against bias coming from social backgrounds (see Lichter et al. in Schudson, 2000). Hence Gans (in Schudson, 2000) argues that the news product reflects the personal views of journalists rather than those views of the officials whose position they are reporting. As a state owned newspaper the *Cameroon Tribune* produces news that is scrutinised by the state within the broad sphere of the profession (media law, code of ethics and editorial policy).

3.3.1.3 Cultural approach

The third perspective is the 'cultural' approach. It seeks to explain the influence of the cultural traditions and other symbolic systems on news making. This perspective does not take into consideration the economic foundation and the work routines in the news organisation. Since this study intends to understand the making of business news in a state owned newspaper it focuses on the political economy and social organisational perspectives, respectively. The cultural view fails to address key elements that become very instrumental in the analyses. It is on this premise that the cultural approach is omitted in this study even though its inclusion would probably increase the understanding of making business news in Cameroon. According to Garnham (1990:10) news is "a material product and there are political economic, social and cultural dimensions to understanding its production."

Schudson's model is important for this study because it helps us to understand the role of political pressures in news making practices. Given that the *Cameroon Tribune* is a state-owned newspaper, this model allows us to analyse how the social organisation and political economy impact on news production. The model allows us to explain how the *Cameroon*

Tribune compromises the democratic promise and, in another light, serves to legitimise the present status quo in society. Similarly, this approach helps explicate how the organisation promotes certain values and a professional culture resulting in the production a particular type of business news. In the same way, even though not dealt with in-depth, Schudson's cultural approach elucidates how the absence of any code of ethics or in-house policies for the newspaper contributes in shaping what gets produced as business news in the context of this study. However understanding what news is depends very much on how well events conform or deviate from referential news values as postulated by Galtung and Ruge (1965). The following section therefore discusses their 1965 study.

3.3.2 News values

The 1965 publication of *Two Norwegians* by Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge has been recorded as the landmark study of news values and news selection (Watson, 1998). The purpose of the study was to determine how foreign events become 'news' (Harcup & O'Niell, 2001: 262). It focused on the selection of foreign news by the Norwegian media based on three international crises: the Congo, Cuba, and Cyprus. The main findings of this study are the twelve (12) news factors that have been cited continuously as 'prerequisites' in the selection of news at the beginning of the century (Herbert, 2000:72-73). Even though these factors are alluded to in key news production texts (see Cohen & Young, 1973) and accepted as the key in explaining news values (Hjavar, 2002: 94; McQuail, 1994: 270) the authors made "No claim to the completeness of the list of factors or deductions" (Galtung & Ruge, 1965: 64-65).

News values are not applicable only to foreign news as they basically cut across all forms and types of news. As such, these values can also be used in understanding the production of business news. The study by Galtung and Ruge (1965) was conducted in three crisis periods, thus according to Roush (2006) it is likely that most of the information about the evolution of the crisis was useful for political, economic and business purposes. Secondly, the business undertones of the Cuba crisis which was fought between two economic power blocs (United States and the former Soviet Union) need not be over stated; the crisis in the Congo that is still on going is fuelled by the thriving business which has been so lucrative to involve neighbouring states and even United Nations (UN) peace-keepers. A brief discussion of the

12 news values is presented in order to situate them within the guiding parameters of business news. Galtung and Ruge identified and described the following twelve (12) news values:

1. *Frequency*. An event unfolding with a comparable pattern to the news cycle holds a higher probability of becoming news in comparison to one that unfolds within an elongated time period. This is exemplified with the regular news sections on radio and in the press that recount the movement of share prices at the end of trading in the stock markets.
2. *Threshold*. Events require going past a certain edge to attract media attention. Thereafter, their page placement or positioning on the air increases with its intensity. Practically, the higher the fall in stocks the more the attention it gets or the more salaries are likely to be affected by a new budget which means an increased perception to report on by news workers.
3. *Unambiguity*. Media coverage increases with clarity and falls with vagueness. The business news is quick to report how leadership change can affect the economy whereas any uncertainty will dissuade coverage. The media are keen to report on new government policies, for example, foreign direct investment, if they (the media) are certain on what such policies are all about. This is because legislations are created by experts from different departments each guarding different state interests.
4. *Meaningfulness*. The news media are encouraged to favour an event that culturally fits into the mind-set of its audience than otherwise. It would be bad business for the *Cameroon Tribune* to talk on the financial markets and not on the construction of the new sea port in Limbe making room for bigger cargo ships to dock in Cameroon.
5. *Consonance*. This refers to the media's ability to see the unseen. The media get credited for reporting on future happenings which are most likely to impact on the audience. Take the example of news reports ahead of the 'state-of-the nations' address where the media strive to predict and pre-empt what issues are likely to be on the agenda in a policy speech with a likelihood of potential salary increase or tax cuts for low income earners.
6. *Unexpectedness*. Unforeseen events that are way out of the cultural prospect fall high on the lists of news making events. A case in point is that should one of the long serving African leaders lose in an election this would make headline news for its rarity and unexpectedness. The same would apply to an unexpected takeover bid by one company of another.

7. *Continuity.* A familiar headline event should take time to leave the news irrespective of any important developments to the story. Journalists and news organs keep track of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and research on its cure because it has important business undertones to nations producing the drugs on the one hand, as well as its consequent impact on the labour force of affected nations.
8. *Composition.* This refers to the coverage of some events, not because of what they add to the news of the day, but because of balancing (for example, language balancing) or to cater for some organisational query on the news organ (for example, neglecting gender issues). The *Cameroon Tribune* may opt to publish a business story to cover up for the exclusive coverage it gives to politics because of suspected pressure from government which caters for the running of the newspaper.
9. *Reference to elite nations.* Whilst the definition of elite nations may differ, the actions of the USA, Britain, and other military and economically powerful nations are readily reported on as news for their far reaching consequences rather than those of poor and weak nations. Exemplary is the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline whose construction and security details were given particular interest because of the huge American interest in the project. This is believed to account for the blind eye America and its allies are giving to the widespread cry of corruption in the petroleum sector in Cameroon. In a purely African setting, neighbouring Nigeria, whose population is over seven times of that of Cameroon, continued to be headline news while it engaged a military offensive on the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsular before the International Court ruling handing the mineral rich stretch of land to Cameroon.
10. *Reference to elite people.* The actions of famous and elite people are more likely to get covered for increased readership/audience since they form part of the cultural capital that the media need to stay in business. Journalists like to report recent events involving prominent people and their impact on readers (MacDougall, 1981). Any story that covers Nelson Mandela gets huge attention in South African and the regional press because of his pre-and post-independence role in achieving democracy in that country. Similarly, the actions of corporate leaders, such as the Sudanese born British Mo Ibrahim who is a mobile communications entrepreneur and sponsor of the Prize for Achievement in African Leadership, are also newsworthy.
11. *Reference to persons (personification).* News selectors tend to give a human face to happenings thereby taking away the agency from hasty generalisations. Recent news

collection techniques favour this through interviews: a precept that cuts across all the different news media. According to Harcup and O'Neill (2001, 263) it positions "man as master of his own destiny and events are seen as the outcome of an act of free will." In the Zimbabwean example the international media have succeeded in putting President Mugabe as the man behind the infamous land reform in Zimbabwe thereby apportioning direct blame for the skyrocketing inflation and economic malaise. In a similar vein what well known business leaders, such as Patrice Motsepe the first black South African billionaire, Bill Gates the Microsoft Chief Executive and Fotso Victor a Cameroon entrepreneur, do or not do is news.

12. *Reference to something negative.* Most news stories from Africa carry this negativity hallmark. Whereas it wrongly depicts what the continent represents worldwide, its consensual and unambiguous nature adds to it occurring over short intervals to take precedence over positive news (Galtung & Ruge, 1965: 65-71). The news of minerals and other resources being smuggled out of war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo is relegated to the background while the killings, looting, arson, maiming, and serial raping by rebels are what gets reported.

These 12 news properties, although informative, do not completely fit the characteristics of defining business news from the case study in this research. Generally African news coming from Western media most of the time refers to negative events: wars, coups, famine, and disease. On the other hand Western media reports focus on values such as threshold, consonance and personification. While these were significant findings of the 1965 study they have limitations when applied to the African media context. This investigation uses some of the characteristics in explaining how business journalists define news at the *Cameroon Tribune*. It uses the following as pointers to describe economic news: 'reference to elite people'; 'reference to elite nations'; 'frequency'; 'meaningfulness'; 'unambiguity'; 'unexpectedness'; 'composition' and 'continuity'. However, these alone are insufficient in understanding financial news in Africa.

3.3.2.1 Critical review of Galtung and Ruge

The 1965 paper however illuminating does have shortcomings. Four cardinal criticisms can be deciphered from the literature. Firstly, the taxonomy fails to address day-to-day coverage. Instead, the concentration is on a partial textual analysis of three major international crises (Tunstall, 1971: 21). The authors failed to undertake a full critical discourse or textual

analyses of the published material which could have shed light on some hidden discourses and other underlying minor discourses that guide the production of news. Secondly, the publication has been accused of positioning itself in the positivist tradition in media research thereby attracting some criticisms that come with such an approach. For example, McQuail (1994: 270) notes the gatekeeping approach appears to assume there is a given reality 'out there' which a reporter can admit or exclude.

Thirdly, views discrediting this objectivistic notion of news are buttressed by Seaton (in Curran & Seaton, 1997: 227) who posits that focusing on 'events' helps to tell just part of the story. She argues that many of the listed items happen not to be 'events' happening in the 'real' world but their existence is dependent on the media. Stated succinctly, the said study is flawed because it assumes journalists report on events. As Vasterman (1995) argues there is no 'news' out there except a construct of reporters. In the construction process journalists construct facts and statements and they construct the context in which these facts make sense thereby producing a constructed version of a given 'reality' (Vasterman, 1995). The 12 values have been described as ideologically opaque even though they may appear as neutral and routine practices.

Fourthly, Hartley (1982) arguing from a semiotic standpoint asserts that the news values sometimes cannot account for what is reported. Arguing further, he posits that news values alone possess the capacity to shield some of the ideological structures that the media publish (Hartley, 1982:79-80). Hall (1973: 181-235) equates news values to an ideological structure that needs to be deconstructed in order to understand the operationalisation and formalisation of the news ideology. He ascertains news values form the 'cultural map' or 'deep structure' through which journalists makes sense of the world (Hall, 1997).

In light of this study the 1965 taxonomy fails to shed light on the political and economic factors that interfere with news production and likewise does not provide a full explanation of the composition of news (McQuail, 1994: 271).

These criticisms have not effectively succeeded to render Galtung and Ruge's model less useful in understanding news as their study has been heralded as the most influential in explaining news values (McQuail, 1994: 270). Giving credence to this, Bell (1991:155) asserts the study forms the basis of understanding news. Furthermore, Tunstall (1970:20)

acknowledges that the work of Galtung and Ruge (1965) offered the long awaited answer to the question of ‘what is news’? In highlighting the usefulness of the 1965 study by Galtung and Ruge, Tumber (1999:4) stated: “The relevance of Galtung and Ruge’s model is its predictive quality in determining patterns of news.” It is on this premise that the model may be stretched to non-international news and other news, such as business news, and still remains applicable. Notably the findings of the study by Galtung and Ruge (1965) have stood the test of time and pre-date mass media bearing straits as far back as Shakespeare’s plays (Tunstall, 1970: 21). As such it is instructive that criticism of this model serves as caveats as well as a guide on how scholars may define news.

3.3.2.2 Other news values

The perishable nature of news and its defining constituents have invited other scholars to revisit and critique Galtung and Ruge’s list. After studying some news media in the United States (USA) Gans (1980:147-152) postulated that domestic stories grew in ‘importance’ in terms of: how they conform to rank in government and other hierarchy; impact on nation and national interest; the number of people affected, and its (the news) significance for the past and future. With respect to how ‘interesting’ an event may be, Gans further proposed the story depends on factors such as: people stories; role reversals; human interest stories; hero stories; and ‘gee whiz’ stories (Gans, 1980: 155-57).

In the United Kingdom, Hetherington (1985) hypothesized that a journalist’s taste for stories increases when a story combines more than one of the following: significance; drama; surprise; personalities; sex, scandal and crime; numbers and proximity. Inasmuch as these additional values add to the general understanding of news, this thesis builds on Bell’s (1991) work which identified four news values: competition; co-option; predictability; prefabrication. Bell (1991) focused on news gathering and processing which are important stages in understanding some of the gatekeeping processes in news production.

Firstly, Bell noted that competition is the desire for a scoop and this raises the potential of an event becoming business news. Secondly, co-option is where a story increases its chances of becoming news because of its tangential cling to a high profile event. Thirdly, predictability is preferred by journalists as this fits the inner workings of news conferences and daily programming rather than an event that is little known. Fourthly, Bell (1991) highlighted that

prefabrication, as in press releases and agency copy documents, raises the chances of an event going past the gatekeepers (Gans, 1980: 158-60).

However new these additional news values may seem the researcher of this study notes that critically they can all be located within Galtung and Ruge's list (meaningfulness, unexpectedness, threshold, composition and personification). This study therefore buys into the argument that the 1965 taxonomy "shape a picture of the world's events characterise by erratic, dramatic and uncomplicated surprise, by negative or conflictual events involving elite nations and persons" (Peterson, 1979 & 1981 cited in McQuail, 1992: 217).

To crystallise what characterises business news in this case study requires drawing from these different scholars' works. First, business news in the *Cameroon Tribune* can be defined using a number of the values postulated in Galtung and Ruge's study. Financial news at the newspaper was essentially centred on elite persons and nations. The business news adheres to the criteria of frequency, meaningfulness, unambiguity, unexpectedness, and was also continuous. In addition to what is applicable, from the findings of the 1965 taxonomy Gans (1980) proposed 'importance' as a main news criterion. This business news feature states that events profiling senior ranks in government have higher chances of being covered as news. This resonates with 'personality' which is another news trait propounded by Hetherington (1985). In addition, Hetherington's 'proximity', 'numbers' and 'significance' all become relevant in understanding the definition of business news in the context of this study. Equally, this investigation makes use of 'prefabrication' (from Bell, 1991) to explain the *Cameroon Tribune's* over reliance on press releases for news production. Likewise, Bell's 'co-option' is necessary in explaining the linkages between financial news at the newspaper and its tangential leanings towards other high profile news events.

News construction is an activity in the media which entails processes of selection and control. To understand how this is realised necessitates an appreciation of the gatekeeping theory. The next section discusses the origin of this theory and proposes an adapted model applicable to this study.

3.3.3 Lewin's gatekeeping theory

Gatekeeping is a social science concept developed by social psychologist and German émigré Kurt Lewin to understand widespread changes in communities. In his 1947 study, Lewin observed the most efficient way to bring about widespread social change is to concentrate on persons in key positions of influence, who function as 'gatekeepers' in the flow of goods and ideas through the society (Reisner & Clayman, 1998: 179). He underscored that the impact of gatekeeping was a matter of 'group dynamics' thus advocating gatekeeping as a sociological problem.

Lewin (cited in Shoemaker, 1991) recognised the existence of forces in front and behind each gate: both having the potential to change polarity (positive or negative) as items pass through the gates. Shoemaker (1991:23) demonstrated how far away an event changes from a negative to a positive force depending on the importance attached to such an event. Whereas Lewin's study was initially carried out to determine how Iowa women make decisions pertaining to getting food to the table, these findings have today become a multi-purpose concept used in various fields including countless media gatekeeping studies (see Gans 1979; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Schudson, 1996; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

In the process of news making, there are many 'gates'. Therefore, some of the constraints of the 'gates' need to be teased out to understand how news is made. Lewin initially assumed that in any organisation the main decision maker functions as a gatekeeper. The investigation then focused on the presumed psychology of the gatekeeper by looking at which attitudes and values the gatekeeper favours over other available choices (Clayman & Reisner, 1998: 179). Based on individual and psychological terms, Lewin posits that sociological investigations are necessary to allow us make the decision on whose psychology has to be studied and who has to be educated for us to achieve change (Shoemaker 1991). This particular slant (individual/psychological) of Lewin's theory has been adopted in this study which scrutinises journalists and editors in the process of news selection.

Communication scholar, David Manning White was the first to translate Lewin's theory of channels and gatekeeping into a research project. While at the University of Iowa, White persuaded a newspaper editor (Mr Gates) to provide three copies of each news sources for a week. Mr Gates agreed to provide written explanations why 90% of the stories received were

never used (Shoemaker, 1991: 10). Based on these explanations White could make some informed comparisons between the stories coming in and what was published. According to him the decisions were ‘highly subjective’: the study noted that personal evaluation was used one third of the time to evaluate the truth in the published stories. The editor had rejected the remaining two thirds based on account of space. Replicating Whites study, Snider used a 17 years younger Mr Gates and arrived at the same results. Snider found Mr Gates’ decision of inclusion or exclusion depended on his judgement of what he liked and thought would interest his readers (Shoemaker, 1991: 11). According to Snider (1967:426) Mr Gates defined news as “the day by day report of events and personalities and comes in a variety which could be presented as much as possible in variety for a balanced diet.”

The activities of Mr Gates bear similar characteristics to the multiple gatekeepers of business news in today’s media. The decision of how to cover and report on Wall Street has been their sole preserve. However, questions began emerging on media complacency only after the recent economic problems that began with the USA housing markets. In Africa business reporters and editors make decisions to favourably report on economic policies (for example the World Bank/IMF Structural Adjustment Programme) even when scholarly works beacons otherwise. Other scholars have criticised Lewin’s original gatekeeping and gatekeeper theory. Shoemaker (1991:32) stated it gives the idea that the process operates on an individual level. Gieber (1964) noted that decisions of the gatekeeper, inasmuch as they depend on the gatekeeper’s values, are also influenced by newsroom and audience values. This left researchers to expand on the theory and study of gatekeeping from the individual to the organisational level. The following is a multi-layered model proposed by Shoemaker.

3.3.3.1 Advance gatekeeping: A model by Shoemaker

Noting the complex nature of the society that is being studied, Shoemaker (1991:32-67) advances five levels through which gatekeeping can be investigated. Within these different levels there exists the possibility of asking the same questions that may lead to a better understanding of the selective process characterising gatekeeping.

3.3.3.1.1 Individual level

This level of analysis is decisive as it marks the central point of entry of information into the system. Tunstall (1971: 23) attests “There will always be much room for the exercise of the discretion of the journalists.” This takes into consideration that reporters constitute an

important category of those involved in the making of business news (Shoemaker, 1991, Shoemaker et al., 2001). The key concerns look at how gatekeepers evaluate and interpret messages, make decisions, their personal characteristics, background, values, role conceptions and experiences.

At the individual level Shoemaker et al. (2001) propose that an individual may use a variety of theories and tools in gatekeeping. These theories and tools are essential for a scholar to understand the evaluation, interpretation, and decision making in gatekeeping. At this level the theories and tools are:

- a) Three theories of thought mechanism, namely *associationism*, *gestaltism* and *information processing* (see Snodgrass, Levy-Berger & Hayden, 1985) guard the thinking of the gatekeeper as he/she decides whether an item should pass the gate. These are made in recognition of the individual characteristics and environment in which the item resides. First, is *associationism* which states that thought processes are conceived as linear, with one idea recalling related ideas or connecting with other ideas, either remembered or imagined. A business gatekeeper is required to make decisions about common currency and common markets linked to similar stories about the economy (or development in an African context) that have been published. Following the stimulus-response model, association is strengthened when positively reinforced. The second is the *Gestalt theory* which conceives gatekeeping as holistic and not merely the sum of the individual thinking activities. In line with this the gatekeeper may decide to present the business news as reported globally. This is the problem with African business news that does not take into account 'in/out' decisions that would help readers understand what is really happening in the economy. The frame of reference being the world rather than the individual parts of the news item. *Information processing* is the third theory. In this view problem solving constitutes a series of logical steps similar to *associationism* even though it lacks the assumption of reinforcement. Tuchman (1974) notes the creation of categories by journalists (gatekeepers) is a way of coping with the essential unmanageable task, which is selecting from a vast number of potential news items to go past all gates.
- b) *Second-guessing* is another theoretical approach that explains how people interpret messages and evaluate messages (see Hewes & Graham, 1989). This cognitive process explains how people try to 'correct' and 'de-bias' messages using prior

messages in interpretation. The business gatekeeper may interpret messages at face value but may engage in reinterpretation because of remembered information in an attempt to validate its truthfulness.

