



PRESS FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP: A NORDIC CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This comparative case study analyses the state of censorship and press freedom in the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. It examines the existing legal frameworks around censorship and media regulations in these three European countries. It helps to determine how the public perceives the outcomes.

KEYWORDS:

CENSORSHIP, PRESS FREEDOM, EUROPE, NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, SWEDEN

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the report on censorship and press freedom in Europe, focusing on the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, includes a mixed methods approach combining qualitative studies like interviews with quantitative data from opinion surveys conducted among journalists, academics, politicians, and other relevant stakeholders. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of the state of censorship and press freedom in these countries. Qualitative studies such as interviews provide in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the media industry, while quantitative data from opinion surveys offer statistical information on the perceptions and attitudes towards censorship and press freedom in the three European countries.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the criticality of censorship and press freedom scenarios in the countries of Sweden, Netherlands and Norway?
2. What are the historical influences of events on the current state of censorship and press freedom in these countries today?
3. Whether the governmental systems in these European countries are showing declining respect for the profession of journalism, shifting away from democratic values towards more authoritarian practices?
4. How the civil public views and interprets the outcomes and does it do any good to the society?

INTRODUCTION

“The people shall not be deprived or abridged of their right to speak, to write, or to publish their sentiments, and the freedom of the press, as one of the great bulwarks of liberty, shall be inviolable.”

- New York Times Co. v. United States, 403 U.S. 713 (1971)

The media freedom can be considered one of most significant concepts of a democracy. Journalists joining together help to investigate, comment and address matters of common importance and public debate. The development of civic spirit by citizens is prompted by information exchange that takes place in civil society. Speaking of the latter, the media also have a responsibility to check the government in regards to any malfeasance or the violation of human rights. Any democracy that wants to succeed should include those elements that guarantee a smooth functioning of the parties involved in the process and democratic institutions. During the history of the last decade all across the world there have been certain challenges which show that despite the meaningful participation of the journalists in the life of our society they do not have a decent authority. Similarly, just like what happened in the media as a cornerstone of democracy, violation of press freedom is a universal infringement on people's right to free speech, which affects variety of different individuals.

An individual's freedom to express his thoughts and ideas is a fundamental human right. It is so as the main (prime) international laws, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN) provide for its protection. In addition to European LLs, freedom of expression and restrictions on their application during elections are ensured in countries that are ruling through democratic governance. Nevertheless, Free flow of information is still facing many barriers in European countries, which remain a serious problem for years claiming thousands of prisoners with website blocking as the base means of censorship. One of the ways this is done is through the creation of laws that penalize libel to others, secrecy rules which are common for officials, extensive surveillance on the conversations happening etc., therefore, frequent interference by states to stifle public communication despite the existing local and European laws that are carefully drafted to protect free talk. As mature economically developed welfare countries, the three countries which require a high human capital, present an interesting analytical venue, with many similarities but also multiple context variations.

The gravity of rational censorship rules as the most important controversy of recent times is the viral spread of much misinformation, extremism online, and the growing power of authoritarian regimes globally that support propaganda instead of journalistic integrity (Reporters Without Borders, 2020). Assessing in light of the longevity of press freedom protection laws, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway provide a good example of where free speech thrives, despite the concerns of recent censorship expansions that camouflage themselves as inclusive integration and prevent of hate speech online.

Most European states have introduced stricter censorship laws basely the grounds of combating misinformation and ensuring the security of vulnerable members in society. By the way, the legislative process in Germany, namely, the so-called NetzDG act which aims to prevent crime in cyberspace while the press freedom advocators challenge it and believe it gives an impunity in the fight against unjustified removals of legitimate journalism.

Another case is where the states apply the legislative mechanism under the cover of national security to conceal the practices which normally are aimed at advocating illegality. Law of France that reportedly wants to ban having of assess – imageries of brutality of patrol seems more to focus on protection of security personnel than people or speech rights. Just like Spain, similar restrictions in other countries, such as Lebanon, do call for more protests due to the reality of a violation of the basic humanitarian principles. For example, Poland, through censorship, nowadays feigns accurate history, sometimes even deliberately and only to an ordinary point of view of the state. One of the main aspects of a totalitarian state is the practice of breaking laws where the government tries to pursue someone if such a person gives an account of events different from those preferred by the government. It tells us about a different Europe that is losing the sovereignty to both control the truth and opinion in a backbone manner.

The Concern for press Freedom

It would seem that the international academic community has still neglected to explore this media independence subject within the theory or empiric area. Because there is a horizons-expanding and ambiguity around the concept, scholars are still on the fence about what media freedom stands for, thus making it impossible for other academics who are carrying out the study to be acclaimed. To my knowledge, both Adriana Ruosswell and An article title published in 2020 witten by authors Carl Madison and Adriana Ruosswell with the title That is the book, Redefining Public Governance in Emerging Societies. Consequently, it is stated how the straightforwardness of dependence on media that existed before, differs from the present state of wickedness in which this issue has been placed.

Consequently, the first press freedom indicator approximating so till 1974 allocated media systems starting from the "Free Press systems; usually government control does not exist" to the "Authoritarian Press Systems". David in 1973 enlarged freedom by combining and adding the separate notions of absence of government constraints, no nongovernment constraints, and spread of ideas within structures. This characterization, eventually, led to more complex perspectives on this. The direction the government chooses always worries intelligence people the most in the matter of interventions with press freedom Through political meddling, media controversy, media power and unfavourable labour demand as additional hazards it appears. The news coverage just highlights the lack of access to information for a significant section of the society which is the last point of discussion related to press freedom. Flexible enough for the public to access information if they want, listen to their stories, and debate around their businesses, press freedom is indisputable.

In Europe pro-democracy activists claim that there is hardly any democracy without a free press. One of the reasons that press freedom is still a challenging topic to deal with in inter-state relations is that different countries ascribe different meanings to the term as well as apply it in their own countries in a unique way. Consequently, this conduct results in the consideration of freedom of the press to be too complex or simply an undervaluing of that noble liberty cause. The authors of Press Freedom and Pluralism in Europe: Good example of this statement is the work of Andrea Czepek, Melanie Hellwig, and Eva Nowak who dig deeper into the issue to give the readers broader view of the freedom of press problem on the continent.

