

# MEDIA, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN CAMEROON: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the relationship between the triple concept of media, democracy and development in terms of how they relate to each other within the African context generally, and specifically to Cameroon. The paper studies them individually and then as an entity and looks at the impact they create on each other and on society at large. The research methods employed include mainly secondary sources and observation. The findings of the investigation reveal that although different, the three phenomena are interdependent and indispensable in the construction of a society and Civil society that satisfactorily address the aspirations of the people. Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that stakeholders put all hands on deck for the desired results to be achieved. The state must above all, provide an enabling environment for success to come about.

**Keywords:** Media, democracy, development, multi-party politics, Cameroon, Africa, governance, poverty.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cameroon is a country located in the very heart of Africa. Tanjong (2012) describes it as a place “peopled by over 19 million inhabitants (results of 2010 census, conducted in 2006) spread across more than over 200 ethnic groups speaking over 200 different local languages with English and French being the official languages”. Biya (1987:97) sees the country as “a crossroads, a melting point for Africa’s cultural mainstreams”. Although the multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic character of Cameroon may appear to be a blessing, this coloration also comes with its dark side, for the country is also one ill at ease with itself, because of this diversity. Ngwane (2002), for instance, points out that the reunification of what became French speaking Cameroon with English speaking Cameroon “has occupied prime space in our media ...” The point is reiterated by Nfi (2011) when he says, “The Anglo-French boundary dislocated a people united for close to thirty years by the German plantations, schools, mission stations, trade centres, railways, ports and firma”.

The political wind of change that took off from the former Soviet Union in the 1980s, swept across the world and affected Africa, including Cameroon (Tanjong et al 2002). Ndeh et al (2010:123) comment: “The wave of democratization that swept across Africa from the late 1980s rekindled bright hopes for a democratic future in a continent with a largely undemocratic past”. This was very significant for Cameroon because prior to the country embracing the return of multiparty politics in the 1990s, there had been some resistance to it. The country’s president at the time and today, Paul Biya, wrote in his book, *Communal Liberalism* (1987): “ The need for a one-party system in this phase of our history and as a result , provisional rejection of the multi-party system is imperative for the sense of patriotism for every Cameroonian really interested in the future of this country.” As things turned out, Paul Biya was to swallow the bitter pill and allow the return of multi-party politics in the country shortly afterwards.

This political revolution was to be more dramatic in 1990 when the President of the Republic introduced a law liberalizing the media. That law was promulgated ten years later in 2000, after considerable feet dragging on the part of the regime in place. Ngwane (2002) affirms that the return of multi-party politics in the country has been of little help to Cameroonians. Other scholars such as Ngwa (2012) in Tanjong (2012) question the effectiveness of the role of the media following the passing of the wind of change and the ensuing democratization strategies in Cameroon.

The past few decades have witnessed what one might call revolutionary changes in other aspects of daily life, not just in Cameroon but also elsewhere in Africa. Chiamogu (2012) puts it thus: “What is more, advancements in technology which have over the past three decades witnessed unprecedented revolutions in information and communication technologies did not leave the realm of politics and governance untouched.”

It is worth noting that the recession of the 1980s that also hit African countries, including Cameroon, led to the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes throughout the continent, but especially in Africa South of the Sahara. Tanjong et al (2002) confirm this view: “Since 1986, Cameroon has been experiencing an economic recession. Some Cameroon economic watchers have attributed this to the global economic recession of the 1980s, while others have attributed this to mismanagement, corruption and inept leadership”. In fact, by 1988, the economic situation of Cameroon had become so out-of-hand that Yaounde took the unprecedented step of playing host to a team from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for talks in the country (Azonga 1988).