- c) *Cognitive heuristics* is another theory that explains the human nature of gatekeepers. Accordingly, Kahneman et al. (1982) postulated some rule of thumb and other judgmental heuristics used by people in solving problems. The cognitive heuristic strategies differ from the deliberate application of decision rules because they are generally and automatically enacted without conscious consideration. The economic gatekeeper is more likely to allow more frequent messages to pass through the gate. This also implies that gatekeepers are: active; resolve ambiguities; make informed guesses about what they have or have not observed.
- d) *Decision making* compared to the *judgmental/cognitive* approach applies conscious application rules. It can be perceived in the form of binary decisions (see Gandy, 1982) in terms of deciding whether an item goes through the gate or not. Gandy adds the decisions are rational choices whose end result is based upon the anticipated value of opting for one choice and not the other. According to Wright and Barbour (in Shoemaker, 1991) decision making follows four steps: problem recognition; defining relevant alternatives; reviewing these alternatives before applying the decision rule (to making news, which point to highlight an event).
- e) *Values* relate to the cognitions common amongst news makers. Journalists worldwide share common values. For example, they share similar understanding of news and these invariably guide them on how they make news. US journalists share similar social values and these values are reflected in their production of news (Gans, 1979a).
- f) The individual characteristics of individual gatekeepers need to be understood. Lewin (1951, 177-8) differentiated cognitive structure and motivation. The *cognitive structure* allows us to understand how people (business gatekeepers) think while *motivation* opens our understanding to their values, needs and some of the obstacles they overcome.
- g) Looking at the *role conceptions* gives us insights into gatekeeping choices and how these can be affected by the job requirements of those involved in the manufacture of business news. Different studies have identified different role conceptions, such as

neutrality/participatory, that may influence the gatekeeping (see Cohen, 1963). Other roles require newsmakers to be adversarial, interpretative or disseminators (see Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). What is essential here is that these roles allow gatekeepers to make different takes on the same things.

- h) The *job types* according to Bass (in Shoemaker, 1991) necessitate that gatekeepers be differentiated into news gatherers (writers and reporters) and news producers (copy editors and other managers). As in this study, a better understanding of the gatekeeping process requires an investigation into both of these roles.

3.3.3.1.2 Communications routines level

A communications routine, according to Lewin (1951:186), is the channel between two gates controlled by a gate or gatekeeper. Shoemaker and Reese (1991: 85) understand such routines as patterned, routinized, and repeated practices used by journalists in exercising their functions. Within the media, deadlines, the inverted pyramid, and news beats, are some of the routines common in processes of news construction (news gathering, processing and transmission). At the individual level, Tuchman (1972) argues that giving conflicting evidence, presenting supporting facts, use of quotes, and the use of the inverted pyramid, are routines used by news workers to claim objectivity. It can also be argued that media organisations use routines to guard against libel and to protect individual reporters from their peers (Shoemaker, 1991: 48). Newspaper editors decrease their rate of accepting wire copies close to deadlines preferring to fill them with spot news or, in a business case, adverts (Jones et al. 1961 in Shoemaker, 1991: 48). However, Shoemaker notes that routines are set to be important when we notice uniformity across gatekeepers (1991).

3.3.3.1.3 Organisational level

This level of analysis relates specifically to the effects of group decision-making on gatekeeping. It also takes into consideration some of the routines that vary between media organisations (Shoemaker, 1991:53). Organisations hire gatekeepers and make the rules. The gatekeeper is thriving when the gates function to meet the stated goals of the organisation. Failure in this light may result in the organisation relieving the gatekeeper of his function. The ability to hire and fire gatekeepers is one of the greatest powers of an organisation (Stewart & Cantour, 1982).

Since an organisation is ‘constituted in communications’ and exists as a ‘symbolic reality’ and not as ‘activity systems’ it therefore selects its items from those available in order to

create its own symbolic environment (Bantz, 199b: 505 in Shoemaker,1991). For instance, when a newspaper editor fails to report on the effects of the current Greek financial crisis and how it affects the local economy, the paper fails to become part of that symbolic environment. Shoemaker acknowledges that according to the paper the event never happened. The selections of what is newsworthy to the organisation may be changed by its communication behaviours (Shoemaker, 1991: 54).

3.3.3.1.4 Extramedia, social/institutional level

The analysis at this stage focuses on other communication organs, for example, sources, government, and advertisers that exist alongside the media organisations. Below is an analysis of how some of the organs can affect the gatekeeping process in the construction of business news.

- a) The use of *sources* is very influential in the functioning of the news media since media workers themselves hardly experience the unfolding of events they cover (Shoemaker, 1991: 61). It is important for journalists to focus on the vested interest of news sources to the information they make available to the press. However, Chibnall (1975; 1981) posits the procedure journalists use to identify and select these sources plays an important role in gatekeeping (in Shoemaker, 1991: 61). Sources may facilitate or constrain the information getting through the control thus preventing it getting to the media channel. For example, economic bureau sources provide gatekeepers with regular and credible information (see Gans, 1982) while source identification (Donohue et al. in Shoemaker, 1991) explains why some gatekeepers allow information from the police to easily pass through the gate.
- b) In this market-driven era the process of gatekeeping serves to maximise income while reducing costs. Gatekeeping is hence guided towards maximizing market appeal that leads to variation in gatekeeping rules subject to market characteristics (Shoemaker, 1991: 63). An investigation showed that small town newspapers gave a higher priority to advertising when compared to daily newspapers in cosmopolitan cities (Donohue et al. in Shoemaker, 1991: 63). These scholars argue that this discrepancy may result from the fact that small town editors handle both business and editorial decisions whereas business decisions are handled by separate departments in the city dailies.

- c) Even though news managers find it hard to accept the widely accepted influence *advertisers* exert on media content, many scholars still think otherwise. Altschull (1984: 258) asserts: “The content of the press is directly correlated with the interest of those who finance the press. The press is the piper, and the tune the piper plays is composed by those who pay the piper.” It is good business for newspapers to give front and back pages to the highest advertisers. The same holds true for high-paying spots to go on air during peak listening/viewing periods.
- d) *Government*. Writing in the US, Rivers (1965: 129) notes “control of information is central to power.” This seems truer in Africa where most governments still maintain an iron fist to suppress the independent media. In many countries years after liberalising and democratising the media landscape in Africa, most governments still maintain a dominant presence stifling business within the sector. For example, most coup plots in Africa have always targeted national radio stations to announce the takeover of power.
- e) Most *interest groups* have an agenda they want to put across the media. Shoemaker (1991: 65) identifies three types of interest groups whose actions need scrutiny as the item goes through the gates. There are groups that promote their issue stance (example here is the heavy finance to the US government by pro Israeli groups), those attempting to alter media content through criticisms, while the third group actually strives to effect both causes.
- f) *Public relations* are a source for finance for newspapers since they are usually paid events. For this to be successful media content needs to be directly affected (an example is the use of press releases) or media attention may be indirectly captured through the call of a problematic situation. Some financially bankrupt organisations, however, may get free media coverage by organising ‘pseudo-events’ (see Boorstin in Shoemaker, 1991). However, the media may eventually regain sales especially to advertisers who look at the print-run when bargaining the costs. To Shoemaker (1991: 67) such pseudo-events fulfil the interest group’s need for media attention while at the same time, the media’s needs for news are also catered for.

3.3.3.1.5 Social system level

This level of analysis was the focus of Lewin (1947) when he first began theorising gatekeeping with the eventual aim of effecting change in society. Lewin's belief of societal inequalities forced him to hold the gatekeeper as central to any process leading to change. Shoemaker outlines several social-level variables but this thesis only discusses those that can be related to the making of business news in this study.

- a) *Societal interest*. Riffe et al. (1986: 321), in a study of three US television stations, speculated that similar news packages were highly correlated. They noticed that the views from the news casts closely depicted the kinds of events prevalent in the world during the study. Analysing how gatekeeping may be affected by societal concerns, Brown (in Shoemaker, 1991) compared how media coverage of business instability relates to population and family planning. In terms of his results unstable business conditions lead to many press coverage of population issues. He concluded that families became hesitant to have more children while jobs were uncertain (in Shoemaker, 1991: 68). In the same light, the *Cameroon Tribune* business news which focuses on development projects can be seen as a response to job creation in the situation of high unemployment in the country.

- b) Though *ideology* has been one of the over researched areas in media studies, it still remains of importance today. According to Althusser (1984) the media form part of the ideological state apparatus. While ideology has also been variously defined the researcher of this study upholds the critical definition proposed by Thompson (1988: 56) which understands ideology to be operating in ways which serve to establish and sustain relations of domination. Shoemaker (1991) argues that at the level of social systems ideology ceases to be an individual belief and becomes a world belief system practically shared by all. Business news coming from the US and other Western countries carries the hallmark of a capitalist economic ideology, for example. As indicated earlier the model of gatekeeping provided by Shoemaker (1991) specifies elements, such as the thought processes, communication and organisation routines, and institutional organs, amongst others, that can be used to understand the making of business news. In this study the model of gatekeeping complements our understanding of sociology of business news at the *Cameroon Tribune*.

There are many benefits of using Shoemaker's gatekeeping model for this study. The model, at the individual level, assists us to appreciate how reporters evaluate and construe messages published in the business pages of the newspaper. At the communications routines level, it permits us to analyse how repeated and routine practices used by journalists impinge on business news outcomes. Additionally, Shoemaker's model allows this study to make inferences on how the *Cameroon Tribune*, through its economic news reports, helps maintain imbalances existing in the Cameroonian society. Equally, this method of analysis permits us to assess the contributions made by news sources as well as helps provide insights resulting from group thinking and decision making.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with defining business news and tracing its evolution in the West, in Africa, and particularly in Cameroon. This chapter underscores the observation that an abundance of business news exists in Africa but this is poorly reported for a variety of reasons. A developed theoretical framework guides this study to locate this investigation in the field of sociology of news production. One part of this framework focuses on the definition of business news. By so doing, the researcher of this study has presented and analysed the 12 news values proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965). The framework is contrasted with other news values propounded by other scholars before making its own contribution towards defining business news in Cameroon. The other parts of this theoretical framework focus on journalistic conceptions informing the practice of business journalism at the newspaper. This has been approached from the broad field of news construction. It was informed by a model of investigating news making proposed by Schudson (2000) and Shoemaker's (1991) advanced gatekeeping model, respectively.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology employed in investigating the making of business news at Cameroon's state owned bilingual daily, the *Cameroon Tribune*. According to Ellen (1984:9) methodology refers to "articulated, and theoretically informed approach to the production of data". Methodology is a way of thinking about and studying phenomena and includes an account of method. Goulding (1999: 870) asserts that a researcher needs to make a thoughtful decision on a research approach that would yield methodical and systematic knowledge. As such it is significant that researchers are aware of the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of research in order to (1) identify appropriate research methodology, (2) apply the chosen method appropriately, (3) make adaptations or changes with reasonable justifications where necessary, and (4) evaluate the appropriateness and use of the research methods for the study (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002:31; Crossan, 2003: 47-48; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:1).

In this study news production and the sociology of journalism are positioned within the qualitative research paradigm. Succinctly, news production and sociology of news posit that "journalists do not merely select and combine information; rather they can be seen to literally 'produce' the news in the context of organisational and other social frameworks" (Tuchman, 2002:78).

4.2 Philosophical understandings

This research argues from the perspective that 'objective reality' is unattainable (Poerksen, 2008:295; Tuchman, 1972). Inasmuch as journalists posit news reports are 'objective' forming the cornerstone on which validity is used as a barometer to measure media content, other studies have shown that this is impossible. This study therefore seeks to understand the inner workings of reporters as they go about doing what they do. It seeks to appreciate the

multiple perspectives of reality from the key actors in news production at the *Cameroon Tribune*. In this light, Deacon et al. (1999) posit that the interpretative research understands all social knowledge to be a co-production of multiple encounters, conversations and arguments between researchers and the researched. This inadvertently dismisses the positivist stance of using a correct methodological procedure to produce research findings based on the assumption of existing social ‘facts’.

This study subscribes to the constructivist’s understanding of perceiving ‘reality’. A quantitative researcher upholds the existence of ‘reality’ ‘out there’ which is independent of the researcher and the actions of those being studied. On the other hand, constructivism argues that everyday life is continually produced, and reproduced, through a myriad of factors which are affected by social and cultural life (Deacon et al., 1999). Interpretative studies therefore generate huge amounts of qualitative data to develop a ‘thick’ description (Geertz in Deacon et al., 1999) detailing how journalists invest in their world of meaning making and reporting.

Understanding constructivism in journalism necessitates not perceiving journalism as representing an observer-independent reality (Weischenberg in Poerksen, 2008: 295). Hence this study requires the inclusion of diverse factors influencing news production. The constructivist position demands the investigation of “the core activity of journalism: the selection of information” (Poerksen, 2008: 295). As multiple studies have shown (see Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Poerksen, 2008; Tuchman 1991, 1972), the selection, and eventual reporting of events in the news, is an active operation involving numerous decision-making processes. Essentially, constructivism best explains the socialisation of reporters. Reporters are actively involved in the production of business news moulded by the institutional (in-house) culture. Similarly, they see the world against this background and remain receptive to cultural and other social factors that become hardened and rigidified in the process of socialisation (Poerksen, 2008, Tuchman, 1972). Additionally, journalists interact with each other, and with others, such as sources in the production of news. Thus this research looks at the subjective underpinnings contributing to understanding how “human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their (life) worlds” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This research buys into the underpinnings of qualitative studies which account for the necessary tools required to understand how people continuously construct, develop and interpret their worlds.

This study attempts to study the production of business news from an insider's perspective (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The effort is to understand the production of news from the perspective of the social actors, namely the journalists. The primary aim is to describe and understand the multiple perspectives whilst not explaining the human behaviour of the different reporters. Qualitative research is epitomized by a commitment to understanding a unique, particular, and natural context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: x; Maxwell, 2006:22). In the words of Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) qualitative research is “multi-methods in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter”. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) retain the emphasis on participants in qualitative research as being grounded in their locality, history and temporality. As such Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) acknowledge that qualitative research focuses on “how people learn about and make sense of their experiences, themselves and others in their setting”.

This study is situated within the field of qualitative research and is conducted in a natural setting: the newsrooms and offices of the *Cameroon Tribune* which is “inquiry from the inside” (Goethals et al., 2004). It investigates news production as a process without trying to place emphasis on the news outcome. In the same vein, like most qualitative studies, the aim is not to generalise the findings but to get a context bound appreciation of what happens as events get selected and pass through the many gates until the final publication (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Bryman, 1988). To attain these goals, a researcher, unlike those who conduct quantitative studies, becomes the primary research instrument (Cantrell, 1993; Lincoln & Guba 1985b: 39-40). This indicates that the researcher is the chief data collector who also analyses the data and subsequently presents the findings in a descriptive, and not statistical, form (Creswell, 2007: 36-41).

4.3 Methods

Justifications for supporting the chosen research design are presented followed by an explanation of the sampling procedure used in this study. A detailed description of how the data were collected and analysed is presented. There is also a discussion on the limitations that were encountered during data collection and data analysis.

4.3.1 Research design

Case studies have been variously defined depending on their intended usage. According to Yin (1989) a case study is a research method that uses multiple sources of evidence to

investigate an existing phenomenon within its real life context in which the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident. Similarly, a case study method employs the usage of many data sources to systematically investigate individuals, groups, institutions, communities or organisations (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Wimmer & Dominick, 1991). Since this study seeks to investigate and understand how business news is conceived and produced at the *Cameroon Tribune* it meets the criteria of a case study investigation.

It is essentially a descriptive case study research (see Merriam, 1988) without being particularistic or heuristic which are the other characteristics of case study objectives developed by Merriam (1988). It is envisaged that the study will provide a 'thick' description of the reporters' understandings of business news and the inner workings of the news production processes.

The decision to use a case study approach resides in a couple of reasons. Firstly, this method is most valuable when the aim of the research is to obtain valuable information about the topic; in this study it is how business news is conceived and produced. According to Wimmer and Dominick (1991) case study methods can be used to gather descriptive and explanatory data. Secondly, case studies allow researchers the possibility of using a broad spectrum of evidence. Since the validity of a study increases with the use of a range of data sources the researcher decided to use three data collection techniques: cursory reading; in-depth interviews; observation.

4.3.2 Sampling procedure

This study adopted 'judgemental' or 'purposive' sampling (Deacon et al., 1999:50; Wimmer & Dominick, 1991) in order to understand the reporters' definition of what is business news and how they go about making decisions ahead of business news production. There were inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were that participants had to be permanent staff members who were either attached to economic news section or who had vast experience in the workings thereof. Eight (n=8) permanent staff members were requested to participate in the in-depth interviews. Four (n=4) worked permanently in the economic news section of the paper and there was one (n=1) who had previously worked in this section. Three (n=3) senior staff made up the balance.

There were two junior reporters, two middle-level managers (the supervisor and head of the economic service, respectively), and a former service head for the economic news section of the newspaper. The latter's selection was based on the fact that he had vast hands-on experience which spanned over eight years as head of what could be termed the business desk. Secondly, his experience outweighed that of incumbents. For example, one of the service heads stated his journalistic training had been on environmental reporting while the other service head hopes to be transferred to his former position at the sports service where he is more comfortable. The remaining three participants were the managing editor, the editor-in-chief, and the editorial writer, respectively. They were selected for the following reasons. The managing editor heads the organisational hierarchy making him the most senior and powerful gatekeeper in the newsroom. He attends news conferences and his desk is situated between that of the editor and his assistant which allows him to intervene when there is a crucial point to be made relative to the newspaper policy or angle of coverage. The editor-in-chief is the main news manager who presides over the editorial conference where most decisions on angling, coverage, page placements, are decided upon. He makes the final decisions assigning reporters for coverage. Since the editorial writer's position is that of an analyst on economic and political matters his inclusion in the study sample could be justified even though he was not directly concerned with economic or field reporting. His contributions were far reaching as he spoke freely whereas most of the reporters were not outspoken since they were watchful of their job and career prospects. Being in the twilight of his career he indicated that his wish was that findings of this study would lead to an improved working environment.

New recruits were not included even though this would have increased the sample size. The reasons for their exclusions were that there was no guarantee they would be at the study site when the interviews were undertaken. For example, a young employee who was at the economic service as part of his socialisation (training) was rotated between the beats (see Mabweazara, 2010) and could easily be moved to another section depending on the daily task demands. Student journalists on internship at the newspaper were also excluded because they had limited experience and had not yet been in the organisation long enough to be integrated and articulate the practice. This exclusion criterion applied to all student journalists and new recruits including those that were specifically attached to the economic service.

4.3.2 Data collection

Data collection was done in two phases. Firstly, the researcher did a cursory reading of copies of the newspaper with the view to develop an interview guide. Secondly, observation was used to complement the main data collection method of individual in-depth interviews. A combination of observation and in-depth interviews go hand in hand to gather a holistic picture of a phenomenon (Lofland, 1971).

4.3.2.1 Cursory reading

Since hardcopies of the *Cameroon Tribune* were not accessible the researcher did a cursory reading of online June 2010 issues. This time period was just for convenience to allow him to then compile research tool: an interview guide. It should be noted that hardcopies of the newspaper are not readily available in most of Cameroon's ten provincial hinterlands.

The main advantage of the cursory reading in research design is that allows a researcher to gain an understanding of the newspaper within a limited time frame. It has been generally acknowledge that context can be used to determine meaning (Parreren & Parreren, 1981). These cited authors did a study that focused on 'contextual guessing' in order for them to analyse how certain sub-skills, and mastery of such skills, can be used to determine the meaning of unknown words.

For the purposes of this study cursory reading was used to recognise text type and to determine whether the story was fictional or informative relative to the story scheme. It was equally useful in determining the different text structures used in business news articles at the *Cameroon Tribune*. It was employed to predict and summarise texts or parts of online text of the newspaper. In addition, other cursory readings enabled the researcher to make inferences to messages that were not explicitly referred to but simply alluded to in texts. Likewise, cursory readings were employed ahead of the field phase to determine meanings of unknown words and to analyse the word form from unknown words (see Parreren & Parreren, 1981).

The cursory reading therefore provided the researcher with an understanding as to what types of stories are most likely to be considered as business news at the *Cameroon Tribune*. Furthermore, this close reading enabled the researcher to note usual page placement of business stories which were understood to fall under the broad section called 'economy'. Similarly, the perusing of the online versions of the newspaper gave the researcher some insights for the development of the interview guide to conduct in-depth interviews.

Based on these understandings the researcher developed an interview guide to assist in answering the key research questions. Some of the questions were geared towards understanding how news, particularly business news, is described in the context of the study. Other questions were framed to allow the researcher to understand the background of the various reporters, such as their level of education and training pertinent to journalism. This became useful in understanding how training influences their perception of what is economic news. Also, some questions were styled to enable the reporters' to reveal how they view the economic system and their mainstay of sourcing business stories for publication. Additionally, the guide sought to explore and understand the extant in-house guidelines for reporting business. Furthermore, other probing questions were generated to illuminate the constraining effects of these guidelines on the production of news.