Finally, it is important to know that stating that press freedom is guaranteed under constitution or law does not solve the problem, too. So, something else should be done. Meaningfully understanding a matter requires you to examine the structural powers within a state. A country without subsystems is only a framework, and these "walls" are the means of media communication. Similarly, the way in which these systems' areas of focus interact impacts content just as much as the process of creation itself. Information subsystem is the basic subsystem that three to be considered in the media freedom of any European country. The political, economic, educational, religious and cultural subsystems act as primary systems in this regard.

The very essence of the culture of every nation is going in this way to let the media well or adversely impact it. Indeed, same as a modern economic system is changes the media, the media is as well altering modern economic system. To put an example, media sector is like the atmosphere; it follows the structure of the political system as the economic system brings the same impact to the media sector. Press freedom tends to suffer governmental stifling conditions. A high return margin which is another type of market mechanism that actually reduces the type of report that the journalist can do, and has a potential to violate their freedom of speech.

Attraversiamo: Journalism & civil citizens

"The problem of the press is confused because the critics and the apologists expect the press to make up for all that was not foreseen in the theory of democracy."

- Walter L, 1938

In addition to watching society, journalists are major components that engage in restoring democracy. While media-civil-society relations may be thought of as one of the crucial pillars of democracy, media-civil-society linkages receive scant attention in most publications. In his study "Nurturing Civil Society-Civil Society and Media Freedom: Lamay tells about the importance of purpose and sustainability in democratic transition in his article "Definition and Sustainability in the Practice of Democratic Transition" published in the International Legal Not-for-Profit law. According to Adilina Lamay, in the recent decades there has been a significant progress in the field of civic society and media journals on this topic, but the evaluations hereof is rather blurry and does not provide the precision we require. Lamay points out the correlations between, on the one hand, the people composing a civic society, and, on the other hand, professionals serving in the media and the journalism fields, in the very same context in which he is attempting to determine the relationship between civic society and democracy. Their zigs and their zags not no matter what they want one of them is making art and the other one is interpreting it. Lamay sees civic society to be the resulting effect of democracy, this conceptis connected to the idea of social systems that connects Hellwig & Czepek concepts also to that of Nowak. These non-governmental, corporate, grassroots, and any other social institutions can be illustrated by institutions like churches, neighbourhoods, clubs, civic association, among others. These institutions stand out in the sense that they are the ones who "blow the whistle" on government officials sadly remaining disregarded.

CHAPTER - I SWEDEN

Since 1849 Sweden is the best-known advocate of free speech and very liberal constitution to the world, one of the most progressive constitutions. One of the four main Laws in Sweden is exactly the Freedom of Press Statute in 1812 and has a nickname of the Magna Carta of Swedish journalism. It is the absolute ban of any type of censorship on the basis of that every citizen is beyond the boundaries of infringement of unalienable right to publish their own opinion. Germany has used its influence over the press carried out in Sweden since Adolf Hitler took over the power in Germany. Therefore, it was not straightway for Swedish officials to pull down the newspapers which were praised by Sweden. Swedish Times has increased discomfort levels for the German minister in Stockholm, Prince Viktor zu Wied, who visits the Foreign Office almost every day to raise issues about the articles, editorials, and even the advertisements.

As early as the beginning of the US war at the fall of the previous year, the Swedish government issued circulars to the press with a common request for the press not to publish any article that would be read by Germany as a breach of neutrality and so give Germany an excuse to attack. People who held the position of newsreaders forced, for the most part, to be slightly disentangled from the persecution of Jews in Poland and Austria, and focused on concentration camps. Hitler, Göring, and Goebbels have been unmistakably absent from all Swedish newspapers in the past two years; what's more, no print media has published any artists' renderings of them.

To keep up the Swedish denial, even the most minor rebuke of Nazism within the radio of this neutral nation is usually parried with a sarcastic putdown of the Allies. Three days before the preceding event there was held a sitting of a committee of which Sweden's new conservative Cabinet was at the head to "devise effective measures for defending press freedom." The press legislation introduced widely as the German as Minister of Justice Karl Gustaf Westman revived an antiquated press legislation that made it not legal for editors to print "offensive writings" against other states.

A man of many caliber as a journalist, poet, and socialist, Ture Nerman, the first editor to be tried on this particular act by Mr. Westman, was the first. That being said, after the murders shot in Munich's Hofbrauhaus, Hitler, he wrote an editorial for his weekly publication, *Trots Allt*, which was called "Hitler's Hell Machine." For this, Nerman was found guilty and sentenced to three months in prison. He was captured about 48 hours later, and five days later there were three convictions for "offensive writings." Soon after the ban of Rausching's *The Voice of Destruction* (p.8g), Nazism Minister Goebbels oversaw its confiscation under the same article. Publisher Johan Hansson subsequently emphasized, "How stupid this democracy is that we have in Sweden today!" after toiling seriously to take away the Swedish part from the issue before the publication. Minister Westman took the word of the Cabinet that gave the green light at his last month's meeting for the formulation of the strongly imposed law to restrict the press and their freedom of speech during the sixteenth century.

The that is run by the Swedish journalist Torgny Segerstedt, who is also the editor of *Handels-Och Sjöfartstidning* in Göteborg, is the most popular trade and shipping journal. By avoiding the assimilation of the Nazi imperialist power structure, she has relevantly established her endurance not to be humiliated. The *Gazette* was very much in line with the *Manchester Guardian* for the fact that it has a liberal tradition to be proud of. The *Toea* from the Sweden's journalist, Irma Segerstedt, *I Dag* symbolizes the best of journalism. He has a unique ability to cover up lethal sarcasm (directed towards Stalin and Hitler) with phrases that are so neutral that not even Minister Westman can find them "offensive." Here's an example: "The already discernable judgmental stance of the Swedish people in matters of their dominance is no longer visible but rather concealed to safeguard them from the competing forces." This they cannot be convinced because the shouting cat will not scare us away from wide spaces. He will send us scurrying like mice in the hope that the cat will be lenient towards them.