As a result of the liberalization measures, Cameroon today has over 200 political parties and enjoys parliamentary democracy, an improvement which was unthinkable prior to 1990. Tanjong (2012) states: “Almost twenty years (1990-2010) after the reintroduction of party politics, Cameroon has over 200 registered political parties. Only five of these parties are represented in the National Assembly, which has over 180 seats”. Similarly, Cameroonian citizens have become more aware of their rights – and are fighting for them – more than they did before the revolutionary changes. A certain degree of free and fair elections has taken place, although some observers still blame the Biya regime for systematically rigging elections in order to maintain itself in power.

In this investigation, we set out to paint the above picture in the background, and then against it, examine the triple concepts of media, democracy and development, while looking specifically at how they impact each other and how they affect the Cameroonian citizen. We also look at the extent to which they characterize Cameroon of today, and how the media have handled the situation. The question now is how the country can wade itself through these minefields and attain the key pillars of media, democracy and development as required by the United Nations-initiated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

## 2. CONCEPT EXPLICATION

Before we proceed, we feel that an explanation of the basic concepts as used in this study is necessary. The explication will be limited to the three key words in the title of our study, “media”, “democracy” and “development”. The detailed explication of other related terminologies such as “sustainable development”, “politics”, and “governance”, also referred to in the study is beyond the scope of the present work. This outlook ties in with the approach adopted by Ansah (1988) when in his study on the role of the African media in the democratization process, attempts a comparative definition of the key concepts of ‘democracy’ and ‘development’. The UCLA Globalization Research Centre for Africa, in its publication entitled, ‘Globalization, Mass Communication, Democracy and Security’, posits that the twin concepts of ‘democracy’ and ‘development’ “conjure up different analytical discourses”.

The *Britannica Encyclopedia Ready Reference* (1990) gives up to four definitions for “democracy”. Even so, the four have some common denominators which tie them together. These are ‘government’ and ‘citizen’ with three entries each, and ‘political’ with two.

According to the *iWebtool Computer Glossary*, media refers to “various means of communication, for example, television, radio, and the newspaper are different types of media. The term can also be used as a collective noun for the press or news reporting agencies. In the computer world, ‘media’ is also used as a collective noun, but refers to different types of data storage options.” *Business Dictionary.Com* views the concept as, “communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, or promotional messages are disseminated. Media include every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet. Media is the plural of medium and can take a plural or singular verb, depending on the sense intended.” Castells (2007) cited in Deane (2007), affirms that “the media have become the social space where power is decided”.

Nico Halle (internet source) holds that, “mass media refers to a means of communicating to a large number of people at a time. This can be done via the TV, radio, newspapers, etc.” The researcher points out that in Cameroon, mass media are governed by Law Number 90/52 of 19<sup>th</sup> December 1990 relating to freedom of mass communication.

Hester & To (1987) relate media directly to the utility factor: “Our society looks to the reporter to bring them information and sometimes entertainment – information to let us cope with life more efficiently, and entertainment to heal our hurts and to make us forget for a moment the difficulties of living.” Tanjong (2012) argues that in democratic theory the public obtains the information it requires in order to evaluate and control governance mainly through the media. For Hadland (2010), media plays a powerful role in society. The scholar explains that this power emanates from “its multifaceted and in the modern world, universal character.” Hester (1987) stretches the debate further by entering the realm of “developmental journalism which he describes as “a natural outgrowth of revolutionary journalism in that it seeks to call into being a nation and to develop it and carry out the ideals set forth in the earlier revolutionary phase.”

Some researchers recognize that in today’s fast changing world, the media can not escape globalization, which Reese (2010) describes as “cross border communication”. Reese (2008), in an earlier publication, had found that through the interface of media and the global village, there are “overlapping, crosscutting networks of communication”.