4.3.2.2 Gaining access

Data collection was carried out in Yaoundé which is the seat of the newspaper. This office holds the highest number of journalists who convene daily for the various meetings ahead of publication. This study targeted the journalists and news managers directly involved in the production of business news. The researcher then had to make contact with the management of the newspaper to obtain clearance ahead of the data collection phase. This presented many challenges. After several unsuccessful telephonic and facsimile (fax) attempts the researcher emailed a scanned copy to two friends in Cameroon. One of the letters was delivered in a diplomatic envelope at the secretariat of the general manager. In a similar endeavour, another copy was sent to a former neighbour and one-time deputy managing editor. He also emailed the research request application to his former colleagues heading the news team. Soon thereafter, the general manager of Sopecam faxed the researcher's supervisor a letter granting access to the *Cameroon Tribune* for this study (see Appendix 1). This paved the way for the researcher to plan his trip to the research site.

While waiting for permission to go to the field, the researcher met several times with his research supervisor to agree on the contents of the interview guide to address the broad concerns of the study. The interview guide contained themes dealing with journalists' background and training, their definition of news, their perceptions of the worlds' economic systems and the contribution of the an editorial policy to their journalistic practice. The data collection in Cameroon then followed.

On arrival at the site, the researcher experienced some difficulties in gaining access to the business news reporters because the managing director of newspaper was temporarily out office. Eventually the researcher was permitted to meet the deputy managing editor to start data collection. The researcher was introduced to the editor-in-chief who subsequently facilitated meetings with the news team. During the period of data collection the researcher was assisted by the supervisor of the economic news service and one editorial writer.

Inasmuch as these two resource persons remained very helpful to the study, the researcher soon discovered the need to get closer to the service head of the economy section: the business news editor. He holds the authority to decide what goes on the menu for the beat to be presented to the editorial conference. Actually, this business news editor manages the daily activities of the economic service: presiding over the beat meetings, selecting events and assigning potential reporters for coverage ahead of approval by the editorial conference.

4.3.2.3 Individual in-depth interviews

The interview was chosen as the primary data collecting method because the prime “concern was on the quality of the response” (Fontana & Frey, 1994: 362). An unstructured interview allows for qualitative (instead of quantitative) data to be collected which offers greater breath than other types. In-depth interviews provide a researcher with opportunities to deeply explore the views, feelings, and perspectives, of the respondents. Furthermore, the individual in-depth interview was chosen because it “help[s] us understand the complex behaviour of members in society without imposing a priori categorisation that limit the field of inquiry” (Fontana & Frey, 1994: 365-6). According to Bower (in Jensen, 1982: 240), in-depth interviews are commonly used in media studies since “the best way to find out what people think about something is to ask them.” The main idea was to let the researcher ‘immerse’ himself with the reporters of the business desk and allow them to open up and speak freely during the interviews. This would not have been possible with group interviews where one person may dominate the discussions, or every question, resulting in a ‘group think’ mentality. As Schroder et al. (2003:153) state individual interviews are void of the ‘spiral of silence.’ This study employed convenience sampling to select accessible participants; it is also a cost and time effective method of sampling (Marshall, 1996).

Prior to the interviews the researcher held a free and open dialogue with all the interviewees. This was done to introduce them to the objective of the study and to assure them of

confidentiality and anonymity. In addition it was used to establish a smooth flow of conversation, incite spontaneous meanings and access to their life world (Fontana & Frey, 1994: 366-7; Schroder et al., 2003: 112). Similarly, the researcher also sought consent from interviewees to take notes and record the interviews while they spoke. The researcher was introduced as a student wishing to learn what happens at the newspaper thus establishing a very cordial relationship with the interviewees who were the 'experts'. In order to maintain this bond the researcher sometimes allowed interviewees to access the interview guide immediately prior to the interview.

All the interviews took place in the premises of the newspaper. Two interviews were held in the respective private offices of the managing editor and the editor-in-chief. The rest of the interviews were conducted in a shared office but temporary privacy was created. This meant that the researcher had to either conduct the interviews in the absence of the other occupant or had to obtain his approval for use of the office when he was on duty. However interviews were often interrupted by visitors. Two of the interviews lasted over an hour while the remaining six took about fifty minutes. Although the researcher followed the interview guide he allowed the respondents to talk at length. In addition, the researcher posed probing questions to shed more light and gain clarity of issues, where necessary. For example, the researcher probed news editors seeking to understand why the lively and critical debates on topical issues during editorial conferences were not reflected in final publications. In other words he probed them to establish why published news stories failed to carry with them some, or most of the controversies, highlighted and discussed during editorial meetings.

4.3.2.4 Observation

Observation was used to complement the primary data collection technique. During the study, observations provided an inner understanding of the working environment of the journalist. The researcher therefore observed how events were perceived as well as some of the actions taken. Such observations included determining the norms guiding business news making that were applied along the production line at the *Cameroon Tribune*. Likewise, observations made by the researcher provided mundane detail which aided the understanding of the idiosyncratic context in which events unfolded. Furthermore, these observations were used in a flexible way to allow the researcher to re-adjust to the real life situation in the field.

The researcher was mindful that scholars, such as Hansen et al. (1998), argue that field observation leads to a deeper understanding of the in-house culture and professional practice in a working environment. The researcher also took heed of criticisms, such as subjectivity, to avoid introducing unintended 'observer bias' (Flick, 2007:61)

The researcher observed business reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune* for two weeks. He observed them during the pre-service service (beat) as well as the editorial meetings. He also accompanied the journalists as they prepared their news reports for publication. The publication process followed several steps. Starting with the pre-service meeting, students on internship would propose topics for the beat. At this meeting one or two junior reporters have the powers to criticise and select what has to be presented in the beat meeting. The business news editor presides over the beat sessions. He requests reports of the pre-service meetings and decides what has to be dropped and what is suitable for discussion. Reporters are asked to make suggestions on selected topics and how and who should cover selected events. The final decisions are in the hands of the business editor since it is his responsibility to present the beat menu to the editorial conference that commences at 09:00 from Sunday to Thursday.

A specific seating arrangement was followed at the editorial meetings. There was an inner circle comprising the managing editor, the editor-in-chief and his two assistants, the different desk editors and editorial writers, thereby indicating the centre of command lies in the position of managing editor. The outer circle seating comprised reporters, a representative of the cameramen, and other visitors, such as the researcher. These seating arrangements were maintained throughout the duration of the observation.

The editorial meeting commences with a post-mortem analysis of the previous days' publication. This is done page after page: the editor-in-chief states the page numbers and gets reactions from the rest of the editorial team. Thereafter, the news stories of the day are drawn from the presentations of the different beats. At the meeting final decisions are made and the meeting notes the different selected events that are to be covered. The researcher noted that although the editor-in chief presides over these meetings the managing editor could, however, override decisions and make recommendations for coverage. Although the managing editor is a professional journalist his position is administrative. However, the researcher did observe that his (the managing editor) opinions have a strong significance on the outcome of the

publication. For example, he presides over editorial meetings in the absence of the editor-in-chief. This happened once during the study.

4.3.3 Data analysis

4.3.3.1 Data transcription

The researcher transcribed the interviews in their entirety. Most of the transcripts were about ten pages in length. However, two transcribed interviews did not exceed eight pages. The process was tedious particularly as one respondent spoke in French and two respondents used French expressions to explain some points they wanted to highlight. Since the researcher is bilingual he managed to translate most of these expressions. The researcher also sought help from French-speaking friends, and a translator, to clarify the correct translation of some data. For example, it was difficult for the researcher to translate one interviewee's definition of news, namely, "quelque chose qu'on peut vérifié et recoupée". This was finally translated to mean news as something that is verifiable and with evidence that it happened.

4.3.3.2 Open coding

Field data are "a pile of 'facts' which, as we have seen do not speak for themselves" (Flick, 2007: 77) and needs processing to get meaning out of it. In order to make sense of the field data the following analysing technique was applied to breakdown the data. The fracturing was data-driven (Gibbs, 2002: 59) and produced units of meaning-making labels. The first category labels, namely 'in vivo' categories, were created using the exact words of the respondents (Richards, 2005: 95). They were further grouped into themes using analysing techniques. For example, key words in context; constant comparison; repeated words; and in vivo quotes. The latter are exemplified in the below quotes of the interviewees' definition of news:

News (long gap) is something that is new. Something that is not yet known or something that is known but you want to bring in certain angle that is not yet known to the people. News is something that can inform people, anything that can educate people. At time news entertains.

News is something that is verifiable, something we can verified, news is not rumour. It is facts that are put to an audience. It is that which differentiate news from rumour. When it can be verified and there is evidence to that effect. It can be a scoop; it may not necessarily be a scoop.

4.4 Ethics of the study

Research ethics concerns itself with how ethically right (Rocco, et al., 2003: 21) a study is being carried out. Research ethics strives to attain a mutual balance between attaining research objectives as well as leaving study participants or community without any or very little potential harm. Issues of ethical unease usually emerge during planning, data collection, data analysis, and compilation of research findings. Creswell (2007:141) groups ethical issues into access to an organisation and site and rapport while inside the latter. However, other scholars have presented these ethical issues differently. For example, in Berg (2007:79-80) ethical aspects are grouped as (a) informed consent procedures; (b) deception or covert activities; (c) confidentiality towards participants, sponsors and colleagues; (d) benefits to research participants over risks, and participants request that go beyond social norms.

Prior to commencing the field phase of this study the researcher sought, and was granted, permission to visit the site. When he arrived at the head quarters of the newspaper he obtained two levels of informed consent. He obtained consent at the level of the organisation via the assistant managing editor and editor-in-chief who subsequently introduced the researcher to the editorial meeting. Prior to conducting the interviews with participating reporters the researcher also obtained individual consent from all of the participants to ensure they were aware of the purpose of the study and its data collection methods. The researcher also assured the reporters that information gathered on the site would be published as a master's degree thesis at Rhodes University. They agreed to the proposal that the information could possibly go beyond the bounds of the university to be published in academic journals and as a chapter in a book.

4.5 Limitations of study

There were three overarching limitations in this study. Firstly, this study represents business news production at the chosen case study site: the *Cameroon Tribune*. It therefore carries with it some shortcomings attached to other case study research. Admittedly, even though this investigation was to understand the production of business news in Cameroon, its findings cannot be generalised to cover other news rooms that were not part of this study. The study focused on a state owned newspaper in a context where many private newspapers with commercial orientation exist. Regrettably, the findings, no matter how informative they are, cannot be easily opened beyond the scope of the study.

Secondly, the presence of the interviewer may have triggered “interviewer bias” (Swimmer & Dominick, 1991: 128). To minimise this risk the researcher used probing questions to get detailed responses. He also compared previous and subsequent interviews. Nevertheless, it remains uncertain whether respondents were giving truthful answers. It was equally difficult to ascertain whether the newsroom accurately reflected daily occurrences. For example, the researcher did not know whether all present in the newsroom behaved in their normal manner during the study. In other words the presence of the researcher could have introduced some behavioural changes in the newsroom that may have impacted on the findings of the study.

Thirdly, validation of respondents is hard to gauge in research which uses in-depth interviews and observation. The researcher noticed that during the data collection phase most of the reporters pretended to be talking freely. For example, one of the reporters moved the researcher to different locations claiming that microphones were planted in several rooms for eavesdropping and for cracking down on radical reporters. It is worth recalling that the interviews and observation produced large amounts of data for analysis. Suffice to add that another researcher, exploring the same data, may arrive at interpretations substantially different from those in this investigation.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter covers the field of qualitative research enquiry including its advantages to the whole research agenda. Reasons for using a case study approach are expounded. Supporting arguments are provided for the use of individual in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. In terms of the demands of case studies the chapter includes the use of observation and cursory readings to increase data sources thereby increasing the validity of the findings. The researcher provides an explanation in this chapter of how the collected data were transcribed and analysed using open coding. The chapter concludes by highlighting the shortcomings that were faced as a result of the methods used in this study.

Chapter 5: Findings and discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, and discusses, the findings of the study. It is structured to answer the key guiding research questions of the study. The first section focuses on how business news is defined by reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune*. The varied understandings of business news are discussed under two subheadings: content related and referential attributes of business news. The second section examines business news making practices at the newspaper. This is presented and discussed under two subheadings: political economy and gatekeeping. The political economy subsection focuses on constraints emanating from ownership and institutional structures while gatekeeping teases out the factors affecting the production of business news from the individual and organisational spheres of influence. The third section presents key properties characterising business news sieved from the findings informing the conceptualisation of news making practices at the *Cameroon Tribune*. Before we understand business news, we must identify with the general properties of news and then relate these to the business news. It was noted that most respondents drew their understanding of business news from what they considered as news. In view of this these findings are discussed in the light of relevant theory.

5.2 Exploring business news according to reporters at the *Cameroon*

Tribune

News has been extensively researched and many studies have been undertaken to identify its various attributes. Decades after the ground breaking 1965 study by Galtung and Ruge, research still reveals that news means different things to different people. This section presents a diversity of empirical understandings of what is news. In this study news is broadly categorised into definitions that place emphasis on content and those that are of a referential nature. Each of the two broad categories has a nuanced empirical understanding of what is considered as news by news editors and reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune*.

5.2.1 Content-related definitions of business news at the *Cameroon Tribune*

This section focuses on the findings that define business news relative to content of the event. In this regard reporters look at the news content of an unfolding event to decide if it qualifies for a business news story. This is discussed under the themes: newness, scoop, truth, purpose, and events, which were carved out of the field data during the individual in-depth interviews. This is essentially different from the referential categories where events are considered as financial news relative to some frame of reference.

5.2.1.1 Newness as a determinant of business news

The general understanding of news as information which is ‘new’ was uniform amongst the business news reporters and managers at the *Cameroon Tribune*. Most of the respondents related to news as having an element of newness. According to one reporter, “news is something that is new. New things that people hear, of things happening around them and things they have never heard before.” Another noted: “News is something that is not yet known.”

This study observed that novelty, as an aspect of news, was given prime importance in coverage of business news at the newspaper. Novelty in the words of one reporter is “what we think the reader must be getting for the first time.” Junior reporters would meet at eight o’clock in the morning to come up with suggestions of new events that were likely to be on the agenda for coverage. The draft ideas were then further refined during the beat meetings. Newsworthy ideas were then carried forward to the editorial conference which commences at nine o’clock (09:00) in the morning.

There were three identified key properties of news: recent happenings; not known; being heard for the first time. Galtung and Ruge’s theory (1965) identified twelve news values which are central to the definition of news (see chapter three). This study reveals that in the context of the *Cameroon Tribune*, it is about ‘not known’ and ‘being heard for the first time’. Seen in the understanding of the 1965 taxonomy, economic news events that unfold in the same frequency as the news cycles stand a better chance of being reported as business news. Things that are heard for the first time and understood qualify them as fitting the cultural mind-set of the reader. The basis for selection of information by the reporter depends on his frame of reference, and on whether the reader possesses the required cultural capital to make sense of the story. Likewise, an event that was never known and which carries an element of

newness is likely to make it as business news. Gans (1980) argues that domestic news stories become increasingly important because of their significance to the past or the present. However, some of the findings of this study do not squarely fit these existing theories. For example, Galtung and Ruge (1965) postulated that long standing social trends have fewer chances to becoming business news; this was however not evident this case study. In this regard it was commonplace to find business reports of a government official undertaking a routine visit to some services under his department being covered as business news at the newspaper. The next section presents a discussion on ‘time’ as a feature of business news.

5.2.1.2 Business news a ‘scoop’.

Most of the interviewees mentioned the time bound aspect of events becoming news. One of the editors stated that “news can be a scoop.” The reporters recognised that breaking the news first is an important news factor. This element of being instantaneous was reiterated by both junior reporters and senior reporters. One journalist defined news as,

...something that is just happening or has just happened. It is not something old or what is most recent about some event that is going on. This really applies to a news story that you are the first to report on. We are always watching out for this in covering stories for the business desk.

It should be noted that this perspective of news looks similar to the notion of news as something not heard before but the two are not the same. Time-oriented views of news emphasise when the news is heard irrespective of a change in presentation or understanding. To exemplify this position the *Cameroon Tribune* did not follow other local newspapers’ speculations criticising announced innovations in the postal services. The newspaper decided to wait on the press release of the postal services’ innovation and only then was a reporter assigned to interview officials of the ministry before writing on the story which has been unfolding in other newspapers.

During the observation period the researcher noticed on several occasions that reporters were encouraged to adopt a ‘scoop’ proposal as a thought line during the beat meetings. For example, during the daily meetings the service editor usually praised reporters for making good story ideas while those who kept quiet and did not suggest new ideas were often ridiculed for being lazy. The researcher observed that the editor’s approach seemed to be a

precautionary measure. Such a measure would avoid the possibility of a proposal of any business scoop being introduced by another reporter who was not part of the business desk during the editorial meeting.

Scholarly literature upholds that the time with which an event gets translated into news is vital to any news organisation. From Galtung and Ruge's (1965) taxonomy time can be accounted for in the frequency of broadcasts or publications. Insofar as new things happen in the finance world these must be translated into news, and as such reports may appear with each news cycle of any media outlet under scrutiny. Therefore, time is not considered to be a sequential pattern but rather adopted to match the newness of event with the time of publication, namely frequency. Bell (1991) postulates the desire for a scoop is positive force in a sense that the gatekeepers allow such a scoop to be included in the final publication.

In addition to the time bound characteristic of news, economic news, according to reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune*, carried with it some elements of 'truth'. This is presented and discussed in the following section.

5.2.1.3 Truth-related understanding of business news

Prevalent during the interviews was the notion of truth to a potential news event. A news manager described news as "... information put to an audience such as a reader, listener or tele-viewer, but this information must be verifiable. News is not rumour." In a similar view, another interviewee described "news is facts, facts, and facts". In the following quote, another reporter described the necessary requirements needed before writing an economic news article:

You get the facts, talk to key persons involved and then you put the story together. I had a story about new regulations in the telecommunication sector. I was given a communiqué from the director in charge of standards at the regulatory authority. If you are publishing a communiqué, you publish it the way it is. I needed a story so I met the director to explain to me why this communiqué, why was it written this way. I also asked about other things. When you get anything wrong, you can come back on story but the main idea is to keep your readers abreast with what actually happened.

Business news in this regard can be understood as existing 'out there'. It is difficult to posit this news feature along any of the studies under which news is described. This news quality

does not conform to any of Galtung and Ruge's (1965) twelve news traits (such as unexpectedness or unambiguity). Equally, this truth related understanding is not accounted for in Gans' (1980) features that describe news as interesting or important. Similarly Hetherington (1985) news attributes such as numbers or crime cannot be used to account for this news trait since it does cover such elements as surprise or scandal. Nevertheless, Bell's (1991) notion of 'predictability' is relevant to the findings of this study. His 'predictability' notion means that journalists and media houses will be more willing to cover economic news events that are scheduled when compared to unexpected happenings. In the same vein he argues that news reporters usually prefer to use ready-made text in the build up to a financial news report because it facilitates their job (Bell, 1991). Thus predictable events as well as those events accompanied by press releases both stand a good chance of being published in the business section of the *Cameroon Tribune*.

The reporters understand they report 'objective fact' in their coverage of the economy and business news reports. According to Tuchman (1972) journalists make this claim because of the application of certain strategic rituals upon which they understand news to obtain its own internal validity. In terms of the use of these professional norms most of the business desk reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune* observed that stories are written using the inverted pyramid writing style as well as reliable news sources and quotes and where possible presenting both sides of the story.

In addition to the perspectives of news as new and news as 'truth' there are other characteristics of defining news based on the content identified in this study; these include the purpose of news and news as event.

5.2.1.4 Purpose of business news in Cameroon

One junior reporter succinctly described the purpose of news as being entertainment, informative, and educative to the audience. He stated:

News is something that can inform people, something that can educate them and sometimes, news entertains people. It can be something that is known but you want to bring another angle to a story to shade light on certain aspects that is thought to be neglected.