Not only that, but various Nazi periodicals in Hamburg like the *Hamburg Fremdenblatt* started an organized defamation campaign against Segerstedt. One of the most open secrets was that the main Swedish agreement to be made with the Germans at the time was the suppression of Torgny Segerstedt's debut, a development that somewhat postponed the highly anticipated trade agreement between Germany and Sweden. There were rumours that the Swedish negotiators threatened to fire the crew, sink the ship with no notice, and arrest Nazis in sight for every bad piece published in the paper. A group of shipping magnates both founded Göteborg and publishally challenged Segerstedt over a fear of retribution by Germany. They did not fail to reactingly ask the Government to submit an indictment and to thus decrease the volume of his words. Last week, the Swedish journalists were worrying endlessly about how much longer any freedom that they and the whole press corps might have were allowed to last before they got repression pushed at them. From one peace to another, next item was written by Segerstedt and it is meant to be the last thing that would have been written under his pen as he said goodbye to the newspaper world. "In the United States, Britain, or France we cannot afford to tell ourselves we are much more noteworthy. We are to be perceived as a little German lackey and that is it," he wrote one day.

Tackling the era's before that, King Charles XI imposed censorship on July 5, 1684, and it lasted until the Press Freedom Ordinance of 1766, when it was removed.

Then, July 7, 1688, the ministry issued a new position under the name censor librorum, which would be carried out by the person appointed as the censor of the books. The censor's responsibilities involved inspecting the printing houses in Stockholm, controlling the compliance with the law among the book importers and monitoring the booksellers, and naturally also the editing and in case of necessity revision of the manuscripts before the printing. The noteworthy fact is that only a small number of printing presses in capital stood in contradiction with the majority that scattered haphazardly in university cities and diocesan cities, and the local censorship of religious and scientific publications went on.

In the field of sacred writings, the censor was the one who had the power to appoint the assessments ended to consistories the censor.

Intellectual properties rights became notional right during nineteenth century. Although the Swedish privilege system was like that in other countries, the influence of having the advantage to distribute money to the writers and publishers was the main aim. This meant that work's fixed term protection was guaranteed from 10 to 20* years which, in fact, was the standard for the area. The original authorship was the only one that could be used at the time, and the censor could also prevent the publication of all works dealing with similar topics.

In the duration of its existence, the censor's office at one time had only one person all along. From the scope of its activities, it is evident that at times the task was too daunting and the surveillance became inefficient due to the numerous and diverse tasks. On the contrary, we should not forget about the censorship by criminal law which is acting upon writers nowadays. Respect and recognizing the government's actions was emphasized for the majority of the subjects already from the childhood. Hence, those writers who really dared to publish seditious ideas did not appeal for official approval.

One of the utmost best about The Freedom of the Press Ordinance 1766 and now which was based on a principle that the opposition party had established because of the Caps which was the opposition party. The commitment to the purpose of the revolution continued to be kept at the high level even after coming to power, although, it might have terrible results for them. The parties more often pushed for bills which favored their group of supporters or, as for Anders Johan von Höpken, they were Party's proponents of press freedom which excluded opponents. At first, because the policies of the Caps were considered to be closely monitoring the government move they were the first to come into line of fire. Meanness meaning of the reform was defined as broadly and the opposition parties made standpoints to limit it, but as a part of a set of measures, the press freedom ordinance shaw that the politics system was about to become new.

The Charter of the Freedom of the Press enactment immediately changed attitudes to what the public talks about, and this topic is largely on political views' formation. Through to political pamphlets all sorts propitiated fiercely, and in the last years of the Age of Freedom, a more radical school of thought appeared as if it aimed to undertake a full upheaval of Swedish society. As the idea that the people's will

should prevail not only in the two legislatures but in the prime executive branch became popular. In fact, we should realize that commonly dismissed idea the equality in right to participate in matters of legislation was playing a key factor in creation of this Ordinance. The inherent attribute based standards, while they replaced the of estate class notion, however, had its own merit-based reasoning in this society. Thus, the privileges of the estates were enough to make themselves questioned more often, resulting in legal status of unrepresented people being provided. Multiple parts of the system were differentiated on order to put an end to it and to substitute "a Norway system" (en allmän svensk mannrätt) for all citizens irrespective of their sex.

With the development of press, rapid escalation of political radicalization was an inevitable thing. This all of a sudden eruption of issues that people only used to talk about in private now could be turned into topics for public conversation, usually in form of anonymous gossip. The inauguration of a more liberal attitude by the censorship authorities resulted in a number of books and other works that had previously been banned finding their way into the hands of the public. Among other things, in *Ärenden om krig i allmänhet och dess tillämpning på Sverige i synnerhet samt vart ägande och dyrite sveka har tagit en mycket strikta ställning mot militärismen i Sverige, i Tankar om krig i gemen och Sweriges krig i synnerhet, samt hvaruint* First was the 1767 publication that was compiled in two volumes the year following. Formed in a year of 1758 accordingly a great work which was written by someone with command power and currently not possible to show, represented by the title page.

In the Freedom of the Press Ordinance, we can see how it produces identifiable and tangible results. Approximately eighty periodicals (of which one-third had a barely any circulation and were short-lived) came into existence between 1766 and 1774 (or rather, 1772–1774), the years of press freedom. It proved a much stronger tool in the production of pamphlet. From 1700 to 1809, in the course of first six years after the Ordinance was implemented, at least 75% of political pamphlets were printed.

Censorship transition to press freedom was a challenge for some editors to handle all at once and doubts about the new law were felt by the sceptical writers. They would directly point out the stipulations in the Freedom of the Press Ordinance and highlight the preliminary actions as a preventive measure. The talks pointed to the concept of public information distribution, and the positions of both sides were equally supported by the announced excerpts of the protocols and the confidential data. The community was in turmoil as people began to test the limits of their newfound freedom, and a number of cases were brought against individuals for violating the laws they had been set up with.