Regarding the concept of democracy, Rousseau (1762) cited in Tanjong (2012), posits that there is democracy when government resides in the hands of the people or the greater majority of the people. Cooley (1909) cited in Deane (2007) holds that “in politics communication makes public opinion which, when organized, is democracy.” For Rana (2003), democracy is basically behavioral, for as he puts it, “while constitutions may prescribe the structures and functions of State, it is the actors of state, principally the population and those that act on its behalf that define the behaviors.” Rana (2003) argues that “democracy is also development.” Other scholars have linked democracy to other specific aspects of national life. Kasfir (1998) for his part, advocates for “the conventional wisdom in applying the concept of civil society to politics in Sub Saharan Africa, and particularly to democratization.” In the work entitled, ‘Seeds for Democratization in Ethiopia: Why Unity of Purpose matters’, Semegn (2007) posits that of the countries in Africa, Botswana typifies effective connection between aid and development outcomes.” Tanjong (2012) views freedom as being the “nucleus” of democracy. Moye Bongyu (2008) tilts the notion of democracy to monolithism which he says is incompatible with democracy. The author affirms: “This contradiction is depicted in the early governance structure of Cameroon which was centralized, autocratic but with regular elections which basically provided no real choices.”

Concerning development, Opubor (1986) defines the notion as “a many-sided process”. He explains that at the individual level, development means increased skills, capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, and responsibility as well as material wellbeing. Beltran (1974) talks of “national development” which he explains as “a direct and widely participatory process of deep and accelerated socio-political change geared towards producing substantial changes in the economy, the technology, the ecology and the overall culture of a country, so that the moral and material advancement of the majority of its population can be obtained within conditions of generalized equality, dignity, justice and liberty.” Other investigators such as Sen (1990, 1999) and Onu (2011) talk of “sustainable development” which they relate to capacity expansion, rooted in “freedom”. Significantly, the *Britannica Encyclopedia Ready Reference* (1990) which has a definition for one of our triple concepts under definition in this section, ‘democracy’, does not have any for ‘development’ within the scope of the present study but rather defines the notion within the context of biology and goes on to put it in the context of the ‘development bank’, without singling out the terminology for specific treatment. Rana (2003) links ‘development’ to ‘democracy’: “To this scribe, democracy and development are interlinked. Describing development as a positive movement from one stage to a better stage, we can ask ourselves how this can be achieved in the societal context without the participation of the bulk of society.” Nyamnjoh (2005) goes further and relates the three paradigms – media, democracy and development – to each other. He places the trio within the context of Africa generally and Cameroon in particular.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The main source of data collection for this study was secondary sources such as publications, archival data, and to some extent, the technique of content analysis. However, the analysis was basically qualitative, rather than quantitative because this method fitted best the purposes of our study. This is because whereas quantitative analysis tends to make the researcher find what was expected, qualitative research, on the other hand tends to lead to the unexpected. From that perspective, we can affirm that our investigation was exploratory. The advantage of this method is that it enabled us to deploy the multi-disciplinary approach which we then related to workable instruments with a social science and historical background. We used historical and anecdotal evidence to examine the research problem and establish a typology. We also used the more recent forms of media data collection such as internet and cyberspace to support and lend credence to our study.

At the macro level, we examined the triple concepts of media, democracy and development singly, and then collectively, while paying attention to the ensuing interface or hybrid, or to be more empirical, the common subset. Such an approach made it possible for us to probe the interrelationships found in the study. We placed the entire work within the context of the multi-disciplinary setting that brings together several paradigms and variables.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After examining the triple concepts of media, democracy and development singly and in relationship with each other and putting the study side-by-side with the available data, we made the following observations.

When one considers the interrelationship between media, democracy and development, one realizes that poverty is an impediment to any progress that could be made. Forje (2003) makes the point: "The non-improvement of the livelihood of the suffering masses constitutes not only a time bomb for Africa, but can have serious consequences the world over." Forje (2003) lays the blame for this drawback squarely at the door of both the state and the private sector, both of which he says "have failed the marginalized poor." The researcher goes a step further and views the failure within the context of Africa as a whole: "Africans are poorer today than under colonial administration. The continent is on the brink of economic crisis which is so vast and deep that many countries according to their leaders could eventually disappear." Tanjong (2012) also indicts poverty as a cause of the failure: "Poverty is not only a threat, but has succeeded to subvert ethical practices in journalism in Cameroon." From that view point, one can extrapolate Tanjong (2012) by stating that poverty has impeded, rather than facilitate the contribution of journalism and by extension, the media, in enhancing democracy and development.