This seems to be a traditional definition of news echoed by most of the interviewed journalists. In other words this approach to defining news was common amongst the respondents. Coincidentally, apart from one respondent, the remainder who shared this

definition happened to come from the same training institution, namely the Advanced School of Mass Communication in Yaoundé. It can be safe to assume that during their training news may have been defined as information which carries the potential to inform, educate or entertain the target audience. This purpose of news finds solace in the Galtung and Ruge (1965) publication which requires an event to be clear to the audience. According to them news must come with some familiarity and should fit into the audience's cultural mind-set. This is what Galtung and Ruge (1965) understood as meaningfulness, and to a degree it includes their notion of news having a 'threshold' value (see the next section). This implies that news has to entertain and has to be interesting. It should not be humdrum and boring. Most of the business stories were seen to follow from the much talked about 'giant projects' which came with information about the building of new sea ports, dams and new roads. It follows that business news in Cameroon is conflated with development communication where the main concern is publicising government infrastructural development policy. According to Bell (1991) this is 'co-option'. This means it is a situation where certain events are reported as news, not because of their news worthy nature, but because they are attached to some other high-profile personality or story.

5.2.1.5 News as 'events'

Another perspective of news places emphasis on the infrequency and unusual nature of an unfolding happening. This meaning of news emphasises the extraordinary nature of an act or occurrence of an event and not the characters involved neither them nor its (act or event) regularity. This perspective of news is evident in the below statement of one of the respondents.

In the context of *Cameroon Tribune*, people make news. There are things that a common man will do and it wouldn't be news but once it is coming from a certain person that makes news. For example if a minister goes out, that makes news because the minister has gone out to do something. But from an ordinary citizen we may not qualify as news because he does that every day. But for somebody who has not been doing it often, we may qualify it as news.

A desk editor agreed with this perspective as he underscored that for occurring events to be described as business news they must create an impact for the reader. He described news to be, "a serious event that must be interesting....say human interest story...and having some strong economic or psychological impact on the rest of society." A senior reporter explained how occurrence could affect a simple occurring new event. He stated that:

...very much importance is attached to the event. Take for example the government announcing salary cuts for state employees at a time when food is becoming more expensive. The occurring event is important. Some [newspapers] in their stories may accuse the government of being insensitive to the plight of the people while other may simply see the action as dictated by the donor organisations lending money to the country.

Galtung and Ruge (1965) two news values namely, 'threshold' and 'unexpectedness' elucidate this news quality. For an occurring event to get published as business news necessitates that its impact goes above a certain threshold value to attract the attention of a publisher. Gauging this threshold value position is a controversial decision since it varies with individual editors, the news organisation, and the environment in which the news organ finds itself. For example, a publisher may decide to report on the burning down of a central market as opposed to news that the government is introducing treasury bonds for the first time in two decades. Since the issue of treasury bonds is still new it can be assumed the story needs time to generate enough momentum to rise above a required threshold value set by news-workers at the newspaper. Additionally, 'unexpectedness' can be used to account for broadcasting and publication of rare events. According to Galtung and Ruge (1965) 'unexpectedness' refers to the most unanticipated or uncommon events that can be expected to happen. However, the rarity of these unexpected events in the light of the *Cameroon Tribune* is different to the meaning in Galtung and Ruge's (1965) study. According to newspaper's reporters and news editor's unexpected or rare events insinuate the daily routines of ministers and other top officials in government.

In a similar line of thought, Hetherington (1985) argues that occurring events hold the possibility of becoming news depending on the number of people involved and also the significance of such events or their closeness to the potential target audience. Likewise Gans (1980) posits that an occurring event is deemed important to the nation when it touches on national interests and affects the lives of many. Such an event grows in importance and therefore it has a higher potential to be a news story. To sum the researcher has presented and discussed how business news is defined by using news content of the business news reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune*. The next section switches to another category of describing business news. It was deduced that most reporters used some frame of reference in their understanding of what characterises business news. The different sub-categories of business news, as perceived at the business desk of the newspaper, are presented and discussed below.

5.2.2 Defining business news using referential standards in Cameroonian society

The second category which embraces other perspectives of news is identified as referential standards towards news definition. In contrast to the emphasis on content of news, referential standards towards news give primacy to persons and their significance, geographical distance and reader interest, developmental focus, and economic and business activities. In this category of definitions news is a property of what is centralised as the reference standard around which business news is described.

5.2.2.1 Reference to persons and significance

Most of the reporters and news managers who were interviewed in this study referred to personality as having a strong influence in deciding whether a story should be published as business or other news. Irrespective of the subject or theme for the event the presence of senior state officials during any occasion inadvertently qualifies the event not only for news but also determines the section of the paper under which it gets reported. For instance many of those interviewed acknowledged that the movements of the head of state and the prime minister are news making events which waters down the business perspectives. To exemplify this one news manager stated, “The head of state is sacred here at the *Cameroon Tribune*.” In a similar thread, a senior reporter articulated this connection of news and the head of state:

This may sound strange to you and it is not said every day... When it comes to objectivity which is meant to be a value, you work in the context which safeguards the interest of the head of state. He is the invisible proprietor of the paper. His interest pervades whatever we write and no one tells you this. You just look around and see what happens when someone contradicts this. People up there jump and before you know it, the decision is made about your failure to safeguard this.

Another reporter elaborated further by stating “let me tell you that the same event that should normally be covered for the economic section of the paper become political news if it is being presided over by either the president of the republic or the prime minister.” One news editor described how news beat assignments depend very much on the presence of some public figures in potential news stories. He asserted: “... here at the *Cameroon Tribune*, when demand for coverage comes, it is the political function of the personality involved and not the business angle that determines which service is assigned the task.” Correspondingly, one business reporter highlighted that it is contradictory to keep aside the strong bearings senior government officials exert on business news. He stated that to understand this dilution effect on business news “one needs to go beyond the boundaries of the *Cameroon Tribune* to look

at the business news event that is not obscured by the presence of the senior government member in attendance.”

The definition of business news, with respect to persons and significance, cuts across many of the theories, such as those cited in chapter three of this study. Amongst these, Galtung and Ruge (1965) understand that news sometimes refers to elite persons. Business news at the *Cameroon Tribune* is mainly sourced from events surrounding the unrolling of the government policy on infrastructural development. The newspaper however reports this usually with reference to the head of state and not as a development needed to boost energy production which the country needs. In this respect the developmental aspect is marginal to qualify as business news. Arguing from a similar position, Gans (1980) emphasised that the importance of the event is magnified by the presence of a high ranking government official. Hetherington (1985) acknowledges that personality matters in news making. In terms of this study it was found that reporting on elites dilutes the understanding of the economic essence of news at the *Cameroon Tribune*. The next section looks at how proximity and reader interest affect the construction of business news.

5.2.2.2 Perceived reader interest and geographic distance

Business news, according to reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune*, is written in the interest of potential readers of the newspaper. The interviewees described different categories of readers which include the general public, investors, senior government officials, and consumers. When considering the perceived interest of readers one editor recounted how he used editorial policy and ‘facts’ of a story to meet the needs of the target audience:

We make sure we get the facts of the story just like any other news organ. Then we decide on how the story is written based on the editorial guidelines of our paper. This is the same process you shall find if you get to Le Messenger¹ where stories are written along the lines of what Njawe wants and the same is the case with Le Jour² where Hamman Mana is boss.

¹ Le Messenger is a newspaper in Cameroon covering general news. Its founder, Pius Njawe (who died in a car crash on July 19, 2010) opposed the ruling government of President Paul Biya. He was arrested 126 times and jailed three times for voicing such opposition (<http://www.mondotimes.com/1/world/cm/298/all/13000>).

² Le Jour is a leading French Language newspaper (also publishing online) born out of professional and managerial disagreements between the editorial staff at Mutations. It is founded by the former editor-in-chief of Mutations.

Most of the reporters strongly claimed they were guided by ‘the law of distance’, namely, how close the story is to a potential reader. Some journalists focus on the potential impact a story may have on their target audience. Capturing this view a respondent recounted:

The law of geographic proximity is very important to us. I mean when the price of cocoa or coffee changes, this is news to our local farmers here. Writing stories about whatever happens to stocks in New York, London or wherever is not news to these farmers. Sometimes, it’s the significance of what we write, and the potential impact the on the lives of people here that matter. For example making the people to know how the construction of a new road can change the lives and ease access to towns and nearby local markets.

This law of proximity is excessively applied at the *Cameroon Tribune* leaving one reporter at the economic news desk to conclude that the newspaper: “has reduced Cameroon to Yaoundé, the seat of the paper and of government with very little coming from other parts of the country and the rest of the world.”

The understanding of news based on proximity can be located in a number of theories. For a story to qualify as news Hetherington (1985) underscored proximity to the audience as an attribute. Additionally, this issue of nearness is also echoed in the 1965 study of Galtung and Ruge which acknowledged that meaningfulness plays a key role in news production. Furthermore, Gans (1980) stated the importance of an event increased with the number of people affected by it and its significance on the past or future. Any audience needs to be familiar with news events for them to make meaning out of it. The next section focuses on how reporters understand business news from a developmental perspective.

5.2.2.3 Developmental focus

From the findings of the interviews it is evident that most of the business reporters understood business news as having a close relationship to economic development. According to a senior desk reporter business news is that which “can help change the behaviour of the people and that which has the potential to contribute towards the development of the country.” Another added:

Business journalism to me is development journalism. Journalists in Africa are agents of development. For example, journalists are expected to tell people to wash their hands in Cameroon with the present outbreak of cholera in the north of the country. This will not only help reduce the spread of cholera but also assist people save some money which they

can put to other use. I can tell you this is not the case in developed countries where such things are taken for granted as the general public are already cultured to wash their hands once they get home.

The majority of the interviewees pointed to the major development projects as the main source for business news in Cameroonian society. Almost all of them made reference to the ‘giant projects’ which encompass projects to improve the energy supply through the building of new hydro dams, roads construction and the creation of two new sea ports. According to one of the interviewees, these projects are core sources of business news:

The main focus of our economic news is the major development projects that are earmarked for the country. These development projects include energy, because the country has come to realise that the economy cannot grow without energy since there is an acute shortage of energy. These are projects to boost energy production such as the Mlompinga Dam. Other development projects include the sea ports at Kribi and Limbe amongst others.

In the past economic news coverage used to centre on activities of the government. However, this new focus departs from the earlier business news coverage at the newspaper. One of the news editors confirmed this new focus. He described business news as that which focused on “managing the economic crisis of the 1990s, assisting retrenched workers with information on how to re-invest their money and managing the 2008 food crisis.” A senior reporter elaborated this with reference to the Bretton Woods Institutions and their economic role:

Business news was reporting the economic crisis, focussing on Cameroon’s relationship with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The real focus was to help the country to reach the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Country) acceptance level. The country fought hard to gain admission into the HIPC initiative and thus business reports had to follow a particular channel to attain prescribed levels. Business or economic activities were geared towards that. Thereafter, the new focus is on infrastructural development.

Apart from these developmental stories being treated as important and having an impact on the lives of the people (Gans 1980) such news reports do not fit any of the main theories in defining business news. Based on Galtung and Ruge’s (1965) taxonomy the development feature of news can be explained using ‘meaningfulness’ because the readers then identify with some of these projects reported in the business section. Also, their continuous coverage gives these stories some ‘continuity’ resulting from inertia gathered from previous coverage. These notwithstanding, it is difficult to qualify these reports as news worthy in terms of Hetherington’s (1985) news values or the additional news features proposed by Bell (1991).

However, this study qualifies this take on business news as relating more with development journalism. The concept of business journalism dates back to one of the seminal works on financial reporting in Africa which argued that in developing African countries, economics, financial (business) journalism can often be equated with development journalism (Thomas, 1978). The argument was that in most post-independent African states most of what was reported in the financial and economic news beats was mostly news stories about developmental actions carried out by the governments. Recent definitions leave much undone about reporting the economy in Africa. This is because contemporary definitions indicate development journalism entails much more than what is practiced at the *Cameroon Tribune*.

Development communication according to Hunczik (cited in Wimmer & Wolf, 2005) should critically and freely examine national developments projects and its applicable elements in a rational discourse free of social constraints. Consequently, development journalism should engage the audience to actively participate in development and also defend the interests of the different stakeholders. Development news is therefore defined using a combination of the participatory approach to communication and the ‘emancipatory’ view of journalism. According to Freire (cited in Banda, 2006), participatory communication is a ‘conscientisation’ process wherein the dialogue focus is more on both the receiver and the social structure. ‘Emancipatory journalism’ as postulated by Shah (1996) is journalism whose goal is to promote and contribute towards development. From this premise development news is making available information that “critically examines, evaluate and interpret the relevance of developments plans, projects, policies, problems and issues” (Shah in Banda, 2006: 6-7).

The findings of this study indicate that most business news at the *Cameroon Tribune* emphasises government policies and provides background to development projects by the administration and other foreign bodies. Most of these reports show the brighter side of such projects without recourse to how failure may ruin the economy. For example, critical reporting and evaluation, or important policies, such as the privatisation of state corporations in Cameroon and widespread corruption with its devastating consequences, are revealing examples. In the same vein, economic news stories published in the newspaper are not centred on the people. Very little space is apportioned to the primary needs of the citizens (such as food, housing and employment), secondary needs (transportation and electricity) and their tertiary wishes (which include their cultural diversity, recognition and dignity).

Similarly, this developmental approach to understanding business news agrees in part with some of the characteristics of business journalism proposed by Kareithi (2005). Drawing from the same work of Kareithi (2005), business news at the *Cameroon Tribune* can be seen to (1) report on the economy, (2) deal with social policy, but (3) fails to account on how it is received by the audience. This failure of feedback is explained by the absence of opinion pages and letters to the editor, which, according to a senior reporter, were suppressed by management long ago: “I must say in passing that some ten or fifteen years ago, management decided to suppress opinion pages...you must have noticed that we don’t have interactive pages like letters to the editor or other opinion pages.”

Kareithi (2005) also argued that African business news neglects the operations and management of corporate organisations, leaving corruption unchecked (for the case of Cameroon, see Nyamnjoh, 2005 and other publications of institutions, such as the Stiftung Herbert Foundation). In addition, some of the reporters acknowledged that the new insert recently added to the *Cameroon Tribune* titled “Alter Eco” may in the future address some of the hurdles faced by business coverage in the newspaper. The majority of the reporters on the business desk of the newspaper asserted that creating specialised columns in “Alter Eco” had been done to target people-oriented business information and help improve on the publication’s coverage of the economy and large corporations. Nevertheless, perusing through published inserts of “Alter Eco” revealed that the insert carries light-hearted reports on issues such as the sales of second-hand goods and price fluctuations in the local markets. Similarly, it was observed that very little attempts were made at in-depth or any critical coverage about these stories that can directly influence policy formulation. This section covered a discussion on the development focus of business news. The next section covers economic and business activities.

5.2.2.4 Economic and business activities

The next important pointer to business news is the nature of the event in question, that is when issues such as high profile political persons are relegated to the background. Frequently the point was made during the interviews about the subject or the theme that the event acted as an indicator of business news. To emphasise and illustrate this one of the business desk editors said this of business news:

Any news item that has an economic colouration is an economic story. Having an economic colouration means that it should contain certain elements that make for economy. For

instance, if a story or news item has to do with, the budget, import, export, infrastructure, road, electricity, energy, or production, commodities; it is automatically an economic news item.

One interviewee made specific mention of the bifocal nature of the country's economy. The respondent claimed the present focus of business news at the newspaper is misdirected as a result of the emphasis placed on government offices as main provider of business news and not on the informal sector. This was espoused by one interviewee as follows:

I cannot understand why we look for business news in the government offices and other institutions in a country where the economy is by far driven by the informal sector. This informal sector comprises more than 70% of the economy. It is unstructured and we must rely on local people to give us information. Take for the case of concealed bread production which is commonplace in Yaoundé or a factory hidden in the outskirts of town that produces iron rods for construction. This second example becomes useful if we are to question the very frequent construction accidents in our capital city.

Although some of the respondents found it difficult to separate an economic from a political story, for the most part they tended to agree that business news emanates mostly from ministerial departments. It only touches on finance, the economy and infrastructural development. However, other reporters understand business news to originate from the banks, insurance companies, and other sectors of the economy. That notwithstanding, one journalist, with over eight years practice on the economic beat, concurred that this sector was under-reported by the newspaper. He blamed this shortcoming on the complex nature in which information about the economy is packaged by economic institutions in Cameroon. Lending credence to this another reporter described how received financial information is processed with a lot of difficulty at the business desk, "it is a combination of figures and statistics which are sometimes made more complicated with tables and graphs" that are difficult to make sense of.

Roush (2006) defined business news as encompassing all news reports about business and the economy. This may seem consistent with current practices at the *Cameroon Tribune* because business and the economy are not differentiated at all. However, the economic news fails to explain the performance of the economy (Parker, 1997). Additionally, the business beat rarely questions public authorities nor does it bring business to book or investigate malpractice (Tambini, 2008). Instead, African business journalism is locked in the multi-layered approach to business journalism which Moge kwu (2005) admits has plagued

reporting on the continent since independence. Arguing further, Moge kwu (2005) states that in terms of this approach news producers target a selected few from whom the rest of the society would then gain access to whatever information they need. This is the context in which business reports from the *Cameroon Tribune* may be read and understood. The newspaper articles are written to please the upper echelons in government and a few elite with the expectation that these handful of persons should help get the messages to the general populace.

5.2.3 Consolidating a definition of business news according to the *Cameroon Tribune*

The different understandings of business news at the newspaper indicate the existence of a complex blend of characteristics used to describe business news as a genre. After discussing these diverse features of business news, according to content and referential aspects, this section seeks to pin down how business news is defined at the *Cameroon Tribune*. A cursory reading of its contents revealed that business news carries with it elements of newness, time and rarity of the event happening from the time-bound perspective. Also, the emphasis placed on sources of potential news events underscores the necessity of some degree of ‘truth’ in stories that are likely to be reported. In terms of the referential attributes associated with understanding business news the researcher observed that the newspaper is highly influenced by individual ranking in administration, geographic distance, and state institutions. Additionally, the findings of this study point to the understanding that economic news at the newspaper is essentially development news.

In the light of existing theory, the newspaper appears to make use of a number of the Galtung and Ruge’s (1965) 12 news values, though not to the same extent in each case. News at the *Cameroon Tribune* is defined primarily from ‘reference to elite’ value demands. Subsequently, ‘meaningfulness’ is given equal significant attention. This can be portrayed through the newspaper’s disregard for information that is not culturally close to its audience. Stating this differently, the newspaper tends to emphasise business news from its immediate surroundings, namely Yaoundé. Also, the position of the newspaper relative to ‘ambiguity’ is very revealing and indicates how another news characteristic becomes relegated to the background. On the basis of the analysis of this study it seems that the *Cameroon Tribune* strives to clarify issues in its business reports as exemplified by the excessive usage of government officials as a source for economic explanations in the build up to a story. By contrast this tends to undermine ‘unexpectedness’ as an important news criterion. This is

because unlikely events need to go through much scrutiny by the newspaper's hierarchy to ensure they are in line with the editorial policy and newspaper style. During one of the news conference meetings a senior news manager responded "we have to leave that to *Mutations*"³ to a suggestion that the newspaper should follow-up on other newspaper reports about rumours from the presidency that the head-of-state wants a Brazilian to coach the national football team. Similarly, the paper stays clear of 'negativity' except in rare cases where such news reports are in consonance with government thinking. For example, the paper may not investigate corruption but would report on a corrupt minister who has been prosecuted by the state.

These findings are also in conformity with Gans' (1980) view that domestic news attaches importance to events involving high ranking government officials. The news traits commonly used in business news production in this study also reflected closeness to significance, proximity, and personality, as postulated by Hetherington (1985). It is worth noting however, that qualities like drama, numbers, and surprise, which Hetherington (1985) advanced as increasing journalists' desire for news did not feature prominently in defining business news from the perspective of reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune*. Having presented how business journalism is described according to the news-workers at the *Cameroon Tribune*, the study progresses to examine key practices common to the process of conceptualising business news in this context. These come under two subheadings: political economy and gatekeeping. The analysis is based on the assumption stated earlier on in this thesis that news can be analysed like any other manufactured produce.

5.3 Political economy and institutional structures

Previous media research has posited the news media as omnipotent, all powerful, agenda setters and having the bullet effect. Media houses do not exist in vacuums and work alongside other supporting structures in coming up with final publications. This level of the analysis therefore presents and discusses factors influencing business news items as a result of the institutional setup and social structure in which the newspaper is embedded. This is presented under the subheadings: coverage and control; sources and source cultivation; and target audience for the *Cameroon Tribune*.

³ Mutation is an independent newspaper publishing national and world news in French. It is a Yaoundé-based paper and is still coming to terms with a fractured readership following the struggle that sent its former editor-in-chief away and creating a rival newspaper, Le Jour.