In regard to the last few years, the EU Parliament has enacted changes to the legal code that explicitly aim at reinforcing journalist safety and ceasing assaults on journalists. Their purpose is to lower the chances for the correspondents to dodge the possible threats that could influence their work or cause them to avoid reporting facts, for the sake of remaining unbiased. Such changes defend the right to free speech and expression by preventing cases of violence or attacks on media personnel.

The guidelines from people from Lund University suggest that the legal system must start by giving a priority to the deliberation and allocation of resources to ending online bullying of journalists. For the purpose of really criminalizing such acts of disrespect against social workers who are involved in inspecting violations of children's rights, employees of the healthcare system, social services, rescue services, as well as the educators, the revisions provide for proper penalties. This policy is to protect the positions that are more exposed and therefore is intended for the workers' secrecy and to ensure that the essential jobs for the society are carried uninterrupted.

The above all objectives is to provide other professionals specifically journalists amongst them with a more conducive environment that is free from threats of intimidation and reprisal to enable them carry out their vital duties. The government will increase the legal protection scheme for the media and impose heavier punishments on those crimes that are targeted at the media personnel. The move aims at two objectives, one being to emphasize as well as uphold the freedom of the press and the other being to secure the wellbeing of the people who serve the public good.

Sweden has TV, radio and UR system which are funded by the government. They give a lot of programs and are advertisement-free. While Swedish citizens also have access to a number of commercial television channels, the use of the streaming online services is on the rise. The rule of open records permits people and media to discover almost any official government files at any time they require. This transparency actualizes the check and balance of power of the national, regional, or rural executive government organs, hence, minimization of malpractices. The government workers are also allowed the sharing of information with media partners and external sources. Alternatively, crucial data belonging to national security or private health files could be classified and stayed under the curtain through the process.

Sweden is one of the countries who bring human rights into real actions. They even make this into their character strengths as well as the basis of their constitutions and laws. Those basic law-giving pieces like the Instrument of Government, the Freedom of Press Act, and Freedom of Expression Act put rights and freedom for all people in a row. Roughly, this means that power should be administered justly, Observing all rights and liberties and observing them with the help of the principle of equality, freedom, and dignity of the person. No one has a right to make those who are only light-skinned, sapphic, persons of color, non-Christians, differently-abled, or nongayly-identified, and those who are age-wise among our population face discrimination. These laws usually work to reduce or eliminate unfair and discriminatory rules or laws.

Sweden is concerned with not only the human rights of its citizens, but also with human rights globally and is advocated for them as well. However, as early as 1995, they implemented the European Convention on Human Rights by enacting a code under Swedish law. They have bought into a collection of international human rights documentations through organisations such as the UN, International Labour organizations, and the Council of Europe. So they have made human rights a golden rule for all policy areas - security, development, migration, environment and trade. Whether it is security, development, trade, migration or environment, they cannot accept anything concerning human rights.

Now when the word rights is mentioned, freedom of speech holds the most significance in Sweden. There, the internet penetration level is insane - we mean a figure higher than 90% of people being plugged in. Majority of the households have been furnished with internet including big chunk of them having fiber optic connections as the main source. Thus, the government has not only its comprehensive strategy, but also the initiative for a "completely connected Sweden" where all the country will have full nationwide broadband by 2025. The mobile apps and technologies are other technologies which are advancing digital integration. Hordes of Swedish users are into mobile payment and IDs as part of their daily dos and donts. Even though one might think about social media being not so popular there, it's just as alive - there are YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and many other platforms.

Another thing to discover in the same country of Sweden is the appointment of "ombudsman." It's a Swedish word which can be roughly translated as a representative who votes on behalf of the people or the voters (in the Parliament or other institutions). There are ombudsmen overseeing all kinds of areas: We also have the Parliamentary Ombudsmen who can review the complaints filed if a citizen suspects that they weren't treated properly by the government or any of its officials. Technically, now everyone, Swede or foreigner, is authorized with right to complain. Media Ombudsmen investigates ethical problems in journalism and may take cases to the Swedish Press Council. The Consumer Ombudsman effectively fights the cases of unfair competition, false marketing practices, and misstatement of product features and safety.

CHAPTER - II NORWAY

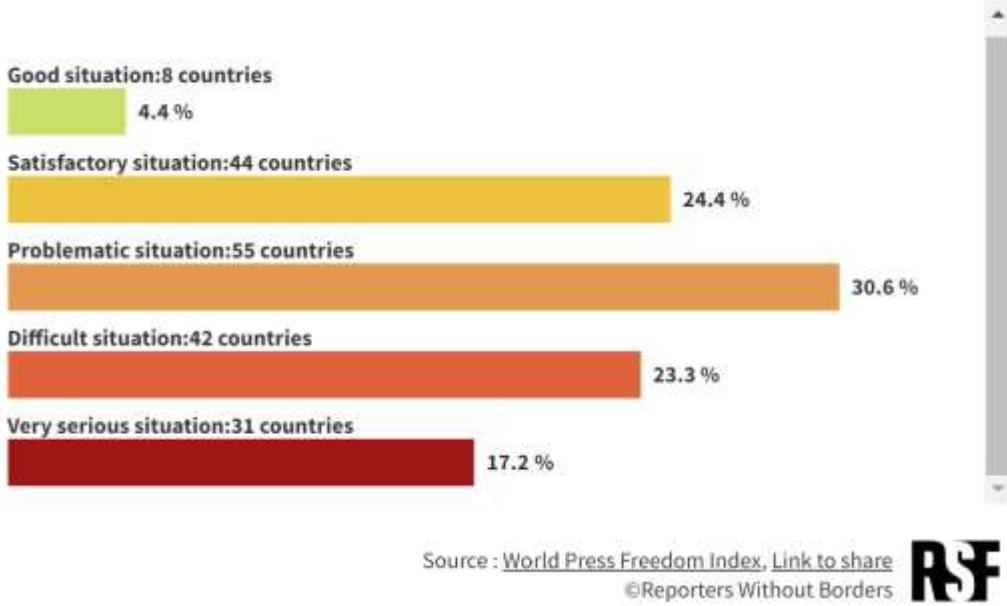
Along with the Nordic countries, free speech and press freedom are very much acclaimed as an important part of life. A research conducted by, for instance, the Reporters Without Boundaries World Press Freedom Index, which has shown that those countries are among the best in the world since it regularly places them at the top of the list. Norway and Sweden would be the front runners in the list with Norway leading and Sweden positioned in the second slot while Finland, Denmark and Iceland as well would make the top 15.