However, we hold the view that the poor are not having a raw deal only in economic terms. In fact, Ngwane (2002) cited in Tanjong (2012) holds that the masses have not benefited from multi-party politics, when it comes to politics.

There is a growing realization that networking and globalization can help in leading the way forward. It is within that context that donor countries such as the United Kingdom, France and the United States have prioritized projects that promote democracy, human rights and youth issues as well as peace building. Cameroon is an example of a beneficiary state. The US for instance has insisted on the existence of strong, free and independent media, legislative and judiciary as a prerequisite for any assistance. Such projects are usually carried out in partnership with institutional stakeholders such as governments, the media and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Eribo and Tanjong (2002) point out that journalists have failed in their duty because they are of low moral standards: "The argument is that in an embryonic democracy that ought to count on the media for development, ethical behavior leaves much to be desired." While tilting the analysis towards Cameroon specifically, Nyamnjoh (2011) concurs when he states that the Cameroonian media have not lived up to expectations concerning the ongoing debate on democracy. Tanjong (2012) comes back to put things in perspective: "The current trend in which the private media in their reporting focus only on the positive aspects of the opposition and the negative aspects of the ruling party and the government, does not augur well for the future of media balance."

One of the findings that concern Cameroon specifically is that of Moore and Sanders (2001) who feel that the country's elite class has unfairly stood firm against the silent and suffering majority of Cameroonians who are calling out for change for the better. The scholars conclude: "the government pretends to liberalize broadcasting."

Research has shown that corruption is a real canker worm, not only in Cameroon, but throughout Africa. This revelation was made by Mbaku (2007) in a study whose results pinpoint what he calls the rather "destructive link between corruption and the abrogation of economic freedoms and entrepreneurships, a system that has clearly left Africa as one of the most deprived regions in the world."

The patchwork nature of Cameroon's ethnic configuration, religions, languages and other similar social parameters are of disservice to the country. Yet, the phenomenon is not peculiar to Cameroon alone. Onu (2011) makes similar observations about Nigeria: "Virtually nobody is a Nigerian: Okafor is an Igbo man, Adamu a Hausa/Fulani, and Olayinka a Yoruba man, and lately, Tompolo a Niger Deltan, Ivor a Tiv."

The pace of change in modern technology, especially as it relates to media practice, is breath-taking. In fact, Zandpour and Rimmer (2008) comment on this point: "Communication professionals, faced with an explosive growth of numerical data, have to make sense of an increasingly complex world in an ever-changing media environment."

Tanjong (2012) picks up a practical aspect of modern technology in media practice. It is that of the challenges the media system faces in Cameroon: "Production is frequently interrupted because of electrical power shortages. Component parts of broadcast production or transmission equipment are unavailable; there are shortages of trained repairs and maintenance personnel, faulty communication links, poor transportation, etc."

Following an in-depth study of the state of the media in the democratization process in Mongolia, Nielsen (2009) comes up with findings which show parallels with the situation in Cameroon: "Corruption is a huge problem for Mongolian society as a whole (...) The grand corruption is related to many different areas: natural resources, privatization, development aid, customs duties, taxation, the legal sector, and the allocation of land licenses."

Tanjong (2012) finds that media imbalance in Cameroon is a problem: "The extreme polarization of the media into public/private, Anglophone/Francophone, North/South, Beti/Anglo-Bamileke, urban/rural, etc, does not augur well for the practice of media balance in Cameroon." Tanjong uses the expression, "democratization farce" to disapprove of the current state of multi-party politics in Cameroon, characterized by up to 180 registered political parties for a single country with not up to 25 million inhabitants.