5.3.1 Coverage and control

The entire staff at the newspaper are government employees and therefore are remunerated by the state. The government also appoints these personnel to the various senior positions within the organisation from the lower ranks (namely business desk reporters) to the managers (such as managing editor). One reporter openly informed the researcher of the benefits that attract new reporters. Such benefits include, amongst others, better salaries and working conditions compared to other private press in Cameroon,

A young journalist starts off with over 300.000 Francs CFA which is far more than what his peers in other news houses can get. Also, there are service cars for coverage, internet access and you know, some of the things many private newspapers cannot afford.

Seven of the eight persons interviewed for this research acknowledged they graduated from the oldest state institution which trains journalists: the Advanced School of Mass Communication (ASMAC). Furthermore, six of them admitted to having worked at the ministry that controls communication prior to joining the *Cameroon Tribune*. Further probing revealed that five of these respondents had post-graduate qualifications and held senior positions in the news hierarchy. Amongst these are the managing editor, the editor-in-chief, the supervisor, and the editor of the business desk.

Another finding of this study indicates that the management of the *Cameroon Tribune* is reluctant to hire journalists who have been trained at other journalism schools such as the universities of Buea or Dschang, and other non state-owned institutions. This is a rational conclusion explaining the dominance of the newspaper's staff coming from specifically one out of the many journalism training institutions in the country. This can be explained by reference to ASMAC's mission statement to mainly train journalists and other media professionals to work for different government departments after independence. However, it was observed that inasmuch as qualification determines a position occupied by an individual in the news production hierarchy, key positions were handed to obedient reporters. To elucidate this point one of the service heads disapproved of his appointment to manage a beat which he openly dislikes and claims he knows nothing about and he regrets missing the comfort he enjoyed in his former position:

I don't like it here working as an economic reporter, this is not my thing. I don't understand the economy and have to read a lot not to write trash. I seat on this position because of the decision of a service note. At my former position, you wake me up from bed and I will give

you a story. I was at home and liked it there. Can you imagine with my present position I have never been to a stock market not to talk about understanding what happens there.

In addition another senior reporter claimed he was never trained to be in his present post. He does not complain about his work and accepts his predicament since his area of specialisation is not given importance at the newspaper:

I work in this service not because I like it but because what I trained for is not taken seriously here and also, it is not an independent service on its own. But I am doing my best even though it is not easy here because most of what is needed to make a good economic report cannot be made available, take the example of statistics that is essential to write a good story on the economy is hardly available. Cameroonians don't have the culture of statistics.

A similar complaint came from another desk editor who until 2010 headed the service under investigation. Likewise, he was not happy with his transfer and disapproved of the managerial decisions to move reporters from services they are comfortable with. However, the news editors view this problematic issue of inter-service transfers in a different light. From a senior managerial perspective moving reporters was a good thing. The following is the point of view of the managing editor on his personal experience while working for the newspaper; the senior news editor underscores that inter-desk transfers are beneficial to both the individual reporter and the news organisation:

Take my case for example, when I started working for the *Cameroon Tribune*, I was assigned to writing short stories but my main job was preparing the menu for my supervisor. Later on, I worked as an economic reporter in Douala and then was moved to the sports service. Today, you can see I am doing a totally different thing. I think that is what a good journalist should be, all round.

However, understanding the intricate links between the newspaper and what its staff does is not solely dependent on newsroom politics. A senior reporter in the following quote described how the position of journalists has been dictated by the history of the newspaper:

The government owns the *Cameroon Tribune*; you must understand that we have grown out of a brutal system that is not very friendly with the press. So we are managing this new found freedom with a lot of difficulties and highhandedness. We feel the presence and pressure of government all around us, even in the newsroom.

To echo this point one of the reporters described how the tacit editorial policy follows and mirrors what government is doing:

Well, at the *Cameroon Tribune* business news looks first at government policy on the issue at hand. For example look at the Mlomponga Project. This is what government is doing, this

is what is supposed to be done, and this is how the local population is reacting to this. You put them together and give the reader.

This persistent tension between business news gatherers and processors can partly account for one of the findings of this study: the outstanding disparity observed between the vibrancy in the editorial conferences that was not reflected in the final publication. Antecedent to publication controversial issues, such as the newspaper position on the fighting following the presidential election in Ivory Coast, animated the editorial meetings but when these articles were published they hardly carried the different contentious positions. The news reports are usually straight news accounts that are never contextualised. One news manager blamed this disparity as resulting from ‘gombo journalism’ (see Ndangam,2009). ‘Gombo journalism’ is the local name for brown envelope journalism in Cameroon. It signifies the common practice where reporters and news houses demand payment for covering an event.

Political economy analysis occupies a central position in understanding the media since social and economic relations are not egalitarian in society. Different political economy theorists have investigated varied strands of media economy. Political control has been observed by Murdock (1973) as ‘oblique’ and difficult to establish but this does not render such analysis as void. Golding and Murdock (1978) highlighted the importance of analysing social processes through which media content is constructed and interpreted and the context and pressures shaping and constraining these constructions. However, the relationship between ownership and news products is not direct. One needs to ‘read between the lines,’ make inferences and deductions before drawing any conclusions. In an identical view, Noam (1991) examined the growing variety in media ownership assets highlighting the uneasy nature in trying to demonstrate the link between ownership and the coverage of news. From the ownership position one can locate the type of business journalism in practice at the *Cameroon Tribune*. McChesney (2003) argued that “lousy journalism does not stem from a mentally bankrupt or untalented journalist but from a structure that makes such journalism the rational results of its operations.” It can be drawn from the structural arrangement that to transform business journalism practice at the *Cameroon Tribune* to be capable of self-governing the country’s society means there should be an inherent need to institute structural changes in the media organ. This insinuates relaxing the framework under which the media operate and which Banda (2006) underpins as the most regulatory constraint on the media.

That notwithstanding, this investigation observed that reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune* were transferred to other services as sanctions for intransigence. For example, the former sports service editor was moved to the economic service because he chose to criticise the captain of the Indomitable Lions who had physically abused a journalist. This reporter thought it was normal to criticise such actions as was the case in most of the other newspaper reports. His personal decision to back down on writing on the issue according to the newspaper style was translated as being unfriendly to the administration and hence his eventual transfer to a service where he had little knowledge and experience. Similarly, the service head he replaced was also not happy in his new duty post. This dissatisfaction is reflected in the editorial meetings. Misplaced reporters are quick to point out omissions and shortcomings on the beat agenda of their preferred area of work. The findings reveal that these sanctions and disciplinary procedures tend to be counterproductive since it breeds uneasiness amongst the reporters.

5.3.2 Sources and source cultivation

In as much as most of the reporters named a number of sources used in the production of business news, a majority acknowledged using predominantly information from government and other state sources. They claimed they were not forced to contact these sources even though by so doing they were assured of two things. Firstly, the stories would be published and secondly, there would be little, or no post-production, queries. Correspondingly, these business journalists it was observed usually seek government opinion when an issue is deemed as controversial or problematic in one way or the other. According to the opinion of one news editor the newspaper's editorial policy is to support government's position. He added that this does not relate to persons but to government as an institution. He stated:

You know this is a newspaper close to government and defends government as an institution but not as individuals. When a minister gets arrested, the *Cameroon Tribune* will write against him. The *Cameroon Tribune* assumed an impartial and general position. But now there is a position of government and the expectations of the people thus the *Cameroon Tribune* has to play between these two interests. That is a difficult position though it is not written anywhere... you get to understand how to write and the way things get said from your experience of working here.

The relative pressure the state applies on the economic news team was voiced by a senior reporter who has over 13 years experience at the newspaper. In his view the power and demands from state house date far back in history during the reign of the first and former

president of the country. Just as mentioned earlier in this thesis, such instructions get passed from ‘mouth-to-ear’. That is passed between reporters by word of mouth. In the following example, one business journalist recounted how worries about what to write, efforts to increase readership and sales of the newspaper, were not supposed to be the concerns of the news-workers at the *Cameroon Tribune*. He recounted:

It is said that the former president [Amadu Ahijo] told journalists here at the time not to worry about writing to sell the newspaper. That their job was to write what the administration wanted and forget about sales. What should be their major preoccupation there-on is whether at home they have food on their tables.

This invisible hand of the state exerting pressure on the business news team is still being felt today. In another example, one of the senior news editors (the editor-in-chief) was forced to defend himself after writing an article in which he claimed to have criticised the sports minister. The complaint was never made through the normal media channel where the minister could ask for a ‘right of reply’ or demand a correction on problematic parts of the news article. Instead, the editor-in-chief received a call from the general manager complaining about the disgruntled minister and described what transpired:

I received a call from the general manager here at the *Cameroon Tribune* demanding to know why I had attacked the minister of sports in my article. I had to explain myself before the general manager and that needed strong evidence before I could get away.

Along the same lines, and as already highlighted in this study, instructions such as communiqués and press releases emanating from higher state houses are never questioned. In the words of a senior reporter and onetime senior news manager of the paper:

Business news here at our newspaper means rewriting government communiqués and transcribing ministerial decisions as economic news. When they come from higher state institutions, they are comparable to verses from the bible. You cannot question them.

While this thesis has described the usage of press statements as prevalent in business news construction, it can be argued that this is not unique to the *Cameroon Tribune*. For example, Lewis et al. (2008) attest that most newspaper content in the United Kingdom derives wholly from news agency copies and other public relations material. They further argue that news media today are increasingly become reliant on pre-packaged material confirming that other news organs use predominantly similar prefabricated text to write news stories.

5.3.3 Target audience of the *Cameroon Tribune*

Another indicator used to investigate the role ownership plays in covering business and other news beats is that of the target audience of the media in question. Earlier on in this work it was noticed that there was no uniform response as to the target audience of the newspaper. Talking to the main news managers, the opinion was very much a contrast of what this study obtained from the business reporters. The main news managers envisage the general public as the target with includes investors and the government. Contrary to this perception, most of the reporters hold that the paper is written for the rich in society. They maintain that the focus is elitist targeting the upper echelons of government official and the rich but rarely the consumers or lower ranks of the population.

Based on this divergence with respect to the target audience, this study observed that the average man in the street had little or no voice in the serious columns of the newspaper, such as politics and economy. Most of the sources were from the elite structures. Likewise, the content of what constitutes business news did not show much concern for the less privileged in society. One of the news mangers drew attention to persons most likely to be mentioned in the news:

You may find people from the ministries almost every day in the paper but from other financial institutions and consumer groups, not that often. We may use them say once a week but all that is going to change now especially with the coming of ‘Alter Eco.’ This will all take effect with the new structure of the paper we are presently working on that goes into effect next year.

The study found additional inconsistencies with the managerial side of the newspaper. It was observed that it is published only during working days and not during weekends. This can only be explained by the assumption that the target audience was not the general population but specific segments of it: the workers who stay at home on public holidays. That is, failure to publish when workers are away from their offices reveals that the newspaper target is not the general populace but those that are absent from the city centre because of the holiday. Concurringly, the managing editor stressed that sales never reached 500 copies during weekends and this seemingly has oriented the *Cameroon Tribune* to target civil servants and other elite capable of buying copies of the newspaper. In addition, the study noted that while the country’s population is growing, the readership of the paper has registered a significant drop with the print run falling from 60,000 (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 155) to 25,000 (Field Data, 2010). Along a similar path, the content of most business news is predominantly information

from the big cities of Yaoundé and Douala; with a bulk originating from government offices. There was very little content about the majority of Cameroonians, and the rural farmers who are the key drivers in the economy that is agro-based.

This form of news production, according to Murdock (1973), where news is mostly reported from political systems ‘coincides with’ and ‘reinforces’ the ‘definition of a political situation evolved by the elite.’ This situation is however caricatured through the occasional publication of dissenting voices (such as the publication of a minister prosecuted for corruption) which serves to give the paper its reputation of attending to the needs of the nation. The researcher deemed it necessary to also consider a more flexible analysis and as such the work of Schudson (2000) was consulted. The *Cameroon Tribune* reinforces the cultural hegemony of the dominant elite. It makes the existing power distribution seem natural hence its outcome is logical in terms of common sense. It succeeds to make oppositional views appear unreasonable, impractically idealistic, or utopian (Schudson, 2000).

Manufacturing economic news is business in itself. Another stage of this analysis understands that an income from potential economic stories affects how news is constructed. As observed the *Cameroon Tribune* publishes government communiqués and press releases not just because of its ownership attachment. One reporter informed this study that these press documents:

...are the main sources of finance added to the fact that these press statements may contain news. Even though these documents come with money and information, their source speaks volumes especially if they emanate from government departments.

In the same light, a senior journalist was of the opinion that numerous publications of these press statements and the writing style of the paper was not business-like. According to this reporter:

We write for the decision maker, the civil servant and not for the ordinary people....it is difficult to get a target because the concern here is not so business-like. I think most of our writing is done in the interest of our boss, which is the owner.

Based on these findings it is possible to conclude that the *Cameroon Tribune*, unlike other newspapers, is not very interested in increasing its readership. This newspaper, that is supposedly the voice of the government, prints only 25,000 copies in a country of close to 20 million inhabitants. The newspaper targets government official and civil servants who form

just a minute part of the literate population in the country. Therefore it fails to cater for the interests of its huge informal sector which, according to half the interviewees, is the foundation of the economy. This readership population is the marketable product used by media organisations to attract potential advertisers. Thus its obvious neglect is indicative of the non business-like attitude attributed to the newspaper. Inasmuch as the newspaper has no policy that prioritises profits the same can be said of its attitude towards serving the majority.

Furthermore, at the time when privatisation is actually peaking, with many of the state owned corporations getting into private hands, the *Cameroon Tribune's* focus on resources from the state is inconsistent with the whole notion behind the policy. Even though the difference between public media and private media is not specific on sources of income, one would expect the newspaper to focus on the private sector for news and other financial intake to supplement income from government.

It can be safe to assume here that the *Cameroon Tribune* displays what Schudson (2003) understands as a kind of motivation that has grown rare but not obsolete in media: the idea of running a newspaper not to make money but to make a statement. The argument being that even though profit is at the heart of most newspapers it does not necessarily mean that market logic dictates news outcomes.

5.4 Gatekeeping structures and news filtering at the *Cameroon Tribune*

This section presents and examines the findings relative to Shoemaker's (1991) understanding of gatekeeping. The findings are presented according to two levels of analysis: the individual and the routine and organisational. This mode of presentation is employed because it allows us to bring to the fore insightful understandings to practices informing the conception and production of economic news production at the *Cameroon Tribune*. The following section focuses on factors impinging on these processes that result from journalistic routines and organisational limitations in new production.

5.4.2 Routine behaviour and organisational constraints to news construction

This section focuses on two essential areas of analyses. The first section looks at patterns, routines and repeated practices, such as the editorial conference meetings and the news writing style encouraged and practiced at the *Cameroon Tribune*. The accompanying analysis

reveals how these determine the construction process of financial news at the newspaper. The focus then shifts to the organisational constraints which come to bear on information as it moves from the sphere of individual gatekeepers to be scrutinised by organisational demands. At this stage, the analysis hinges on the editorial policies, in-house codes and how the newspaper shapes reporters to meet its organisational objectives.

5.4.2.1 Editorial conferences at the *Cameroon Tribune*

Serious work starts at the newspaper at nine o'clock in the morning with news managers and senior news staff meeting for the editorial conference. Observation revealed this meeting usually takes about an hour. All senior reporters, service heads, editorial writers, the editor-in-chief and his two assistants and, the managing editor, are usually expected to attend this meeting which is influential and starts with a critique of the previous day's publication. The assessment is done page after page and this is the first point of the schedule of this routine meeting. The editor-in-chief calls out on the page numbers and participants highlight shortcomings, point out errors and, when necessary, draw attention to stories that did not follow the instructions given prior to coverage. The reporters are expected to have perused their free copies before the start of the conference.

When asked about the objective of the editorial meeting, a senior reporter highlights its importance by stating:

It is to prepare the next days' publication but as you must have noted it starts with a critique of the previous publication. The idea is to help reporters improve on their output and also meet the objectives of the paper in subsequent publications.

This repeated practice serves as an opportunity to pass on the tacit editorial policies and other in-house guidelines of the newspaper. It is appropriate to mention that the *Cameroon Tribune* has no written code of conduct nor style book to guide reporters. It was observed that the newspaper policy is heard and understood through regular attendance of the editorial meetings. This can be deduced from the preceding quote. One senior reporter insinuated that guidelines that are used by reporters in covering events and writing stories to meet the goals of the newspaper are issued during these meetings. In addition, headlines for all articles and their general presentation are dictated from the editor's conference. For example the editor-in-chief on one occasion remarked:

I cannot believe he [referring to the deputy general manager] could not see the spelling error on a front page headline. I believe he read the story and how can such a mistake go past him?

However, this comment was made in his absence. On another occasion, attention was directed towards a photo-journalist who attached the wrong photograph which did not match the text in the accompanying article. This prompted the editor-in-chief to spontaneously come up with new rules for the photographic department. The following are his instructions and the new policy directive towards the photography service relative to the conference meetings:

I am obliged to tell you that a photographer is a journalist and can be sent on coverage alone. This means I need a representative from your department here every day at the editorial meetings. You should no longer wait on assignments to come to you in your offices.

This contrasted with the findings of Gieber (in Shoemaker, 1991) which found editors to be passive, task-oriented communicators, making no evaluation of the incoming copy and worried just about its concordance with production and bureaucratic goals. While the editors focused on the aims of their publication, the critiques of the editorial conference were more on the content and how palatable the information was that had been served to the audience. This showed that news values did not take into consideration simply how easy it is for a story to go past the gates but also the specific details of the message that needed to be amplified. Here one sees conformity with the three sets of criteria: the audience, accessibility, and fit, as being the basis upon which news values are based (see Golding in Shoemaker, 1991). Another repeated practice influencing how business events are perceived and packaged for the business page is the writing style employed by reporters of the newspaper.

5.4.2.2 *Cameroon Tribune's* business news writing style

The newspaper's approach to news writing is not unique. The pattern applied to writing for the business and other beats of the newspaper is a method taught in most journalism training institutions. It is the 'inverted pyramid' writing style. This approach demands that reporters begin stories with the most important point with the rest of the 'facts' following in decreasing order of importance. One junior reporter explained how journalistic writing, otherwise referred to as 'journalese', becomes embedded in graduates on completion of their training programme. She understands this common background to account for the similarity existing between business news reports written by different journalists working for other news

organisations. In the quote that follows, she likened the writing technique to the news outcome:

I think the writing technique used here is the same as those used in France and elsewhere. We use the same tools as thought in schools. Look here some of us are from different journalism training schools but we write more or less the same.

According to the editor-in-chief, the writing policy of the newspaper gives primacy to ‘facts’ and the policy objectives of the news organisation you work for:

First are the facts. Facts are sacred here and this is same everywhere. Then the choice of how to report it follows from the editorial line. Take for example an accident with 20 deaths. Some newspapers may highlight the state of poor roads and blame the government while others may look at the mental state of the driver at the time of the accident.

This study observed that most of the reporters claimed to be writing objective news reports. To back this claim they list a number of other routines practices employed in news writing. Most of the journalists underscore how talking to sources can be beneficial to an upcoming business story. Another repeated practice employed in the conception and construction of a economic news reports includes the presentation of both sides in a conflicting report and using quotation marks to distance oneself from the ‘facts’. Nonetheless, it was noticed that the sources used were biased in favour of the administration as opposed to independent and other expert advice. Without delving much into preferences in sourcing information, the point highlighted here is the continuous application of such routines practices. Shoemaker (1991) argues that when gatekeepers employ established practices to guide their selection, they represent their profession or society more than exercise their individual influence as reporters. Additionally, stories carrying such professional inputs appear with positive forces at the individual and other gates thus favouring onward passage through the different channels.

In the light of Tuchman’s (1972) stance, journalists’ claims toward attaining objectivity can be based on the usage of four strategic procedures: giving conflicting evidence; presenting supporting facts; using quotes; structuring the article using the inverted pyramid writing style. Therefore while these reporters understand their efforts as being ‘objective’, it is arguably true that the reverse holds true. Inasmuch as they collected the information using a routine that could be qualified as biased, talked to a similar category of news resource persons, it follows irrespective of how much ‘journalese’ is embedded in their writings that such news

reports cannot be accepted as ‘objective’ along the lines of Tuchman’s analysis. The reporters cannot provide adequate conflicting evidence because they lean on one type of source and as a consequence lack supporting facts from the non-preferred source.

Nevertheless, routines are better used and understood towards organising the functioning of the newspaper. Business journalism will be nothing but chaos if journalists were thrown out to the field in order to be allowed to write their reports and paste them anywhere on the newspaper. The *Cameroon Tribune* is structured in such a way that it publishes 32 pages regularly with the news sections divided into five sub-sections: politics, economy, society, foreign, and sports. ‘Politics’ is the first and privileged section (according to our field data) coming immediately after the front page, after which is the ‘economy’ with ‘society’ occupying the third position. Next are the sports pages followed by the foreign page. News events must satisfy the organisational needs that are sometimes embedded in routines and other news values used at the *Cameroon Tribune* to traverse all the gates to the publication.