The Nordic region has not only crafted the policy on contemporary assessment, it has also been innovative in its formulation of the legal protections that safeguard free speech and media rights. Still as recently as 250 years ago, an epochal freedom of the press act was enacted in Sweden and Finland in 1766, which resembled the archetype of the liberty of the press in the rest of the world. While this act retained a censorship at a distance over certain literary and theological texts, and also banned any kind of explications of constitutional laws, it represented a first step. Through an analysis of the Nordic legal development of free speech from 1815 to the end of the 19th century it is possible to reach a conclusion that the law development and legal science were both influenced by the practical realities of enforcement of legal norms. The practical implementation of substantive rights, conversely, could become a matter of dispute as administrative actions and judicial proceedings could through divergence with the formalized rights.

The relationship between freedom of expression and press freedom was initially and by default conceptualized together in terms of their intrinsic relation. This rationale has been expressed as far back as the 18 century by scholars who saw value in press freedom as giving to the rulers opportunity to reflect on grounded and enlightened comments about socio-economic issues. Those people who regarded church not as a space for honest communication, but the opion of the hierarchy, submitted written accusations to their lords, whereas there were no public channels to address their concerns. Norway's stellar reputation for media freedom was reaffirmed recently by topping the 2023 World Press Freedom Index for the second consecutive year. Highlights include zero journalists imprisoned, a thriving private media sector, the respected public broadcaster NRK, around 230 news outlets, and a devoted newspaper readership transitioning to digital subscriptions.

The forward-looking Transparency Law of 2022 further cemented Norway's human rights credentials by requiring corporations to assess their supply chains for any oppressive practices. A testament to the nation's commitment to ethical business practices. Norwegian politicians have been praiseworthy in not dismissing critical coverage as "fake news" and respecting press independence. The sovereign wealth fund has even placed a Polish state energy firm under monitoring over press freedom concerns in Poland. Through this intricate tapestry of laws, practices and global leadership, Norway weaves a shining example of how to nurture a free, ethical and vibrant media landscape. A nation that seemingly embodies the harmonious coexistence of rights, responsibilities and respect so vital for any true democracy to flourish. Not only matured journalists but students also feel similarly as shown via this table. A survey was conducted for journalism students specially in regard to what they felt in a country like Norway vs Bangladesh and Tunisia.

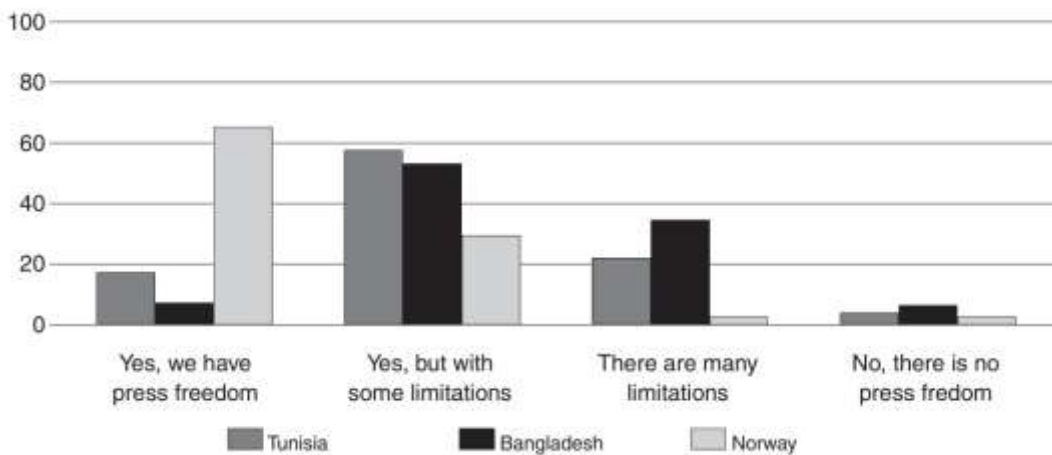
Research Through Innovation



Source: RSF- Reporters without borders

The figure below responds to the following question:

- Did you experience press freedom in these countries?



Source: *The Relationship between Press Freedom and Corruption: Solveig Steien*

CHAPTER – III THE NETHERLANDS

Through a long history of democracy, The Netherlands, has been a summer-house of expression of different ideas, open political discourse, and fair competition of political parties that stems from its ancestors. In Freedom House's esteemed survey, "Freedom of the Press: 2016," the Netherlands has side by side, with Belgium, Sweden, and Finland, every region of the world attracted to it by being the most liberal place in the world (RSF, a fighting bunch of people totally for the freedom of the media, places the Netherlands on the fourth position globally in its 2016 Press Freedom Index, thus increasing by more the respect the world has for this country as the champion. The Dutch definitely do honor their rights for expressing themselves and they believe in whatever they want to - these rights are written in constitution and also followed in practice. The ground is fertile for healthy political discourse and informed, competitive analysis within the local and private media and amongst them. This ongoing dialogue with the audience has a positive effect upon the information seedbed in a society, which is the very element needed for a favorable democratization.

The political spectacle has kept its identity by the atmosphere of openness, much like an accessible accessible public area. The multifaceted character of the political spectrum comes nightly in the numerous differences of opinion, the same way one can notice the differences of opinions in the similar situation when looking at the diversity of the number of colors in a bouquet. This actually composition of the 2012 election, where not less than 11 parties emerged from ideologically diverse backgrounds than managed to gain seats in the national parliament. Countless other candidates of different parties routinely take part in this pageantry of democratic

participation and governance at different levels of federal government. While the identified sanctuary of free speech is Belgium, some extremists have still been observed practicing of poisons and threats in an attempt to make it impossible to engage in important discussions around critical issues.