Ndeh (2010) decries what he calls the scramble for "the national cake" on the part of Cameroon's different regions, with each one trying to outdo the other and grab the lion's share. Mbile (2011) concludes that many have missed the democracy train because they went "in search of new political policies and fortunes, just as most gamblers do."

One realization is that Africa must learn to count on itself for the solution of its own problems, whether these have to do with the triple paradigms which are the subject of the present study or not. Hatchen (1966) makes this point when he remarks that "the type of Third World and African news (that) makes its way into the world's information machine is mostly about political upheavals and national disasters." However, even African journalists have been known to unduly expose their own countries and their own continent to ridicule, while reporting, as if they were foreign reporters. That is what Lule (1987) alludes to when he says: "Many of our own journalists consider it smart to imitate the popular western definition of bad news being good news and are bored by constructive and developmental activity."

One major stumbling block to the advancement of democracy and development in Cameroon in general and Africa as a whole is illiteracy. Nwuneli (1986) puts it thus: "In many Third World nations, one of their major headaches is how to reach the significant majority of their population that are largely illiterate, poor and rural, with information on development programmes such as agriculture, health and family planning information in order to improve their lifestyles."

From that perspective, the rural world becomes complex, especially when it comes to reporting it. That impression is no doubt what Hester (1987) has in mind when he comments: "Broadcasters in developing nations who attempt to serve the needs of their predominantly rural populations have one of the most difficult jobs in mass communication."

One impediment to progress is that of media ownership which lies largely in the hands of what one might call a privileged few. Opubor (1986) makes the point with the example of Nigeria: "One cannot but remind us that for many years, some of the newspapers with the largest circulation in Nigeria were owned in the private sector. They were essentially commercial enterprises, run for profit and highly dependent on advertizing revenue." Deane (2007) also sees media ownership as a problem: "Media are often owned by people attached to special interests, whether political, commercial or religious."

At the specific level of Cameroon, studies have shown that on the whole, the press is still gagged in Cameroon. One school of thought presents the country thus: "The constitution guarantees freedom of the press, but in practice, the threat of government censorship generally prevents opposition view points from appearing in print, especially in the government-controlled press. Censorship and harassment of journalists is common in Cameroon." Nyamnjoh (2009) is of the same view: "The government of Cameroon shows that it is more interested in containing the media politically than in providing its proprietors and practitioners with the enabling economic environment they need for professional excellence and financial independence."

As media, democracy and development continue to count for our populations and countries, there is no denying it that manners of reporting will also continue to change, in conformity with the evolving technological landscape. Reese (2008) captures that thinking vividly when he posits: "Old and new media continue to co-exist but become networked and interpenetrating, creating new structures of communication through which journalism happens."

As things stand, the spectacular growth of the media is unstoppable. Srestha (2003) has noted the point succinctly: “One of the remarkable phenomena during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been the emergence of media power, the impact of which has been all-pervasive, transcending national barriers.” Srestha (2003) even reveals that media technology growth has today supplanted that of the military and occupied pride of place. This was eminent in Senegal, when incumbent President Abdul Diouf lost the elections to Abdoulaye Wade. This is because the local FM radio stations covered vote counting live using cell phones. So the results were declared on the spot, thus rendering rigging rather difficult.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to critically examine the triple concepts of media, democracy and development as they stand individually and as they related to each other, and especially how they impact on the evolution of Cameroon. It has been established that the media constitute an indispensable platform and vehicle in that initiative.

It is clear that for Africa to enhance human development and draw benefits from it, it must further the process of democratization and in so doing, fully involve the media and the civil society who are unavoidable partners in the struggle. Forje (2003) explains the notion of the civil society as being “the custodian of the people’s rights” and “the go-between of the state and the private sector.”

