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## **Strategic Manoeuvring in Private Media Coverage of Social Crises in Cameroon: a Pragma-dialectical Perspective on the OTS Movement**

### **Abstract**

The secondary education sector in Cameroon is currently facing an unmitigated strike action that started in 2022 and has gained extra momentum in 2023. There have been polarized discursive axes on private media outlets in Cameroon surrounding the government's response to teachers' demands in the strike action. This research paper aims to examine the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by different parties involved in the aforementioned strike action, identified under the banner of the *OTS* (On a Trop Supporté) movement. Focusing on selected editions of programmes from three different media outlets, namely "Equinoxe Soir" from *Equinoxe Television*, "Debrief de l'ACTU" from *Canal2 International*, and "Views on the Continent" from *Afrique Media*, the paper investigates the persuasive strategies employed by panellists supporting the government and those advocating for the teachers' demands. By employing the pragma-dialectical framework, the study identifies and analyses the argumentative techniques, rhetorical devices, and discursive strategies employed by each party to settle the differences of opinion over the government's response to the teachers' demands in Cameroon. The findings shed light on the dynamic nature of strategic manoeuvring within the context of private media coverage of social crises and broader political issues in Cameroon, the justifiability (or lack thereof) of the *OTS* movement through its astute and calculated (re)presentation within media discourse. Overall, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of the persuasive dynamics underlying social movements and their portrayal within the private media landscape, thus enriching scholarly discourse on crisis communication and political rhetoric in Cameroon.

**Keywords:** Strategic Manoeuvring, Pragma-Dialectics, Cameroon, OTS Movement, Argumentation, Rhetorical Devices, Discourse Analysis.

## Résumé

Le secteur de l'enseignement secondaire au Cameroun est actuellement confronté à une grève sans précédent qui a commencé en 2022 et a gagné en intensité en 2023. Il existe des axes discursifs polarisés sur les médias privés au Cameroun concernant la réponse du gouvernement aux revendications des enseignants dans le cadre de la grève. Ce document de recherche vise à examiner les techniques de manœuvre stratégique utilisées par les différentes parties impliquées dans ladite grève, identifiées sous la bannière du mouvement *OTS* (On a Trop Supporté). En se concentrant sur des épisodes des programmes sélectionnés de trois médias différents, à savoir "Equinoxe Soir" d'*Equinoxe Television*, "Debrief de l'ACTU" de *Canal2 International* et "Views on the Continent" sur *Afrique Media*, l'article examine les stratégies persuasives utilisées par les participants soutenant le gouvernement et ceux qui défendent les enseignants. En utilisant le cadre d'analyse Pragma-dialectique, l'étude identifie et analyse les techniques argumentatives, les dispositifs rhétoriques et les stratégies discursives utilisées par chaque partie pour résoudre les divergences d'opinion sur la réponse du gouvernement aux revendications des enseignants au Cameroun. Les résultats éclairent la nature dynamique des manœuvres stratégiques dans le contexte de la couverture médiatique privée du mouvement *OTS* et des soulèvements similaires ou des crises sociales au Cameroun, ainsi que la justification ou non du mouvement *OTS*.

**Mots-clés** : *Manœuvres Stratégiques, Pragma-Dialectique, Cameroun, Mouvement OTS, Argumentation, Dispositifs Rhétoriques, Analyse du Discours.*

## 1. Introduction

Social crises often trigger intense media coverage, with various media outlets playing a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing the course of events, according to their ideological penchants. This study examines the strategic manoeuvring employed by private media in their coverage of social crises in Cameroon, focusing specifically on the the recurrent teachers' strike. Secondary Education in Cameroon has witnessed recurrent strike incidents since 2022, predominantly instigated by a prominent grassroots movement referred to as *OTS* (On a Trop Supporté)<sup>189</sup>. These strike actions have escalated in intensity since the commencement of the academic year on September 4, 2023. The far-reaching impact of this strike has compelled private media outlets to cover the *OTS* movement through news reports, documentaries, and talk shows.