A truly disgraceful way our nation's diverse heritage as a nation being torn down must be totally removed. Not only featuring the Dutch heritage, broadcasting producers in Dutch public broadcasting have created remarkable and unique model after several decades. As early as the 1920s when a "column community" strategy was first implemented, licenses to local radio stations have been distributed to various social and political associations, especially the Catholics, Protestants, liberals and the socialists. Boldly inspired from it, this experiment was actually moved into television in 1951.

Under this creative content appeals to the nation wide viewer, the pillar designated produces the Dutch programming for all the channels (public stations), with airtime allocated similarly to each pillar based on their viewer ship stats. These channels further dug their channels in the fertile grounds with the arrival of cable and satellite while each supplemented one another from the commercial, regional and foreign side. While people ask to modernize this pillar, it does work and accordingly attracts 34% of the views, meanwhile, 44% Television stations belong to the public and they are the one who maintains the news diet to most of the people. The Netherlands deliberately crafted an inclusive approach so as to set up a formidable structure that exercises the values of media freedom same time ensuring a flourishing media environment that values diversity, liveliness and participation all at once. The realm of gems in a garden full of countries, where the ideal democratic values and press freedom remain above all else. Just as well that there are always interesting blooms to admire, but don't forget that those noxious weeds that may threaten them always lurks around.

the Dutch media are multifaceted, reflecting the country that is deeply tapestried with vast political ideologies and rich religious threads. Though paper circulation is political about a staggered period, the Netherlands stands as one of the best countries in Europe for reading newspapers and magazines. In the Netherlands, the household that is hard to find at the beginning of the day which does not read one kind of national daily, with an even larger percentage of people those accepting to read any kind of paid or free newspapers regularly. Rather admirably, the Netherlands has evaded the tabloid mania afflicting nations like the UK. And despite a high concentration of ownership among three major players, each ensures a vibrant mix of opinions and news graces their pages. A true bouquet of perspectives, if you will.

The Dutch thirst for media doesn't stop at the printed word, however. They've embraced the digital age with gusto - an impressive 93% regularly carousing the internet's vast gardens. Social media influencers could learn a thing or two here, with half the population actively engaged on those platforms. In a delightfully innovative twist, all the major newspapers and magazines have united under one virtual roof called "Paydike" - a one-stop shop allowing readers to pluck out articles individually, much like an a la carte media buffet. The founders liken it to an "iTunes" for news - how very modern!

The Netherlands' ardent defense of net neutrality is also worthy of applause. After Chile blazed that trail, the Dutch followed as the second nation to legally prevent telecom companies from engaging in pernicious practices like data discrimination or search biases. The internet remains beautifully open and uncensored. The reactions - anti-Muslim protests colliding with Islamist applause for the murders - threw issues of free speech and immigration policy into stark relief. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Somali-born MP who collaborated with van Gogh, faced innumerable threats and attempts on her life before ultimately resigning and emigrating to the US. These wrenching events propelled a nationwide reckoning on immigration policies and the limits of tolerance. Measures were enacted to limit immigration while encouraging assimilation, including deporting unemployed immigrants lacking Dutch proficiency. A country that has overcome oppressions by maintaining its virtues throughout history and proudly proclaiming "freedom of speech" while holding up the appropriate truth-seeking against forces that aim to undermined it.

The remarkable example of the fulfillment of the beautiful duty through the conflict of democratic societies on the governance of this issue. The Dutch Government really takes such constitutionally written ideals distinction between opinion and belief very seriously and not as something that is just is declared like the ideal but to fully implement it as its strong practice. The nation's mass media are like a flower garden of various public and non-public news media, imparting different points of view from many angles to the diverse public. The openness of an environment where everyone can speak up and share ideas provides the right soil to grow an aware society, one of the main elements necessary for any democracy.

The general political atmosphere remains one of the openness and freedom, just as you as a free citizen you have a possibility to express your views in open public space. Section myriad colors ranging from the reds and blues of the right and left leaning to the radicalism of the libertarian and socialist hues, multi-party system vividly portrays the entire political spectrum. Such emmersion very much bloomed after the 2012 elections, with no fewer than eleven parties whose ideologies are all over the rainbow gaining the seats in the national assembly. Among other political florets, this contest among various candidates allows the people to flex their democratic muscles regularly throughout different levels of participation. The Dutch way of addressing their public broadcasting has experienced an immense transformation and now is thought as a special and inspiring model. Immediately following the 1920s "pillar community" plan, radio licenses that were granted were to the main societal pillars—Catholic, Protestant, Liberal, Socialists and more. The depths of the future was opened up for people in the television in 1951 by this pioneering experiment. Under this creatively manufactured system, every pillar gets involved in the stirring of the home nation Dutch programs for the public stations, where viewing time is allocated based on the viewers preference. Arrival of cable and satellite did only further enrich this fertile ground with myriads of channels but rather, it made it very diverse. Nevertheless, it does not prevent others from recommending that the pillar be cut down. This does not stop the pillar model which ensures over a third audience, more than half of which rely on public stations.

Netherlands's press has been woven intricately among the rich political and religious terrain of which the nation has produced over the course of its history. Undoubtedly the combination of online and printed media has changed dramatically but the Dutch readership is still among the most consuming ones in Europe regarding newspapers and magazines. Surprisingly enough, one can as well find, in all

its variety, a stagnant trend of at least one read of a national daily in about the half of households. Curiously, the Nederlanders have demonstrated an incredible tenacity in the present-day British media war movie by battling the invasive tabloidal enemy plaguing their media gardens. While that small group account for the 80% of the words in newspapers, but the quality and the depth of the content it covers is admirable. A renewed impulse for seeing beyond differences.