Golding (in Shoemaker, 1991) observes that such routines as discussed above (use of sources, present both side of a story and writing with using the inverted pyramid) play a critical role in making chaotic tasks manageable and provide regularity. That is the job of transforming events that happen into the news world. According to Shoemaker (1991) such repeated practices are important to organisations because they help to control work flow whereas Tuchman (1974) underscores its usage by journalist in news classification.

5.4.2.3 House policies and codes of conduct at the *Cameroon Tribune*

From the interaction with the news team at *Cameroon Tribune*, this study discovered that there were no laid down rules for writing at the newspaper. However, the main gatekeepers, namely the managing editor and the editor-in-chief, were the only ones who seem to understand the rules needed in deciding how a story is ultimately selected or left out in the newspaper. One senior gatekeeper, the managing editor, acknowledged the absence of clear rules and described how reporters get to learn and follow the tacit editorial policy on the newspaper:

I can say the rules are still informal as we speak but we are working on them now. In the mean time, we try to give guidelines when covering some important subjects. In economics in particular, we want to present to our readers economic facts on finance, business and

how it affects the consumer... Because you know with guidelines, it makes the job of the journalists easier.

Along the same lines, the editor-in-chief understands the editorial decisions to follow from basic cannons of journalistic news writing taught in journalism training institutions. He understands this as a presentation of 'facts' and an avoidance of partisan politics:

First report the facts and make sure the story is balanced. We strive to keep away from 'gombo journalism' (i.e. brown envelope practice). The stress here is balance reporting and knowing how to go around a critical story without insulting the government. We strive to support the government that is supposed to be impartial in serving all Cameroonians. This is the difficult position though it is not written anywhere.

Conversely, it was observed that reporters shared a divergent view to that of management relative to making decisions on how and what to cover for the newspaper. Their first obstacle was the absence of the editorial policy which is best discussed during editorial meetings in the absence of junior reporters. Additionally, both junior and senior reporters remain doubtful of how to handle stories they are expected to write about. This leaves them with the decision to support government on controversial issues for the story to successfully make it pass all the gates or write a neutral news piece that may be considered as offensive thereby running the risk of being sidelined. A senior reporter narrated his doubts and how it affects his decision on the job:

You get confused on what angle to take in writing a story. You get puzzled whether you should even cover certain things for the *Cameroon Tribune* whereas if things were clearly defined, it will ease issues for you. Writing for the *Cameroon Tribune* is very difficult because we have no written codes and much of what we do here is conditioned by guessing what management wants to see.

At this juncture, one could accentuate that the decision to write against government is a negative force in business news selection while the converse is true. Nonetheless, this could be a positive force depending on the rank of the state official in question and on the issue being discussed.

5.4.2.4 Socialisation of reporters

This study discusses socialisation following the three stages proposed by Jablin (in Shoemaker, 1991) which are 'prearrival' or 'anticipatory', 'encounter', and 'metamorphosis'. These three stages are defined and discussed with relevance to socialisation. News employees upon arrival at the *Cameroon Tribune* are gradually introduced into their job expectations. In

this phase, the organisational norms, customs, and ideologies, are implanted thus forming the working mind-set of the reporters. At this initialisation stage, one young reporter at the business desk was openly reprimanded for failing to recognise the countrywide nature of the newspaper. This reporter, unlike other reporters, was however not interviewed by the researcher since his initiation activity required that he could be moved between services depending on the needs of the organisation. Similarly, the business editor slighted the young reporters and interns particularly when they had very few items to propose for the beat meetings. As the managing editor confirmed during the interview, “it is good for a journalist to be grounded in all the different sections of the paper.”

Taking a profound look at this process, this study interviewed two junior reporters who were at the ‘encounter’ stages in the professional career at the news organ. Both of them came from privately owned media houses and had difficulties adapting to the writing style of the newspaper. According to the only female reporter interviewed in this study she took the job because of better financial remuneration even though it was tough working without a clear editorial line. In the following quote, she described how she gets to understand the editorial demands which she seems to grasp so well that she has never been reprimanded for misconduct:

I moved to the *Cameroon Tribune* because of better working conditions after four years with *Mutations Newspaper*. I have never seen the editorial line ...I have never been accused and when you know you have to support government, why attempt otherwise. I have never been accused of going overboard and I strive to keep things that way.

Sharing a similar point of view was another junior reporter who previously worked at *The Herald* (a defunct English newspaper) as sports desk editor before joining the *Cameroon Tribune*. This reporter explained the shift from his old job as downing sensationalism and becoming informative, “all we are doing here is trying to move away from sensational journalism and moving towards informing people.” The reporter acknowledged the difficulties of working in a situation with unwritten rules but said he finds his way around this hurdle with knowledge of what government policy says on issues he is expected to cover.

In addition, this study located most of the reporters, who took part in this study, to be positioned at the ‘metamorphosis’ stage. Most of the senior reporters and editorial writers

were seen as accepted members of the paper. They were trusted with critical or very sensitive articles and have the leeway to orient junior peers as to the expectations of how to write stories with greater chances of traversing all the gates and channels. An editorial writer described his job as being present, sometimes writing commentary papers and covering the movements of the president, “I don’t really go to the field; it’s like being on a holiday. I hang around, write commentary or analysis papers and occasionally accompany the head of state during visits as a special envoy for the newspaper.”

On the basis of the interviews and field observation, it is deducible that socialisation at the *Cameroon Tribune* is achieved through peer leadership and pragmatic learning. The new recruits are trained by senior peers on how to take on given assignments and also how to abide by apparent codes to become successful in the newsroom. The absence of any written code of conducts means skills and knowledge are passed on from senior colleagues to junior peers through practice. Through everyday interactions, the incoming reporters are schooled on what are the favourable news values to consider in writing economic stories so that they do not get rejected at any of the gates. Similarly, they get in-the-field advice on how to keep away from libel suits and upholding the image of the news organ. Through this one can attest then that gatekeepers take decisions based on some common values which have been handed down the organisational hierarchy or chain of command. Inasmuch as these may depend on the individual characteristics and routine practices, the decisions to use or drop certain stories at different gates are informed by this apparent organisational mind-set.

Irrespective of these endeavours to orient employees, socialisation may be resisted and rejected. It was observed that a few senior reporters did question some of the used news values to determine events worth covering for the economic section of the newspaper. A couple of the reporters openly declared that they detest their present duty positions in the hierarchy but failed to qualify these sentiments as being some form of administrative sanctioning even though their line of arguments point in that direction. The examples below are hard to describe here for reasons of compliance with confidentiality. Two desk editors disapproved of their duty posts. Both expressed their wish to be moved back to their former positions with one emphasizing his new job makes him uncomfortable working as a journalist in a beat where he understands very little. One of these unhappy reporters blamed the poor state of business reporting in the newspaper on lack of skilled reporters:

It is not everyone who understands the economy not even economists themselves. It is difficult and complicated to understand public finances which mean that journalists without proper training like what we have here leave much to be desired from their news reports.

Another discontented journalist who is forced to work for the economic service while hoping to regain his former position proposed that for their reporting to improve, there is a need to create another writing style of business journalism. He proposed that business reporting must strive to be less complex and people-oriented, “maybe we have to create another style of journalism and try to make people understand unfolding issues by drawing from practical examples that ease understanding.” Having discussed the routines and organisational factors affecting news construction, the following sections focuses on attributes impinging on these processes resulting from the actions of individuals acting as gatekeepers.

5.4.1 Business journalist (individual) level

Individuals involved in the production of news can be classified into three sets: news gatherers; news processors; presenters (Peterson, 1979; Shoemaker et al., 2001). This analysis concerns itself with the first two: news gatherers and processors. Since presenters would fit into an analysis of broadcast (radio or television) media they are not relevant to this study. This study adopts Bass’s (in Shoemaker, 1991) classification which lists two categories of gatekeepers: news gatherers, and news producers.

According to the news production structure at the *Cameroon Tribune*, the news gatherers are: the journalists who work at the main office in Yaoundé; the ten regional correspondents; and other news personnel reporting for the newspaper. The news processors include: the editors (namely, beat editors, supervisors or service heads); editorial writers; and two levels of senior news managers. This first level is made up of the editor-in-chief and the managing editor. The higher and upper most level managers, who could be termed the executive editors, are the general manager and the assistant general manager. This analysis does not include regional correspondents because they are not permanently based at site of the study, and the two executive news managers who remained hard to pin down during the data collection process.

In the logic of gatekeeping, all these groups of news personnel were observed to act as gatekeepers at different points in the making of business news. Take the example of student reporters on internship and journalists proposing stories ahead of the service meeting; such proposals were either taken-up or dropped by the supervising journalist. The journalists and student interns meet later with the service (beat) editor at 08:30 for the beat meeting. Here proposed stories are further scrutinised, some dropped while new ones could be introduced to be tabled before the morning editorial conference which starts at 09:00. The researcher noted that these news gatherers perform boundary functions as they propose or decide to select or drop potential news items to be covered for the day.

At the level of the editorial conference, the gatekeeping function was more intra-organisational. Attending news processors reject or accept proposed stories from the different news beats; modify the angle of treatment and propose a tentative headline for each story. This group also carries out extramedia and institutional gatekeeping roles. To exemplify this, the editor-in-chief introduces all press releases, government, and other communiqués, to the newsroom.

Following from this hierarchy, this study understands that individuals intervene at four gates in the build-up to publication. The first is situated prior to and during the pre-service meeting, which is the source-journalist/reporter gate. The second gate is located during the service meeting, the journalist/reporter-beat gate. This is followed by the third gate position at the interface between the services and the editorial team, the service/senior reporters/editorial writers'-editor's gate. The fourth is the editorial conference-print gate where the senior news managers (inclusive of the executive managers) proofread, edit and take final decisions before going to print. Furthermore, these gates were observed to be equally functional at the organisational and communications routine levels of the findings which are discussed later in this section of the study.

From the perspective of the individual and his role as gatekeeper in business news production, this study observed most of the factors delineated by Shoemaker (see 3.7 in chapter 3) did affect the selection and decision making processes involved in constructing business news at the newspaper. In the ensuing subsections, this study presents and examines how thought patterns, the application of some rules of thumb, role types, and other individual

characteristics of the individual journalists, affect how economic news is conceived and therefore produced within the context of the *Cameroon Tribune*.

5.4.1.1 Thinking models

The majority of those interviewed for this study tend to recall news in a linear mode. That is the appearance of an idea of a potential news event triggers it to be connected to, and related with, other events that they have experienced in the past. For example, most of reporters understand business news as information that deals with issues pertaining to the economy, or information emanating some government departments. Paradoxically, most of the reporters treat information coming from certain ministerial departments as economic news while the same information is considered as political news when it originates from top government institutions. Such information may subsequently be reported as a business story only after its political angles have been given prominence. Additionally, all the reporters use a logical sequence in deciding on how to write economic stories for the paper. For example, one reporter described his practice as follows when handling a sensitive story:

Once I have a topic from the editorial meeting to write on, I first look at this story from other newspapers, read a communiqué if there is one and then I make a plan of how to go about getting my facts together. I talk to key figures or groups mentioned in the story and cross check with other sources mostly from administration to ensure balance and good reporting.

Whereas this seems to repeat the definition of business news (see 5.3), the quintessence requiring this form of repetition lies in the following analysis. Business news from the *Cameroon Tribune*, according to most of the interviewees, is not pictured holistically. Economic activities are conceived and reported as disjointed individual happenings. The correlation between economic news at the newspaper and global trends are not made even though this impacts on the local economy. Similarly, news about a new hospital, or the burning down of a local market, is not reported with its well-known impact on the lives of the nation. As exemplified elsewhere in this thesis and mentioned here for emphasis, the business news at the paper is mainly re-writing ministerial and other decisions emanating from government departments. Also, economic news according to the interviewed reporters covers mostly news from Yaoundé (the capital city) and Douala (the economic capital). In addition, these news reports neglect the huge informal sector which is understood (according to some reporters) to be the driver in the country's highly unstructured economy. This informal sector is inclusive of the numerous unlicensed business (such as bakeries, plastic and steel

manufacturing plants) and small scale farmers found in remote parts of the country. Also, there is a tendency to ignore financial news events happening abroad except in cases where such events carry profound political significance.

Shoemaker (1991) posits three different thought mechanisms, namely, associationism; gestalt; information processing. According to him these all affect the decisions made by gatekeepers in their role as individuals actively taking part in choosing from stories arriving at the news gate. The findings indicate that associationism, which is making use of linear approach to aligning ideas, and information processing which involves applying logical steps in solving problems, were both positively reinforced in reporting potential financial news events. These relate to stories emanating from the ministry of the economy and coverage of new giant development projects. The business reporter easily connects such events with past stories that have been published by the economic news beat. Such considerations are indicative that this information carries a positive force as they arrive in front of the news gate and therefore are mostly likely to pass through. However, most of these business stories were not used to explain a general phenomenon. Therefore gestalt, according the Shoemaker model (1991) appears to have been negatively employed by news-workers at the *Cameroon Tribune* owing to the reluctance, or the visible failure, to contextualise global trend with local realities in economic news reports. The news stories published in the business section of the newspaper were disjointed individual news stories about transportation, new government policies, the movement of ministers, or the visit of some group of foreign investors. These were, however, never put together in a manner that illustrated how they interconnect with other news reports and affect the general welfare of the nation.

5.4.1.2 Individual characteristics influencing selectors

This study also identified that some personal characteristics played an important role in the process of getting prospective financial news reports ready for publication. It was observed that reporters were assigned to cover different events based on their acknowledged output while working for the newspaper. For example, coverage of issues deemed important were first assign to the editorial writers and senior reporters before the lower ranked journalist. For instance, during the data collection phase of this investigation, only editorial writers were assigned to cover the head of state who happened to have made two visits to Congo and Gabon for the respective 50th anniversary celebrations of these two countries. According to one editorial writer, this is a form of reward for one's support of the administration. He

acknowledged that such assignments come with financial benefits for the reporter assigned to cover the story. On the other hand, reporters who refuse to write certain stories because they do not feel comfortable with the prescribed angle of treatment get sanctioned but the latter are never direct as illustrated by the comments of the editorial writer in describing the covert manner in which such a scenario unfolds from an ethical point of view:

Here there is a kind of close conscience. They respect your complaint for refusing to write for personal reasons. It will be accepted but you will be stigmatised as somebody who is not friendly to the administration and you may lose some benefits. Not that you are sanctioned but you are considered as someone at the periphery. Some small benefits like missions may escape your way. Things like that. It is no out right sanction. That is the situation.

Another personal trait affecting the news product is one's familiarity to the subject designated to be covered. It was observed that reporters were assigned stories based on their understanding and knowledge of the 'facts' about the issue of concern. This is exemplified by decisions to assign particular reporters to source information from certain appointed persons in some ministerial departments upon whom the news organisation relies on for information and updates. During meetings the editor would turn to particular reporters to ask if contact had been made with such resource persons in their designated sectors when there was some interesting or important event in view. Likewise, a lower rank reporter was questioned in a meeting by the beat editor for over emphasising news from his area of origin. The reporter was reproached for proposing potential news coming from the English speaking regions and forgetting that the paper needs to keep its national outlook:

I think I told you this before but let me say it again so others should not forget the objective of our newspaper. Everyone is expected to contribute stories for coverage but you are not tied to your area of origin. The *Cameroon Tribune* is a national paper and we must try to look at news coming from all over the country. Please, keep it in mind that this is not a regional newspaper.

In the same vein, an English-speaking senior reporter was assigned to cover a visit by some Commonwealth officials because one of the editorial writers remarked during the conference meeting that they were dealing with the Commonwealth and it was not proper for the event to be covered only for the French desk.

According Lewin (in Shoemaker, 1991), individual characteristics of gatekeepers need to be understood as they invariably impinge on the decision pertaining to selecting or dropping of news stories. He underscored that motivation from the organisation affects the values and

needs of reporters and thus requires investigation. Even though individual factors could be considered as important in gatekeeping at the *Cameroon Tribune*, the position of the individual in the newsroom hierarchy determines the extent of his/her gatekeeping powers. Concurring, Shoemaker (1991) posits that experience, interest, and prejudices, differ in the manner in which they affect transmission through the gates. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) argue that the powers to influence final selection of stories to be transmitted are more in the hands of editors than reporters who have less authority. Likewise, apart from one's familiarity with unfolding events, examining some cognitive structures deepens the understanding of the role individuals play in gatekeeping.

5.4.1.3 Involuntary application of rules: second-guessing

The reporters at *Cameroon Tribune* displayed a very high degree of cognitive heuristics in deciding how news stories get separated into the different sections of the newspaper. It is intriguing to understand how reporters take certain decisions and apply them without much conscious consideration. Their decision on how to differentiate political news from economic news was seemingly based on some simple rule of thumb or other judgemental attributes which the news-workers appeared to have learnt on the job. Even though they could easily separate political from financial news reports, a handful of journalists interviewed for this study highlighted that separating politics from that which is economic remains problematic. One editorial writer described the narrow difference to be considered in separating news events:

The line is sometimes not very clear but as I told you, it ceases from being economic news once a very important state dignitary is involved even when the issue is essentially economic. Take the example of the head of state when he goes to inaugurate the Kribi deep seaport project. You must take into account the very heavy involvement of public authorities in our conception of news.

Another reporter underscored the implications of politics on the economy and the likely consequences this brings to the economic field. This reporter recognised both can be explain under 'political-economy.' In the following quote, he described the intricate link binding politics and the economy:

This is what we call political-economy. Take for example a politician decides to increase workers salaries in the run up to an election. This has serious economic consequences. Whereas it is generally taken as a political act, its repercussions on the economy are equally great. Such a story can be treated either as politics just as well as it can make a great

economic story. Imagine what happens if this politician wins the election and cannot meet up the budget increase.

Notwithstanding these, the interviewees agreed that the presence of the head of state or the prime minister inevitably qualifies any news event first as political news. Put succinctly, one news editor captured the treatment of the same event with two different senior state figures, by stating “if the minister of commerce, or his staff, goes out to look at the prices of goods in the market, we cover the visit under the economy but if the head of president addresses the same issue, it is politics.”

Likewise, most of the reporters shared the same conceptual map of shared meanings (Hall, 1997) on where to source economic news. It was deduced from the interviews that the ‘Giant Projects’ were the main source of economic news. The interviewees equally pointed to different ministerial departments in charge of these projects which focus on infrastructural development as being potential sources of business news.

As Hewes and Graham (1989) postulate there are some shared values that gatekeepers use in selecting news without deliberately applying laid down rules. Such is the prevailing case at the *Cameroon Tribune* as the reporters often suggest and propose stories and angles for treatment even though the newspaper does not have a written editorial policy. The gatekeepers here are actively resolving ambiguities and making informed guesses of what they have not yet encountered. Such decisions are propped from within and are enacted without conscious consideration (Kahneman et al., 1982) to any bylaws or guiding principle. According to Shoemaker (1991: 21), “limitations of human senses exert another constraint on the entry of messages into a media channel.”

5.4.1.4 Job roles and news making practices

This level of analysis focuses on how job description affects the choices made which allows some stories to traverse certain gates while others get rejected. Taking the controversial nature of the responses to the contribution of the editorial policy towards the job, one can understand that the editors are striving for neutrality in an area of the job which other colleagues described as highly problematic. It therefore can be safe to predict that editors are being protective of their jobs at the expense of other colleagues.

Similarly, it remains confusing to this study that while the target audience of the newspaper was one thing for managers, the Cameroonian public, it was a totally different one to most of the reporters who saw it as being the decision makers. The understanding here is that from one's position and duty expectations there exists a high possibility to make different takes on the same things and likewise same takes on different things.

Correspondingly, this study also observed that some of the reporters, who were very critical of the newspaper, were not happy with their present roles or job description. Three of the six reporters maintain an adversarial position in describing the business news production process at the *Cameroon Tribune*. The following examples are quotes expressing how some of these dissatisfied reporters view the financial news produced from their write-ups. According to one reporter, business news at the newspaper bears very little resemblance with what is the expected practice. He explains, "I believe the economic reporting we do here has nothing to do with business news as practiced elsewhere. I am (X) of economic service by a duty note but it is something I don't like." In the same light, another reporter disapproves of economic reporting at the newspaper blaming the shortcomings on training:

The journalists we have here are poorly trained...they are under reporting what is happening in the economy of this country...The economic reports you will find here are weak and mind you one can hardly find two journalists capable of reporting on the Douala Stock Exchange.