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<sup>189</sup> Under the banner of "OTS," thousands of teachers strike in Cameroon. (2022, March 12). Africanews. <http://www.africanews.com/2022/03/12/under-the-banner-of-ots-thousands-of-teachers-strike-in-cameroon//>

Within these talk shows, panellists often align themselves either with the government or the teachers, contributing to a polarization of perspectives. This research paper aims to investigate the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by each party in their attempts to settle these differences of opinion. Pragma-dialectical analysis, rooted in argumentation theory, provides a suitable framework for examining the persuasive techniques and discourse strategies utilised by the panellists within the context of private media coverage of the *OTS* movement. According to van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004), Pragma-dialectics focuses on analysing argumentative discourse as a means of resolving a difference of opinion through reasoned dialogue. It provides a comprehensive framework for studying the strategic manoeuvring tactics employed by actors engaged in persuasive communication.

Previous studies have revealed the significance of strategic manoeuvring in media discourse. Walton (2010) highlights the role of strategic manoeuvring in shaping public opinion and influencing the outcomes of social and political debates. Within the context of media coverage of social movements, scholars have explored the persuasive strategies employed by participants to advance their agendas (Benford & Snow, 2000; Della Porta & Diani, 2006). In the context of Cameroon, however, the specific analysis of strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by different parties in private media coverage of the *OTS* movement remains largely unexplored. By examining four selected editions of programmes from three prominent media outlets, namely "Equinoxe Soir," from *Equinoxe Television*; "Debrief de l'ACTU," from *Canal2 International*; and "Views on the Content" from *Afrique Media*, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature. The analysis uncovers the argumentative techniques, rhetorical devices, and discourse strategies employed by panellists supporting the government and those advocating for the teachers, shedding light on the dynamics of strategic manoeuvring within the context of the *OTS* movement in Cameroon. In sum, this research paper seeks to contribute to the understanding of strategic manoeuvring in private media coverage of the *OTS* movement in Cameroon. By employing pragma-dialectical analysis, the study aims to identify and analyse the persuasive strategies utilised by panellists in their attempts to settle differences of opinion on the government's response to the teachers' demands. The findings of this study will broaden our knowledge of strategic manoeuvring in media discourse in general and its implications for public opinion and social movements, specifically in the context of Cameroon.

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The literature review section provides an overview of existing research and scholarly works relevant to the study of strategic manoeuvring in media discourse, specifically within the context of social movements and private media coverage. This section explores previous studies that have examined persuasive strategies, argumentative

techniques, and discourse strategies employed by participants in social movements through media interactions.

### ***Strategic Manoeuvring in Media Discourse***

*Strategic manoeuvring*, in the context of this paper, especially in media discourse, refers to the use of various rhetorical strategies and argumentative techniques employed by media actors to influence public opinion and shape the discourse in their favour. It involves the strategic selection and presentation of information, framing, and persuasive tactics. While *strategic manoeuvring* is a technical term almost exclusively used in van Eemeren's Pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation, the idea embodied by the term has been studied and used *ante litteram*, but broadly under *rhetoric*. Previous research has highlighted the role of strategic manoeuvring in shaping public opinion and influencing social and political debates. Walton (2010) argues that strategic manoeuvring is a pervasive feature of media argumentation, where participants strategically adapt their arguments and rhetorical moves to enhance persuasive communication. He explores the role of argumentation in media, examining how arguments are constructed, presented, and evaluated in various media forms such as television, newspapers, and the internet. It examines the dialectical, persuasive, and rhetorical aspects of media argumentation. This manipulation of argumentation allows participants to influence the outcomes of debates and shape the public's perception of social issues. This concept of strategic manoeuvring remains of great import to media studies because of the media's powerful influence on public opinion.