The acquaintance with the digitalized present of the Dutch audience is also undeniable. No less than 93% of the respondents frequently haunt the World Wide Web's giant expanses. At the same time, they got half who are enriching social media landscapes in their diligent quest. The printing presses adjusted to online realm, and a brand new "Paydike" app provides readers with tailored news as the latter chooses solely from which pieces to absorb by serving as a virtual news buffet. Among other, the Netherlands was the second country to let telecom companies to neutral bit in law, to avoid them of resorting to shady practices like traffic preferences or search biases. Online here, we have the aristocracy of free Internet. This balanced and inclusive approach suitably pressure the Dutch society to develop a highly elaborate platform for free speech as well as a multicultural media system where everybody participates. A beacon of hope for democracies everywhere deepening and fiercely defending those sacred principles. The Dutch Navigate the Virile Arena of the Digital Sphere Showing an Enjoyable Measure of a Free and Just Society. The lords of the web's war with zero-rating is surely a match for the ages.

With this 21st-century platform of boundless internet landscapes, Netherlands was among those who dared to be one of the first to embark the Chilean nation. They did so through passing laws that sought to keep the "smith" away from the gardens of the free Dutch liberty and tolerance. However, although the corruption was not present in these gardens, it had already poisoned and used the plants to spread to the early 2000s. Just like the deadly poison sweetened with honey, the dangerous personality of Pim Fortuyn crept into the festivities of presence of so many groups. This right-wing politician, who was advocating for conservatism, damaged the magnificence of the respected public image of the country which represented deference, tolerance and pluralism through his onslaught rhetoric, in which he completely rejected Islam as "backward".

Moreover, the brutal murder of Pim Fortuyn, an animal rights activist, by an unstable lunatic on the eve of the 2002 elections, brought about a new era, the most toxic weed of all - the rape of politics by unacceptable actions of people who possess no humanity. The unseemly destruction, if not meant to subdue the extremists, then shore up their belligerence and shield any further devastation. In 2004, an Islamic extremist successfully shot down the Islamophobic filmmaker Theo van Gogh but without a fear, incited by his documentary works depicting the harsh reality and suffocating life endured by Muslim women under oppressive condition caused by the fundamentalism's dark shadows. This cold blooded act of the Muslim fundamentalists firing at the freedom of expression and speech let lose an eruption across Dutch society - resulting in anti-Muslim protests that challenged the equally ugly images of some side of society clapping at the murder of Princess.

This incident turns even something as confusing and thorny as free speech and immigration policy into matters which from now on will be looked at under the microscope of national attention. On that fateful day Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the Dutch Somali parliamentarian who in the past assisted van Gogh in his anti-fundamentalist war, was catapulted into what seemed like a non-stop flurry of threats to take her life and other attempts to hurt or even murder the freedom of expression, followers of the fundamentalist sleeper cell. Therefore, in the end, it was the round and endless climate of fear and apprehension which forced her to make the difficult decision and abandon her elected seat, while taking sanctuary in USA.

This forced country application of such poisonous intolerance atmosphere that started long overdue national debate on the infamous Dutch migration policy that used to be "separate but equal" concept. Then a new realist approach was applied. Official changes were made to protect the borders from potential mass inflow, at the same time plant assimilation of the existing migrant communities on the soil of Dutch multiculturalism. The concrete steps were taken by performing large-scale deportation of 26,000 unemployed immigrants in 2006, in addition to the legislation on banning face coverings in public locations and withdrawal of economic support for jobless newcomers held responsible for the situation after telling their rudimentary proficiency of Dutch language.

Besides that, the fiasco of the caricature of Van Gogh not only arouse argument among Danish citizens, it also triggered pain across the whole world when the general paper Jyllands-Posten released a cartoon shown Prophet Muhammad which Islamic have strictly prohibited this by fundamentalist Muslim teachings. Such reactions strange sent people to fight antagonists in Muslim neighborhoods all around the world, who in turn were holding demonstrations and accusing the "evildoers" ignorant to their faith. A truly noble and commendable response, reminiscent of the traditionally liberal and permissive Netherlands, several newspapers decided to go a step further and give space to the cartoons in their publication, in full awareness that the aftershock of this would include a whirlwind of threats, outbursts of rage and instances of violence local instances.

This saga of a tumultuous nation stood out and demonstrated clearly that even a country as rich and deeply cherished of openness, tolerance and a free and open speech as the Netherlands must always be on a sharp edge to tackle the evils of extremism that can creep up from any corner or direction that thwart the freedom of speech that is hard-fought and defended. If that malignant entity establishes itself in the physical or cyber realms, or anywhere in the democratic space, as a brazen and violent, or even censorious, suppression of human rights, a passive neglect of the democratic pluralism that requires eternal promotion and inculcation, means that destructive intolerance can become entrenched.

The Dutch tale is a universal alarm and theirs is a story everyone committed to the principle that democracy is defined by the preservation and cultivation of the rarest if not the more priceless of the flora of humanity : free speech can plants its sprouts in even the wettest clay amidst all resistance of the ever-changing world. Identity is sown through a deep-rooted refusal to accept sewing in extremist weed and hate, although it can be able to stand against the traditions of openness, vibrancy, and progressive pluralism to be able to bloom and bear fruits for centuries to come.

On the 3rd of October 2004, a disciple of the radical Islamist movement executed Theo van Gogh, the controversial film maker, as a retaliation for the latter's filming of the Mo Islamic movie. Van Gogh's perceived offense? These events include the documentary film releases directed to reveal the oppression and suffocation of women established under insular fundamentalist communities rubrics. What was doubly heartbreaking, this despicable public assassination had been indeed committed in the personage of the free Republic of the Netherlands where the slander victim had called home. However, this deadly event unleashed a furious storm of indignation and disapproval throughout the whole society.

On the other hand, there were a wave of violent protests against Muslims in which were ignited by anger, onrush of ferocious feelings and reinvigorated xenophobia after such a horrid crime. On the one hand, the perpetrators's tactic had the unpredictable outcome of being hailed by militant Muslim fractions, who were ecstatic and jubilant at the way free speech was being strangulated: a physical manifesto of the abyss into which free speech would be sent head-first.

Hence, the big storm that slipped the wedge on many controversial matters of free speech, immigration and assimilation policy under the unflinching focus of the spotlight was something like this. A more vivid portrait of the crisis could hardly be found, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Somali-born MP and Van Gogh's willing partner in his radical and sensational films, could not have personified it better, or more radically. Likewise, it was as jarring as an abrupt downpour or a thunderous storm for her when suddenly she was faced with hard to measure death threats and voting for her not only by secret assailants but also by those seeking suicidal vengeance for her blunt stand. These daily terror attacks finally obliged the aspiring, elected-official to make the painful decision to resign her seat and end in long time immigrant in the USA.