The continent in general and Cameroon in particular must embrace the new dispensation of modern and advanced technology. This is seen in terms of communication strategies as well as equipment and mechanization of means of production. Forje (2003) says: “For, without technological and industrial advancement, the livelihood of the people cannot be improved, nor can we talk of sustainable and responsible development.”

Forje (2003) makes recommendations for Africa – and by extension, Cameroon - to join the bandwagon of development and sees those requirements and ingredients being, “an educational system designed to promote national consciousness, provide the required and necessary human resources to the productive sector; improve the quality of labour, and provide the basis for a fuller life for the individual, the state, the betterment of society and the sustainability of the global village.”

Good governance has been named by some researchers as another indispensable ingredient for the forward march of Africa. Furphy (2010) cited in Onu (2011) sees the paradigm as being “pivotal to a successful democracy which when adequately internalized, results in sustainable development.” Omotola (2007) cited in Onu et al (2011) pins down the role of good governance as basically one which consists of forming the link between democracy and development. According to Mutume (2005) cited in Onu (2011), “good governance refers to the exercise of political power to manage the affairs of state which involves policy formulation and implementation , protection of human rights, transparency (in public business), accountability and the relationship among the public, private and civil sectors in determining how power is managed.”

Research work done in the area of media education indicates that greater care should be taken when formulating and implementing media pedagogy curricula. Zandpour and Rimmer (2008) posit that, “given the enormous demand for up-to-date , accurate and actionable information, it is reasonable to suggest that statistical thinking and reasoning should be considered a key learning goal for students of media and communication.” To substantiate the point, the researchers refer to previous studies by Garfield et al (2002), Butler (1998) and Snee (1990). This view ties in with that of Gal (2002) and Giesbrecht (1996) who hold that the need to fully grasp research data and results is vital.

Research in media as it relates to the twin concepts of democracy and development can be enhanced if one considers the intercultural connection involved in the process. On that point, Matveev (2003) affirms that, “In today’s world, people spend a considerable time communicating across cultures with other people and organizations around the world.” This assertion can be particularly relevant to a country such as Cameroon where there exist side-by-side over 200 indigenous languages and cultures, in addition to the two official languages that are French and English.

Even so, Reese (2010) laments, citing Ferguson (1992) and Sparks (2007), the fact that despite the emergence and growth of globalization, “interaction of the world media system, however, has not as of yet yielded the kind of transnational media and programs that would support such village-worthy content.” It is now up to researchers to pick up the relay baton from this point and probe further the implications of the global village.

If the problem on the part of African leaders stems from a poor understanding of what globalization is and what exactly its impact can be, then it may be wise to listen to Nzekwu & Mgbemena (1986) who contend that, “as a result of advances in technology, the world has shriveled into one big neighbourhood where the lives of the people have become so enmeshed that every nation now forms part of the day-to-day reality of every other nation.”

Tanjong (2012) puts forward a number of measures for the mass media to be given their rightful place in the democratic process of African countries South of the Sahara. These include an enabling environment, an appropriate economic and financial setting for media men and women, as well as professionalization.

Ndeh (2010) outlines what he sees as the ingredients necessary for the effective take off of democracy. These include the guarantee of freedom of expression and tolerance which he says are “the key virtues of a genuine democratic society.” This prescription could go for Cameroon and indeed any other African country, notably the sub-Saharan ones.

For the triple concepts of media, democracy and development to have any useful meaning in Cameroon in particular and Africa as whole, politicians must come clean and change their attitude. Nwuneli (1976 & 1977) cited by Opubor & Nwuneli (1986), take that stance when they hold that, in Africa, the politician intentionally does not include “a clause that specifically guarantees freedom of the mass media in their constitutions, for fear of providing constitutional legitimacy to criticism by the opposition.”