However, the other three reporters took a 'participatory role' in terms of being satisfied with whatever task the organisation demands of them. This faction can equally be described as disseminators of information. This study therefore observed that role conceptions are important to appreciate how individuals perceive and contribute towards the production of business news.

Cohen (1963) underscored that some workers in an organisation may opt for neutrality whereas others would be content with a more participatory role without recourse towards disturbing the existing status quo. By contrast, some of the reporters maintain an adversarial approach relative to the construction of business news articles. Proof of this disagreement is embedded in the very vivacious and free debates that usually characterise the editorial meetings. The senior writers at the newspaper engage in inspiring debates which sometimes are focused on controversial issues but which regrettably no reader would ever get the chance

of reading. These stimulating, sometimes controversial and thought-provoking discussions just animate the conference room but are seldom published.

Furthermore, the role perception dichotomy also accounts for the editorial conference debates and publication disparity. According to the reporters the general understanding was that management remained hostile to articles that criticise the government. Stories carrying such traits are sidelined; the reporters are queried and in severe situations the writers are sanctioned. This is evident in the response of a reporter who described the general trend that precedes sanctioning when a reporter is understood to have gone out of line:

We are not in a dictatorship so to say but they will make observations against you. Sometimes ministers call the general manager because of some discomforting sentences in your article and then the general manager calls you. Sometimes you are sanctioned...I was a bit free in my (former) service but in economy service as in politics, they are very sensitive and one has to watch out.

Contrary to these views expressed by the news gatherers, the news processors described the unfolding discrepancy from a different standpoint. The managing editor understood the debates simply as an eye opener to the different ways of handling a given story:

That is the way organisations function. We need such free debates to enlighten us on some subjects and as you have observed, nobody is coming here to tell us what to do. All you need is to consider you are working for the *Cameroon Tribune*. Remember you can take the same discussions and write a different story for newspapers such as *Le Jour* or *Mutations*.

However, the editor-in-chief lays the blame on the reporters accusing them of failing to write what they articulate during conferences. He accused them of double-speaking and guilty of ‘gombo’ journalism practice:

The problem is that many of them who speak don’t put it in writing. Nobody stops them. The *Cameroon Tribune* has been the only daily in a single party system of government and people have carried with them the reflex of self-sanctioning. When I get the scripts I read to check that it meets the editorial line without getting into the minute details... They make noise to waste our time and when it comes to writing, they don’t because they benefit (from the same organisations they pretend to criticise).

According to Shoemaker (1991) it is expected that gatekeepers see things differently in terms of their different roles in the process of constructing financial news. He acknowledges that disseminators will probably get into contact with regular messages coming to their attention as part of their job while adversaries are more likely focus on

stories criticising government and corporate businesses. In light of the findings of this study, many of the reporters acted as disseminators whereas those taking an adversarial stance did not criticise government or business. Their criticisms were in the most part levied against the managerial style of the newspaper.

Additionally, the autonomy given to reporters affects the gatekeeping practices. Bass (in Shoemaker, 1991) postulates that journalists working in the central offices have less influence than their colleagues in remote bureaus. However, this investigation found an opposing scenario at work at the *Cameroon Tribune*. With the understanding of bureaus taken to mean provincial offices of the newspaper, the reporters and desk editors wielded far more influence in comparison to their colleagues reporting from the regions (provincial correspondences). Mindful that it was decided for the purposes of this study to exclude journalists working away from the central office, it is insightful to present the power politics between them and the head office based staff. Most of the time, the reporters in the regional offices call the central desk reporters, or beat editors, to obtain clearance before going to cover some important business event. This indicates the tilt in power balance in favour of the reporters at the head office.

On the contrary, a controversial news item may arrive at the gates carrying a negative force although this may change polarity depending on the general situation in which the story is reported. Take the example of a story criticising a minister where the negative polarity alternates to a positive charge because the decision to allow passage through all the gates was motivated by the poor performance of the national soccer team. Conversely, a positive force news item may acquire a negatively charged impeding passageway because of the change in perceptions between individual reporters, and the editors who possess greater influence down the service-conference gate. This synthesis accounts for the thought-provoking articles that fail to traverse all the gates to final publication. Also, these examples illustrate that the force of items considered for the business section of the newspaper hold different polarities at the gates and in the channels during production. This study has presented and analysed findings relative to the role business journalists and editors play as individuals in shaping what the newspaper publishes in its economic pages. In the sections that follow the researcher presents and analyses how certain routine

practices, and some organisational requirements, impinge on the potential business items in the production phase.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study. The first section focused on describing business news in the words of the reporters at the *Cameroon Tribune*. Based on news attributes, such as ‘newness’, ‘scoop’, ‘truth’ and ‘events’, which were commonly used as defining business news. From external news qualities, references to personality, proximity, economic or business activity, featured as key defining characteristics of business journalism. The study in conclusion underscores that from the perspective of the business desk at the *Cameroon Tribune*, business journalism is synonymous to development journalism.

Reading from the practices involved in conceptualising business news at the newspaper, the study makes several key conclusions. Firstly, overbearing ownership pressures greatly affect business news production in dictating where economic information is sourced and for whom it is written. Secondly, most of the decisions taken at the level of individual business reporters were informed by second-guessing, different thought models, and personal understanding of individual job demands. Thirdly, the absence of any written policy for the newspaper, the strict adherence to changing editorial demands and, a strong socialisation history of the newspaper, emerged as routines and organisational factors contributing towards refining, shaping and packing financial information in the process of becoming business news. Fourthly, it was observed that new information tools such as the internet did not play a major part in business news construction at the newspaper even though there was internet access to the business news desk.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to present the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study. It highlights areas for future research. There are three sections in this chapter. The first section covers the research objectives, the data collection methods and a summary of the key findings of this investigation. The second section proposes recommendations for the management and reporters of the *Cameroon Tribune* and other relevant media in a similar context. The content of the third section focuses on recommendations for further research in the field of African business journalism.

6.1 Summing key facets of the study

The principal goal of this study is to understand the construction of business news from an African perspective. Under this broad view the research had the specific objective of understanding how business news is defined from the standpoint of news-workers. In this respect the study endeavoured to understand how news-workers at the *Cameroon Tribune* go about making decisions on what to cover and report for the business section of the newspaper. The study positioned itself within the qualitative research paradigm to allow for broad descriptions of business news making. The study was conducted using individual in-depth interviews as its principal data tool. cursory readings and observation were used as secondary data tools to complement this tool. As highlighted in previous chapters, a literature review of the evolution of business news in the world, West Africa, and Africa at large was done. A review of the media landscape of the research context, namely Cameroon and the *Cameroon Tribune*, was also presented. The theoretical framework in this study draws from the sociology of news production paradigm. This includes Schudson's theory of political economy of news and Shoemaker's model of gatekeeping to understand the different factors, for example, individual and organisation, impinging on the news making process. At the level of news definition and construction theories of news values, the seminal work of Galtung and Ruge (1965) and others including Gans (1980), Hetherington (1985) and Bell (1991), for example, were used as frames to discuss the findings. Based on this approach to understanding the production of news, the following paragraphs assert the major findings of this study.

Firstly, the study reveals that news-workers at the *Cameroon Tribune* have different understandings of what is business news. These are categorised as understandings of business news relative to content of a story or news defined with respect to another frame of reference. Content related characteristics of business news foreground issues of time, newness, ‘truth’, purpose and occurrence. On the other hand, news properties, such as reference to persons, institutions, proximity, reader interest and economic activities, are associated with referential understanding of business news. Furthermore, this study concludes that business news is synonymous to development news in the *Cameroon Tribune*. This conclusion is based some of the business news reporters’ understanding of business news, namely as having a close relationship to economic development. In addition this conclusion is also based on the frequent reports of progress in big development projects which formed the mainstay of business news at the newspaper. Secondly, the study reveals that ownership controls dictate most of what is published in the business section of the newspaper. The news reports frequently centre on senior state officials, their photographs, and quotes. According to the findings of this study most of the business news was sourced from senior state officials at the expense of experts and the lower ranks in society. This study underscores that the business news from the *Cameroon Tribune* is elitist and neglects the main economic driver of the economy: the informal sector.

Thirdly, the study asserts that most of the decisions taken in the process of making business news were sanctioned by tacit newsroom rules. The latter are linked to an absence of any clear editorial policy or code of conduct for the newspaper. In view of this journalists second-guess what would please management in order for business reports to pass through the various gates before the newspaper goes to press.

Fourthly, this investigation reveals that gatekeeping activities at the *Cameroon Tribune* could be pinned down to four gates. The findings divulge that while a lot individual gatekeeping attributes hover around the business news construction process, the most powerful and decisive actions were taken at the final gate: the editorial conference-print gate. The editorial conference was pinpointed as the key deciding body impinging on news items at the gates and in the business news channel. This body forms the seat of control and dictates how news items are refined and packaged. The *Cameroon Tribune* as an organisation has an inbuilt socialisation history targeted towards conceptualising news creation and production.

This explains how business desk reporters are able to second-guess managerial stance on an issue, source news from anticipated quarters and write in the publication's favouring style.

In a nutshell, this study has ventured into several news construction aspects. The study has made an attempt at defining business news from an African perspective upon which it cannot claim exhaustive scrutiny. The study has succeeded in denting an aperture in a research area where further studies should reveal the wealth and diversity in definitional challenges facing African journalism scholarship. This study confirms that "We should begin to establish an African personality and identity in most of the things we do" (Mogekwu, 2005: 64). These endeavours must not be limited to business but other journalistic genres where most of what is used today are borrowed from western media research. The latter has very little bearing on grounded situations on the continent. This study therefore adds to existing calls for the Africanisation of business news in Africa. Business reporting must target the economic dimensions of the varied problems confounding Africa (such as wars, famine, illiteracy and bad governance) with the aim of finding integrated solutions through people participation and the use of new communication technologies. This engenders democratic and transparent governance which are prerequisites for more business and business news.

Following from these key findings, this study advances some recommendations worthy of consideration by the management of the *Cameroon Tribune*. The implementation of these recommendations should help in improve the working conditions of its staff and also uplift its business news reports.

6.2 Recommendations for consideration by the *Cameroon Tribune*

The *Cameroon Tribune* operates without any clear-cut editorial policy and has been surviving and withering storms as time progresses. It cannot effectively play the role of a 'fourth estate' without having solid grounds those journalists and other news workers could use as guides and resolve their professional and other uncertainties. Most of the interviewees in this study took refuge under the existence of the tacit editorial policy. They acknowledged that they had never seen an editorial policy. In addition it seems there is no concrete evidence that such a policy ever existed. In view of this one of the senior news managers informed the researcher that the news house is presently working towards the realisation of a guide book for its reporters. This study highlights the urgent need for such a guide book because it would contribute towards the production of business news. According to one reporter the production

of business news is “rewriting government communiqués.” The essence is that bureaucratic hierarchy, power relations and status all combine in constructing news, imposing meaning at different stages based on different sets of value-judgements (see Schlesinger, 1978: 135). The proposed document referred to above should address its guidance role at the newspaper. For example, the one used by the BBC highlights that it gives guidance to news reporting and production. The point to note here is that such a policy would help resolve two problematic areas noted in this study. It would help translate the vibrancy in the editorial meetings to the avid reader as well as help narrow the existing focal divergence between management and the business news desk staff.

Staff training and upgrading is another area worth revisiting by the management of the *Cameroon Tribune*. African business journalism is plagued with many operational crises and fundamental to this is lack of required skills to understand and report on the growing economies (see Brand, 2010; Nyamnjoh, 2005; Thomas, 1978). As revealed in this study, the *Cameroon Tribune* privileges straight news reports on the grounds of letting the ‘facts’ speak. However, as highlighted elsewhere in this thesis ‘facts’ do not speak. This position has been advanced by Moge kwu (2005: 68) who argued that “straight news reporting does little good for economics journalism.” He further posited that interpretation of economics and financial issues should be the way forward. This would entail making convoluted figures, graphs, and the creation of a duty free market, palatable information to readers. In this light the *Cameroon Tribune*, as an organisation, has to rethink the suspension of interactive columns in the newspaper that allow for the publication of analytical and critically insightful business news’ reports. Reintroduction of such columns should increase its readership base, attract advertisers and also allow the newspaper to meet “demands for pluralism and democratisation” (Nyamnjoh, 2005:154).

The newspaper needs to overcome the delicate balance of being state-owned and at the same time attempting to serve public interest. The tension lies within prevailing attributes which most of the time posit public interest as always opposing that of government. Take the case of the intuitive debates that occur during the editorial meetings and are never reflected in the next publication. There are many reasons that could explain this scenario. For example, some reporters are afraid to write articles that are critical of the state. This stems from claims that management is emotional to reports that are critical of government. On the other hand, the news managers deny these accusations and demand that business journalists should write

balanced articles and be prepared to back any challenges to the newspaper provoked by their writings. This therefore brings to the fore the call for specialisation within the business news team. It is therefore recommended, in terms of this study, that reporters should be allowed to cover news that falls under their preferred areas of interest. This study therefore discourages the use of administrative and other punitive measures that target professional orientation or leanings as demonstrated through the use of punitive desk transfers at the *Cameroon Tribune*.

6.3 Recommendations for further research

Firstly, this research used in-depth interviews as its main data collection method. However, future research aimed at understanding the production of news should include other methods, such as document analysis or focus group discussions, to obtain a more holistic picture of the process. That notwithstanding, there is a need to allocate more time as demanded by ethnographic studies to come up with a ‘thicker’ (broader) description of the news creation process. Similarly, inclusion of quantitative methods may help produce a more comprehensive picture and give a quantified perspective of how news is conceived and produced within a wider context. This would mean taking a sample population that cuts across different cultures and newsrooms. This argument aligns with existing theoretical arguments positing that qualitative and quantitative research methods can best be thought of as being complementary. Thus the findings of this study remain context bound because of its case study design. Maxwell (1992) joined other scholars in observing that it is difficult to make generalisability of the findings in qualitative research in terms of the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation to other settings. Future studies, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods, should lead to easy generalisation and in such a case, a better understanding of African economic news.

Secondly, different models of gatekeeping (such as those of Lewin and White) exist which when employed may lead to different findings other than those obtained in this study. The study only made use of the model proposed by Shoemaker (1991). There is a potential for future researchers to use other models to produce a better understanding of gatekeeping practices that impact news manufacturing. One of the weaknesses of this study is that it combines variables from different levels in one analysis which according to Shoemaker (1991: 76) could confuse interpretation of results. To minimise or eliminate these methodology weaknesses future studies should consider other options of combining variables and levels of analysis. Another methodology weakness of this study is that the different levels were

treated as being equal whereas previous research suggests some levels hold relatively more power than others (Sasser & Russel, 1972). Future studies should strive to separate the different levels of analysis to avoid similar and potential confusion.

There is need to investigate all three components (political economy, organisational and cultural) of Schudson's approach to the sociology of news for any investigation to claim understanding the materiality of news. Future studies should include the cultural approach which was left out in this study. This should be done to understand how cultural and other symbolic interaction impact on the conceptualisation of African economic news. In the same vein, future research could include other models, such as the propaganda model, to broaden the knowledge produced in news manufacturing and extend the frontiers of knowledge further than what this study has been able to do.

This study studied business news construction from the point of view of a state owned newspaper. However, there is an existing abundance of other news outlets in print, audio-visual, and electronic forms that may similarly widen available knowledge of how business news is created on the African continent. Such studies may offer astute details to understanding business news construction.

References

- Abega, S. C. 1999. *Société civile et réduction de la pauvreté*. Yaoundé: Clé.
- Altschull, H. J. 1984. *Agents of power*. New York: Longman.
- Andrea, F. & Frey, J. H. 1994. Interviewing: The art of science. In Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. *The handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2001. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Bagdikian, B. 1997. *The media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Baker, E. 1994. *Ownership of newspapers: The view from positivist social science*. Joan Shorenstein Center on Press, Politics, and Public Policy. Research Paper R-12: Harvard University.
- Banda, F. 2006. An appraisal of the applicability of development journalism in the context of public service broadcasting (PSB). Paper presented at the News Content Planning workshop of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Boksburg, South Africa.
- Bantz, C. R. 1990. Organisational communication, media industries, and mass communication. In Anderson, J. (ed.). *Communication year book*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Bass, A. Z. 1991. Refining the “gatekeeper” concept: A UN radio case study. *Journalism Quarterly*, 42: 69-72.
- Beardsworth, A. 1980. Analysing news content: some technical and methodological issues. In Christian, H. (ed.). *The sociology of journalism and the press. Sociological Review Monograph*, 29: 371-95.
- Bell, A. 1991. *The language of news media*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Berg, B. L. 2007. *Qualitative research methods for social sciences*. New York: Pearson.
- Berger, P. & Luckman, T. 1964. Social mobility and personal identity. *European Journal of Sociology*, 5: 331-344.
- Berger, P. & Luckman, T. 1966. *The construction of reality*. Garden City: Anchor.
- Blake, C. 1997. Democratisation: The dominant imperative for national communication policies in Africa in the 21st century. *Gazette*, 59(4/5):253-69.
- Boyomo-Assala, L. C. 1995. La Construction de l'Identité du Journaliste. *Polis*, 1:11-28.

- Brand, R. 2008. Journalism education as a transformative social intervention: A case study of economics journalism curricula. Paper presented at the International Conference on Education, Economy and Society in Paris.
- Brand, R. 2010. The business of business news: South Africa's financial press and the political process. *Ecquid Novi*, 31(1):24-41.
- Bryman, A. 1988. *Quantity and quality in social research*. London: Routledge.
- Campbell, J. 1996. "Newspapers in emerging democracies: A cross-regional study of the newly independent press in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa." Paper presented at the Annual Convention for the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.
- Cantrell, D. C. 1993. Alternative paradigms in environmental education research: the interpretative perspective. In Mrazek, R. (ed.). *Alternative paradigms in environmental education*. Troy: North American Association for Environmental Education.
- Carey, J. 2007. A short history of journalism for journalists: a proposal and essay. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 12(1):3-16.
- Chibnall, S. 1975. The crime reporter: A study in the production of commercial knowledge. *Sociology*, 9 :49-66.
- Chindji-Kouleu, F. 1997. 'Ethnies, Médias et Processus Démocratique au Cameroun: Analyse de Contenu de quelques journaux'. In Zognong, D. & Mouiche, I, (eds.). *Démocratisation ET Rivalités Ethniques au Cameroun*. CIREPE: Yaoundé.
- Clough, P. & Nutbrown, C. 2002. *A student guide to methodology: Justifying inquiry*. London: Sage.
- Cohen, B. C. 1963. *The press and foreign policy*. Westport: Greenwood.
- Cohen, S. & Young, J. (eds.). 1973. *The manufacture of news: Deviance, social problems and the mass media*. London: Constable.
- Cresswell, J. W. 2004. *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Columbus: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Creswell, J. W. 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing amongst five traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Cretes. 2005. Summary report on the state of the media in Africa: The case of Cameroon. In *The state of the press in Africa*. Paris: African Press Agencies.

- Crossan, F. 2003. Research philosophy: Towards understanding. *Nurse Research*, 11(1):46-55.
- Curran, J. & Seaton, J. 1997. *Power without responsibility*. London: Routledge.
- Curran, J. & Sparks, C. 1991. Press and popular culture. *Media, culture and society*, 13(2): 215-237.
- Dahlgren, P. 1992. Journalism and popular culture: Introduction. In Dahlgren, P. & Sparks, C. (eds.). *Journalism and popular culture*. London: Sage.
- Deacon, D., Pickering, M., Golding, P. & Murdock, G. 1999. *Researching communications: A practical guide to methods in media and cultural analysis*. London: Arnold.
- DeLancey, M. W. & DeLancey, D. D. 1999. *Cameroon*. England: Oxford.
- Demers, D. 1996. Corporate Newspaper structure, editorial page vigour, and social change. *Journalism and Mass Communication Journal*, 73: 857-77.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. 1994. *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. 2005. *The handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Donohew, L. 1967. Newspaper gatekeepers and forces in the news channel. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 31: 61-68.
- Donohue, G. A., Olien, C. N. & Tichenor, P. J. 1989. Structure and constraints on community newspaper gatekeepers. *Journalism Quarterly*, 31: 61-68.
- Ellen, R.F. 1984. Introduction. In Ellen, R. F. (ed.). *Ethnography research: A guide to general conduct research methods in social anthropology*. London: Academic Press.
- Epstein, J. 1973. *The news from nowhere*. New York: Random House.
- Eribo, F. & Tanjong, E. 1998. Reporting under civilian and military rulers in Africa: Journalists' perceptions of press freedom and media exposure in Nigeria and Cameroon. *Ecquid Novi*, 19(2): 39-55.
- Ewumbue-Monono, C. 1992. 'The right to inform and the 1990 Press Law in Cameroon.' *Africa Media Review*, 6(3):19-29.
- Fishman, M. 1980. *Manufacturing the news*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Flick, U. 2007. *The sage qualitative research kit*. London: Sage.
- Fontana, A. & Frey, J. H. 1994. Interviewing: The art of science. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*. London: Sage.

- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. 1993a. *Sondage d'opinion sur le rôle des medias dans la démocratisation au Cameroun*. Yaoundé: FES.
- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. 1994. *La Justice des medias au Cameroun*. Yaoundé: FES.
- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. 1996. *La presse écrit dans le paysage médiatique du Cameroun: une analyse dynamique*. Yaoundé: FES.
- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. 1993b. *Le driot de la presse au Cameroun. Etude comparative et prospective*. Yaoundé: FES.
- Funge, F., Cheo, V., Mulu, H & Tita, J. 2002. Public relations in Cameroon. In Eribo, F and Tanjong, E. (eds.). *Journalism and mass communication in Africa Cameroon*. Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Galtung, J. & Ruge, M. 1965. "The structure of foreign news: the presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers". *Journal of Peace Research*, 2(1): 64-91.
- Gandy, O. H. Jr. 1982. *Beyond agenda setting: information subsidies and public policy*. Norwood: Ablex.
- Gans, H. 1979a. *Deciding what's the news*. New York: Pantheon.
- Gans, H. 1980. *Deciding what's news*. London: Constable.
- Garnham, N. 1990. *Capitalism and communication*. London: Sage.
- Gauthier, G. 2005. A realist point of view on news journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 6(1):51-60.
- Gibbs, G. 2002. *Qualitative data analysis: explorations with NVivo*. Buckingham: Open University.
- Gieber, W. 1964. News is what newspapermen make it. In Dexter, L. A. & White, D. M. (eds.). *People, society and mass communication*. New York: Free Press.
- Goethals, G., Sorenson, G & MacGregor, J. 2004. *Encyclopaedia of leadership*. London: Sage.
- Golding, P. 1981. The missing dimensions: News media and the management of social change. In Katz, E. & Szecsko, T. (eds.). *Mass media and social change*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Goulding, C. 1999. *Grounded theory: some reflections on paradigms, procedures and misconceptions*. Wolverhampton: University of Wolverhampton.
- Gurevitch, M., Mark, R. L & Itzhak, R. 1993. The global newsroom: convergences and diversities in the globalization of television news. In Dahlgren, P. and Sparks, C. (eds.). *Communication and citizenship: Journalism and the public sphere*. London: Routledge.

- Hall, S. (ed.). 1997. *Representation: Cultural representation and signifying practices*. London: Sage.
- Hall, S. 1973. The determinations of news photographs. In Cohen, S. & Young, J. (eds.). *The manufacture of news: Deviance, social problems and the mass media*. London: Constable.
- Hall, S. 1998. The rediscovery of “ideology”. In Rivkin, J. & Ryan, M. (eds.). *Literary theory: an anthology*. London: Blackwell.
- Hallin, C & Mancini, P. 1984. Speaking of the president: Political structure and representational form in US and Italian television news. *Theory and Society*, 13:829-50.
- Hansen, A., Cottle, S., Negrine, R. & Newbold, C. 1998. *Mass communication research methods*. London: Macmillan.
- Harcup, T. & O’Neill, D. 2001. What is news? Galtung and Ruge revisited. *Journalism Studies*, 2(2):261-280.
- Hartley, J. 1982. *Understanding news*. London: Methuen.
- Hartley, J. 2002. *Communication, cultural and media studies: the key concepts*. London: Routledge.
- Herbert, J. 2000. *Journalism in the digital age*. Oxford: Focal Press.
- Herman, E. S. & Chomsky, N. 1988. *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York: Pantheon.
- Herman, E. S. & Chomsky, N. *Manufacturing consent: a propaganda model*. [online] Available:
http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Herman%20Manufac_Consent_Prop_Model.html
 Accessed June 20 2010.
- Hetherington, A. 1985. *News, newspapers and television*. London: Macmillan.
- Hewes, G. E. & Graham, M. L. 1989. Second-guessing theory: review and extension. In Anderson, J. A. (ed.). *Communication year book*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Hickey, J. R. 1966. The effects of information control on perceptions of centrality. *Journalism Quarterly*, 45:49-54.
- Hjavar, S. 2002. The study of international news. In Jensen (ed.). *A handbook of media and communication research: qualitative and quantitative methodologies*. London: Routledge.
- Jablin, F. M. 1982. Organisational communication: An assimilation approach. In Roloff, M. E. & Berger, C. R. *Social cognition and communication*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

- Jensen, K. B. 1982. The qualitative research process. In Jensen, K. B. (ed.). *A handbook of media and communication research: Quantitative and qualitative methodologies*. London: Routledge.
- Jensen, K. B. & Jankowski, N. W. (eds.). 1991. *A handbook of methodologies for mass communication research*. London: Routledge.
- Kahneman, D., Slovic, P. & Tversky, A. 1982. (eds.). *Judgement under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kareithi, P. 2005. Institutional hurdles and opportunities for the burgeoning African economic press. In Kareithi, P. and Kariithi, N. (eds.). *Untold stories: Economics and business journalism in African media*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Kareithi, P., Kariithi, N., Onger, J., Bello, T., Arowolo, A., Bulley, R., Vries, D & Evans, L. 2005. The development of the economic press in Africa. In Kareithi, P. and Kariithi, N. (eds.). *Untold stories: Economics and business journalism in African media*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Kariithi, N. 2005. A critical analysis of the economic news in the African print media. In Kareithi, P. and Kariithi, N. (eds.). *Untold stories: Economics and business journalism in African media*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Khaehn, J. 2002. A critical assessment of Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda Model'. *European Journal of Communication*, 17(2): 147-182.
- Lewin, K. 1951. *Field theory in social sciences: Selected theoretical papers*. New York: Harper.
- Lewis, J., Williams, A & Franklin, B. 2008. Four rumours and an explanation. *Journalism Practice*, 2(1):27-45.
- Lichter, R., Rothman, S. & Lichter, S. 2000. *The media elite: America's new powerbrokers*. Bethesda: Adler and Adler.
- Lincoln, Y & Guba, E. 1985b. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Loftland, J. 1971. *Analyzing social settings*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Mabweazara, H. 2011. Newsmaking practices and professionalism in the Zimbabwean press. *Journalism Practice*, 5(1):100-177.
- MacDougall, A. K. 1981. *Ninety seconds to tell it all: big business and the news media*. Homewood: Dow Jones-Irwin.

- Malotch, H. & Lester, M. 1974. News as purposive behaviour: On the strategic use of routine events, accidents, and scandals. *American Sociological Review*, 39:101-112.
- Mamdani, M. 1996. *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of colonialism*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Manning, P. 2001. *News and news sources: a critical introduction*. London: Sage.
- Marshall, M. N. 1996. Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice*, 13:522-525.
- Maxwell, J. A. 2006. *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- McChesney, R. W. 1997. *Corporate media and the threat to democracy*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- McQuail, D. 1992. *Media performance: Mass communication and the public interest*. London: Sage.
- McQuail, D. 1994. *Mass communication theory*. London: Sage.
- Merriam, S. B. 1998. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merrill, J. C. 1996. *Existential journalism*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- MicKiewicz, E. 2000. "Split signal: Television and politics in the Soviet Union." In Schudson, M. In Curran, J and Gurevitch, M. (eds.). *Media and society*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Ministry of Communication (MINCOM). 2005b. Fiche nationale 2005 sur le nombre de presse privée inscrites au MINCOM. Yaoundé: Government Printers.
- Mogekwu, M. 2005. Economics journalism in emerging democracies in Africa: Dealing with a difficult Terrain. In Kareithi, P. and Kariithi, N. (eds.). *Untold stories: Economics and business journalism in African media*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Muluh, H & Ndoh, B. 2002. Evolution of the media in Cameroon. In Eribo, F and Tanjong, E. (eds.). *Journalism and mass communication in Africa Cameroon*. Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Munzu, S. 1993. 'Le droit pénal et la communication de masse dans un état de droit: Perspectives et orientation.' Paper presented at the UNESCO seminar on 'Le Cadre d'Exercice de la Liberté de Presse dans un état de droit.' Yaoundé September 6-10.

- Murdock, G. 1982. Large corporations and the control of communications industries. In Gurevitch, T., Bennett, J., Curran, J. & Woollacott, J. *Culture, society and the media*. London: Methuen.
- N'Thepe, G. 1993. 'Aspects pratiques de la loi relative à la liberté de la communication sociale.' Paper presented at the UNESCO seminar on 'Le Cadre d'Exercice de la Liberté de Presse dans un état de droit.' Yaoundé September 6-10.
- Ndangam, L. N. 2009. "Gombo": Bribery and the corruption of journalism ethics in Cameroon. *Ecquid Novi*, 27(2):179–199.
- Noam, E. 1991. *Television in Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nyamnjoh, F. 2005. *Africa's media: Democracy and the politics of belonging*. Pretoria: UNISA PRESS.
- Paquot, E & Ponthieu, G. 2000. Evaluation du programme Syfia (Système francophone d'information agricole). 1988-2000. Bilan et scénario d'avenir. Evaluation undertaken for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DATC-DGCID.
- Paquot, E. & Abega, S. C. 2000. Media status report: Cameroon. Summary document for the African Media Partners Network.
- Parker, R. 1997. Journalism and economics: The tangled webs of profession, narrative, and responsibility in a modern democracy. *Press-Politics-Public Policy*, 1-23.
- Parreren, C. F. & Parreren, S. 1981. Contextual guessing: A trainable reader strategy. *Systems*, 9(3):235-241.
- Poerksen, B. 2008. The ideal and the myth of objectivity: Provocations of constructivist journalism research. *Journalism Studies*, 9(2):295-304.
- Reed, R. & Lewin, G. 2005. *Covering business: a guide to aggressively reporting on commerce and developing a powerful business beat*. Oak Park: Marion Street Press.
- Reese, S. D., Daly, J. A. & Hardy, A. P. 1987. Economic news on network television. *Journalism Quarterly*, 64:137-144.
- Reisner, A. & Clayman, E. 1998. Gatekeeping in action: editorial conferences and assessments of newsworthiness. *American Sociological Association*, 63(2):178-199.
- Republic of Cameroon. 1990b. Law No 90/052 on the Freedom of Social Communication in Cameroon. Yaoundé: Government printers.
- Richards, L. 2005. *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide*. London: Sage

- Riffe, D., Ellis, B., Rogers, M. K., Van Ommeren R. L. & Woodman, K. A. 1986. Gatekeeping and the network news mix. *Journalism Quarterly*, 63: 315-321.
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis, J. 2003. *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science and researchers*. London: Sage Publications.
- Rivers, W. L. 1965. *The opinionmakers*. Boston: Beacon.
- Rocco, T. S., Bliss, L. A., Gallagher, S., & Perez-Prado, A. (2003). Taking the next step: mixed methods in organizational systems. *Information, Learning, and Performance Journal*, 21(1):19-29.
- Roscho, B. 1975. *Newsmaking*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Roush, C. 2004. *Show me the money: writing business and economics stories for mass communication*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Roush, C. 2006. *Profit and losses: Business journalism and its role in society*. Illinois: Marion Street Press.
- Sasser, E. L. & Russell, J. T. 1972. The fallacy of news judgement. *Journalism Quarterly*, 49: 280-284.
- Schlesinger, P. 1978. *Putting "reality" together: BBC news*. London: Constable.
- Schroder, K., Drotner, K., Kline, K & Murray, C. 2003. *Researching audiences*. London: Arnold.
- Schudson, M. 1978. *Discovering the news: A social history of American newspapers*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schudson, M. 2000. The sociology of news production revisited (again). In Curran, J & Gurevitch, M. (eds.). *Media and society*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Schudson, M. 2003. *The sociology of news*. New York: Norton.
- Schudson, M. 2005. Four Approaches to the Sociology of News. In Curran, J & Gurevitch, M (eds.) *Mass Media and Society*. London: Arnold.
- Shah, H. 1996. Modernization, marginalization, and emancipation: toward a normative model of journalism and national development. *Communication Theory*, 6(2):143-166.
- Shoemaker, P. J. & Reese, S. D. 1996. *Mediating the message: theories of influences on mass media content*. New York: Longman.

- Shoemaker, P. J. 1991. *Gatekeeping*. California: Sage.
- Shoemaker, P., Eichhoh, M., Kim, E. & Wrigley, B. 2001. Individual and routine forces in gatekeeping. *Journalism and mass communication quarterly*, 78(2):233-246.
- Snider, P.B. 1967. "Mr Gates" revisited: a 1996 version of the 1949 case study. *Journalism Quarterly*, 44:419-427.
- Snodgrass, J. G., Levy-Berger, G. & Hayden, M. 1985. *Human experimental psychology*. New York Quarterly: Oxford University Press.
- Soloski, J. 1997. News reporting and professionalism: some constraints on the reporting of news. In Berkowitz, D. (ed.). *Social meanings of news: a text reader*. London: Sage.
- Sparks, C. & Splichal, S. 1989. Journalistic education and professional socialisation. *Gazette*, 43:31-52.
- Stake, R. E. 1995. *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Steward, P. L. & Cantour, M. G. 1982. Introduction. In Steward, P. L. & Cantour, M. G. (eds.). *Varieties of work*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Tambini, D. 2008. What is financial journalism for? Ethics and responsibility in a time of crisis and change. *Polis*, 1-34.
- Tanjong, E. & Ngwa, G. 2002. Public perceptions of Cameroonian journalists. In Eribo, F & Tanjong, E. (eds.). *Journalism and mass communication in Africa Cameroon*. Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Thomas, H. 1978. *Reporting on development: economic and financial reporting*. Zurich: International Press Institute.
- Thompson, J. B. 1988. Mass communication and modern culture: contribution to critical theory of ideology. *Sociology*, 22(3):359-383.
- Thompson, T. 2000. *Writing about business*. Columbia University Press: New York.
- Tuchman, G. 1972. Objectivity as a strategic ritual: an examination of newsmen's notion of objectivity. *American Journal of Sociology*, 77(4): 660-679.
- Tuchman, G. 1974. Making news by doing work: routinizing the unexpected. *American Journal of Sociology*, 77: 660-679.
- Tuchman, G. 1976. The news' manufacture of sociological data: A Comment on Danzger. *American Sociological Review*, 41:1065-67.

- Tuchman, G. 1978. *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. London: The Free Press.
- Tuchman, G. 2002. The production of news. In Jensen, K. B. (ed.). *A handbook of media and communication research: qualitative and quantitative methodologies*. London: Routledge
- Tudesq, Andre-Jean. 1995. *Feuilles D'Afriques: Etudes de la presse de L'Afrique Subsaharien*. Talence: MSHA.
- Tumber, H. (ed.). 1999. *News: A reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tunstall, J. 1970. *Media sociology*. London: Constable.
- Tunstall, J. 1971. *Journalist at work*. London: Constable.
- Twumasi, Y. 1985. Social class and newspaper coverage in Ghana. In Ugboaja (ed.). *Mass communication, culture and society in West Africa*. Munchen: K.G Saur Hans Zell Publishers.
- UCJ. 2005. CRETES report on African Media Development Initiative: Cameroon Context. BBC World Service Trust.
- Vasterman, P. 1995. *Media hypes*. Argus.fcj.hvu.nl/mediahype/hype.html.
- Watson, J. 1998. *Media communication*. London: Macmillan.
- Waugh, E. 1943. *Scoop*. London: Penguin
- Weaver, D. H. & Wilhoit, G. C. 1986. *The American Journalist*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Weick, K. 1979. *The social psychology of organising*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- Weischenberg, S. 1993. The media and the heads: Perspectives and problems of constructivist journalism research. In Poerkson, B. The ideal and the myth of objectivity: Provocations of constructivist journalism research. *Journalism Studies*, 9(2):295-304.
- Wete, F. 1986. Development journalism: Philosophy and practice in Cameroon. PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin: unpublished work.
- Wimmer, J. & Wolf, S. 2005. *Development journalism out of date? An analysis of its significance in journalism education at African universities*. Available online on Available: <http://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/archive/00000647/>.

APPENDICES

RE



SOCIÉTÉ DE PRESSE ET D'ÉDITIONS DU CAMEROUN
CAMEROON NEWS AND PUBLISHING CORPORATION

SOPECAM

Société d'Etat créée par décret N°77/250 du 18 juillet 1977

State Corporation created by decree N°77/250 of 18th July 1977

Boîte postale - P.O.Box : 1218 Yaoundé - Tél. : 22.30.41.47 Fax : 22.30.43.62 Télex : 8311 KN - N° SCIFF 134080T



SOCIÉTÉ DE PRESSE ET D'ÉDITIONS DU CAMEROUN, CAMEROON NEWS AND PUBLISHING CORPORATION, SOCIÉTÉ DE PRESSE ET D'ÉDITIONS DU CAMEROUN, CAMEROON NEWS AND PUBLISHING CORPORATION

N° *1470* SPE/DG/DRCT/DRCTA

Yaoundé, le

12 MAI 2010

Ref. :

Objet : **Interviews and Research**
Subject : **In Cameroon Tribune**

Le Directeur Général

The General Manager

at

To School of Journalism & Media Studies,
Rhodes University, South Africa

ROBERT BRAND,

I have the pleasure to inform you of my positive response to your request for Emmanuel Tawe Ngalame to conduct interviews with my collaborators and carry out his research work in Cameroon Tribune newspaper.

We shall be happy to receive him in SOPECAM and he can get in touch with the Managing Editor of Cameroon Tribune once at SOPECAM for the research and observation phase of his research project. The Managing Editor will give him the necessary information and support needed in his research work.

Accept, dear Robert Brand, my best wishes and thank you for taking interest in Cameroon Tribune.

LE DIRECTEUR GENERAL



Marie Claire Nianga

AGENCES PROVINCIALES

* BAMENDA R.P. : 225 - Tél. : 22.30.11.17 * BOUA R.P. : 32 - Tél. : 22.32.42.53 * DOUALA R.P. : 587 - Tél. : 33.47.96.88 * GAROUA R.P. : 661 - Tél. : 27.27.00.62

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The making of business news in Africa: A case study of *Cameroon Tribune* Newspaper.

A. Background of Editor/Journalist/Reporter

1. What is your gender and race?
2. What is your first language? Do you speak the other official language?
3. What is your religion?
4. Which ethnic group/province do you come from?
5. What is your educational background and place of training?
6. How long have you been working as a business journalist?
7. When did you start working for *Cameroon Tribune*? Where were you before?
8. What is your age?

B. General

1. How would you define news?
2. What makes a story news worthy?
3. What are some of the values you used in deciding what to cover?
4. How do you come to understand which story falls under which section of your paper say politics, economy, society etc?

C. Conception of business news

1. What is the difference between a political and a business story?
2. How do you decide whether a story is a business story?
3. Can you differentiate between development/financial/economic/consumer and business news?
4. Is there any difference working as a business reporter in Yaoundé and say Paris?
5. Do you think there is a difference in focus between business journalism in a developed economy, such as France, and a developing country, such as Cameroon?
6. List some of the news sources you use in your reports.
7. Which of these sources do you consider as most important?
8. Do you consider business news as local news?
9. Who do you think business news is written for?
10. Do you think business journalists need special skills to understand and relate the complexity of the field?

D. Social system and economic perceptions

1. Do you often publish government communiqués/press releases?
If so, why?
2. When you publish government statements, do you use it word verbatim or do you rewrite it?

3. Do you believe government sources should be questioned? Do you in fact question government sources?
4. Do you think that your opinion about economic issues affect your journalism?
5. What do you think about global capitalism?
6. Do you think the free market economic system is best for Cameroon and Africa?
7. Are you free to bring your personal views in business articles you write?
8. Do you have the freedom to write articles that are contrary to the government view?
9. Do you belong to any other association of business reporters whose members are not part of *Cameroon Tribune*?
10. Where there are differences in the ethical understandings of how business should be reported, how do you handle these?

E. Historical trend

1. What will you say is the main focus of business news in Cameroon?
2. Has there been any shift in this trend over the past years?
3. Do you agree that business news is uninteresting and difficult to understand? If so, what should be done?
4. Do you report on the Douala stock exchange?

F. Organisational considerations

1. Are there any in-house ethical practices that look at business news?
2. Do these policies help or hinder you in your job?
3. Is this code of practice written or verbal?
4. How are they enforced?
5. What happens when any clause is violated in a business story?