This horrendous fume of the intolerant that came from the extremists did not only shake but also jolt the Dutch into an interrogative existential examination of all the decades of immigration and integration policies they had had adopted. The ABC was consequently no longer used but something like integration-without-absorption was preferred which put an emphasis on absorption into the pluralistic Dutch social fabric. A dynamite like sensation was felt in the air post deed of Van Gogh assassination, and the old mentality to some extent burnt down.

The country's stern rulers decided on a very broad reform package for the Revolt to be successful and the Dutch culture was to stand on top of all the regional cultures. Hobnailing the hulls took the form of expelling the highest number of unemployed immigrants comprising mostly of the Muslim faith – 26,000 of them in the year 2006. Besides, parliament bans face coverings in all public places which is overly critical of the non-traditional cultural practices that occurred the same year. The heap was not the only thing that was cut by the law makers even they took away the subsidies of those who were jobless and did not have basic Dutch language proficiency- as the officials stated; it was making it easy to assimilate socially linguistically.

The Van Gogh affair, which was followed by considerable of tension among the Lowlands, is not a local issue, it was internationally known. An editorial by a newspaper the Danish region published on the caricaturing of the Prophet Muhammad led to violent demonstrations by angry Muslims which left their merchandise and property destroyed across the globe. The demonstrations did not affect just the countries with predominately Muslim populations. The embassies in capital cities across Europe as well dealt with the backlash. Even though the Dutch journalists keep refusing to endorse the radical Danish newspapers, there were several Dutch newspapers in the traditionally tolerant Netherlands that decided to build solidarity with Denmark by re-publishing the illustration that flamed up as the idiom for freedom of expression. With this principle stand those whom perceive the subject as being the reason for evil started attacked the people of Holland. Finally, a tsunami of protests was witnessed in Dutch land.

This turbulent story revealed, in all its starkness, a dangerous predisposition to intolerance among the ruled and a selective amnesia of those who, time and again, claim to be carefully guarding the same precious rights. The Netherlands is a warning call for the democracies who imagines that they are free from the virulent kinds of intolerance like xenopatriotism, theocracy, and populism that discarded their underlying liberal principles.

In the present era of endless Internet terrain, the Netherlands showed determination like no other and stood bravely next to Chile as one of the first nations to deliver. They got brash to create laws that could prevent these tycoons from largely imposing unfair selective bans on the data streams that were known to be unjustly biased or from exorbitantly taxing the info superhighway tolls.

From the perspective of the Dutch Internet, every data packet flows freely and lightcarefully as fast and cool stallions running on to an open prairie. In white worlds, marked by no algorithmic manipulation or any meddling by big corporations, search results would remain unchanged. The only roadblock is total filtering and censorship hence such digital highways have no such blockage around their freeways. This mightily philanthropic entity is a libertarian utopia of 1s and 0s, in which the free information runs in the open channels without any limits! The members of the public so far are free to follow their curiosity and wonder how the virtual world works – without giving the unwanted responsibilities associated with the rent-seeking managers.

The Netherlands' experience is a signal that holds, also to those other countries that are still hopelessly trapped in the bramble bushes of the past internet paradigm. Yet, true digital freedom is not only about their own techo-wildernesses; it is also about whistle-blowing to underhand goings on in the digital realm and a loud clear cry for fairness from their counterparts in the digital world.

Regarding professional role orientations, the most of the Dutch journalists have an opinion that it is the most vital obligation uphold that "presenting like it is". Classifying them from the highest to the lowest, these "two classical" positions are two: "being an observer detached" and "providing analysis of current events." It is said by most of the journalists that they directly participate in telling stories happening in the world while performing these usual tasks such as telling stories about what is going on in the world. Bringing the community on board is very legal for the Dutch journalists, like giving advice, orientation or direction of daily life has high chances of reaching 72.1% of the respondents. It should be underlined that more than 40% of participants support the idea of educational function of media and another nearly 60% stand for making public media opinionated.

Hence, the strong representation of 45.9% respondents who emphasize that providing entertainment and relaxation also serve as means of economy is an index of the dominance of the kind of pressures. Responses to roles that require political assertiveness were divided: if we see that for almost mon share of the facebook users it is crucial to be an adversary of the government, there is a large (inter-faith) group which is sure that "being supportive of the government" is completely not essential and "carrying a positive image of political leadership" is a useless thing. Functionaries such as "checking for misuse of power by political leaders," "encouraging audiences to take part in politics," "advocating for social improvements," and "putting the political agenda on the table" were considered important by one fifth of the respondents.

Roughly 91% (90.8%, to be more precise) Dutch journalists claimed they had the complete or a very high freedom at their choice of a news story and also somewhat similar number of them (91.6%) claimed the same freedom regarding the features to highlight in a news report. This shows a high level of professional independence of Dutch journalists. Nevertheless, the most of them (64.6%) co-ordinated the process of editing, included guidance of the news website and arranging meetings frequently or always. There are a plethora of factors such as those that determine how news production is carried out. "Time limits" to limit speed and HOV lanes the most commonly identified future measure by our Dutch drivers. While one of the five stated that restrictions and lack of news-gathering resources as well as information access all influenced their reporting significantly, one of the fifth shared the same experience. Apart from this, 49% of journalists found their personal values and opinions, as well as journalism's code of ethics, to be the influencing factors in their work.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, The research on censorship and press freedom in the Netherlands, and Norway, shows how important it is to protect the freedom of the press in a democratic society. By using different methods like interviews and data analysis, the study reveals the difficulties journalists face in these countries. The study also shows how the past, government systems, and public opinions influence media rules and censorship. There is a worrying trend towards more control over information and opinions, which can harm democratic values and people's freedoms. Journalists help keep governments in check and inform the public. The research emphasizes the ongoing need to defend and support press freedom to maintain the honesty of democratic societies in Europe and worldwide.

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