The government of Cameroon, through the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, has taken the commendable move of coming up with a white paper entitled, ‘Cameroon Vision 2035 Working Paper’ in which the country states its development vision for the next 25-30 years. The overall objective of the document is to make Cameroon an emerging country within the time frame stated above, which is the period normally required to move from one generation to another. The question now is, how does the government of Cameroon intend to get there? What strategies has it put in place to attain this objective? It would be advisable for the government not to leave the project in the hands of only civil servants but to involve professionals in the field such as researchers and consultants who have a wide range of experience and expertise in the domain.

There is an incontestable need for Africa not just to assert itself and take its place on the world scene of the new dispensation, but also to realize that media constitute a major and pivotal tool for the general advancement of the continent, its countries and its people. Nzekwu & Mgbemena (1986) sound such a note of warning when they affirm: “The style, content, treatment and the perspective of practically all the news flowing in and out of Africa reflects the personality, preferences and needs of the Western world.”

As part of the solution again, Nzekwu & Mgbemena (1986) advocate some soul searching and corrective measures specifically for African news editors whom the researchers feel should take some of the blame for “the misleading, inadequate and unbalanced coverage of Africa in the media.”

Srestha (2003) holds a contrary view by advocating for an enabling environment from which the journalist can operate: “Journalists need a moral code to help them understand their responsibility, but the state has to provide all available information to stop journalists from trying to find it from other sources.” In this way, the journalist can be given a helping hand and propped instead of being silenced.

Interestingly, Deane (2007) brings the people - the common man, the rank and file – to the fore and militates for the latter to be empowered, especially in their role as watchdogs on government action: “If citizens are to hold governments to account, they need access to information on government policy and on how and where funding allocated to benefit them is being spent.” From a practical point of view this is far from true in Cameroon because overzealous government officials have constituted a bulwark around their fellow citizens. They use Decree N° 2000/287 of 12 October, 2000 (General Rules and Regulations of the Public Service) in its section 41(1) which stipulates that: “All civil servants shall be bound to observe professional discretion in respect of all facts, information or documents of which they have .....”

Another area of interest is that of the much vaunted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Obviously, attaining them is important both for Cameroon and the rest of Africa. Deane (2007) comments: “We are at the midpoint of the timeline to meet the MDGs. Immense progress has been made in galvanizing the technical, human, financial and political resources to meet these goals. Extraordinary advances have been made over the last seven years and more, in delivering development as a technical process – vaccines, condoms, treatments, teachers, doctors, clinics, money, budgetary systems and coordination mechanisms.” However, the scholar recognizes that “much more work needs to be done on development as a political process.”

Governments must now carefully redefine their relationship with the media. This is because modern technology has advanced so much that media control is increasingly escaping governments. Deane (2007) explains: "Growing democratization, liberalization of media and new technologies have meant that control of information and media by government has become far more difficult."

Deane (2007) urges international partners of the media to readjust to the new dispensation. This, the researcher argues, can be done if donors switch from just seeking to empower journalists and the media through empowerment and participation, to ensuring that there is some "balance and leverage of the terrain for greater and better performance by the media partners." Deane argues that unless partners make this leap forward, then they will end up by not "prioritizing the development and implementation of strategies designed to strengthen media capacities."

Despite the obstacles and setbacks, the future is hopeful. Some inspiration can be drawn from the success stories of democracies such as those of India, Brazil and South Africa cited in the study, 'Democracy and Inclusive Growth: States, Markets and Enterprises in India, Brazil and South Africa', realized by the Centre for Development and Enterprise in South Africa. According to the source, the three democracies named above are "dealing with mass poverty, the politics of inequality and the dynamics of rapid social change."

The triple paradigms of media, democracy and development have been frequently used in everyday discourse by stakeholders not just in Cameroon but in the rest of African and the Third World as a whole. This study sought to look at how the tenets relate to each other and to what extent they impact on the forward march of countries. The paper recommends not just the consolidation of all three codes of belief, but also the relevant ones such as good governance and sustainable development for there to be some measure of success.

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