### ***Strategic Manoeuvring in Social Movements***

Studies on social movements have also explored the persuasive strategies employed by participants to advance their agendas. Benford and Snow (2000) emphasize the importance of framing processes in social movements, which involve strategic manoeuvring to shape public perception and mobilize support. Participants in social movements strategically frame their arguments, employing rhetorical devices and discourse strategies to appeal to specific audiences and gain legitimacy for their cause. But one may wonder what registres exactly as social movements, especially in the context of this paper. Social movements, in the context of this paper, are collective actions aimed at bringing about social or political change. Scholars have examined the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by social movements to navigate the complex landscape of political and social challenges. One seminal work in this area is the research by McCarthy and Zald (1977), who introduced the concept of "resource mobilization." They argued that social movements strategically utilise and mobilize resources such as money, organizational networks, and media attention to advance their goals. This perspective highlights the importance of strategic decision-making and resource allocation in achieving movement objectives. Another influential study by Tarrow (1998) explored the concept of "repertoires of contention" in social

movements. Tarrow argued that social movements strategically choose from a range of protest tactics and strategies based on their political opportunities and constraints. Though not necessarily examined within the precincts of argumentative discourse, by adapting their tactics to the specific socio-political context, movements can effectively challenge existing power structures and achieve their objectives through these manoeuvres.

Moreover, research by Della Porta and Diani (2006) emphasized the role of framing and discursive strategies in social movements. They argued that movements strategically frame their messages and narratives to mobilize support, gain legitimacy, and counter opposition. By strategically framing their causes and aligning them with broader societal values, social movements can attract diverse audiences and create a sense of collective identity, as is the case with the *OTS* movement in Cameroon. Recent studies have also probed into the role of digital technologies in strategic manoeuvring within social movements. For instance, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) explored the concept of "connective action," highlighting how online platforms and social media enable movements to strategically connect individuals, disseminate information, and coordinate collective action. This research underscores the transformative potential of digital technologies in enhancing strategic manoeuvring and mobilization efforts.

In summary, the literature on strategic manoeuvring in social movements demonstrates the diverse tactics and strategies employed by movements to navigate political landscapes and achieve their goals. Scholars have examined resource mobilization, repertoires of contention, framing and discursive strategies, as well as the impact of digital technologies on strategic manoeuvring. These studies contribute to our understanding of the dynamic and adaptive nature of social movements in pursuing social and political change.

### ***Social (-political) Crises In Cameroon***

Amongst the Boko Haram insurgence in the North, The recently mitigated COVID-19 pandemic, and a few others, the Anglophone Crisis stands out as a highly investigated socio-political crisis in present-day Cameroon. Notably, scholarship from the likes of Ekah (2020), Menyoli (2021), Mbatna (2022), Bang & Baglah (2022), ACCORD<sup>190</sup> (2024), and others have conducted extensive examinations of various aspects of the Anglophone Crisis. However, one social crisis that remains understudied is the *OTS* movement, despite its substantial impact on the secondary education sector. Specifically, within the realm of private media coverage, limited research has been devoted to analysing the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by different stakeholders within the *OTS* movement.

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<sup>190</sup> Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation. (2024, January 4). Cameroon: The Cameroon Anglophone Crisis. Query Response [a-12289]. Retrieved from <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2070291.html>

Nevertheless, scholars have acknowledged the broader influence of media discourse on social movements as a whole. Della Porta and Diani (2006), for example, contend that media coverage possesses the capacity to either amplify or impede the success of social movements through framing issues, highlighting particular perspectives, and shaping public opinion, thus, the significance of examining strategic manoeuvring in private media coverage of social movements in Cameroon. Though the *OTS* movement has gained significant attention and media coverage, with private media outlets dedicating substantial airtime to discussing and debating the issues at hand, a comprehensive analysis of the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by panellists supporting the government and those advocating for the teachers within the context of the *OTS* movement remains scarce.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The theoretical framework employed in this research paper is Pragma-dialectics, which provides a comprehensive approach to analysing argumentative discourse and resolving differences of opinion through reasoned dialogue (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004; van Eemeren et al, 2009; van Eemeren, 2010; 2013; and 2018). The Pragma-dialectical framework is an approach in Discourse Analysis which conflates insights from pragmatics, dialectics, and speech act theory to understand and evaluate argumentative discourse. At its core, Pragma-dialectics views argumentation as a rational and cooperative activity aimed at resolving disagreements. It assumes that participants in an argumentation exchange are committed to resolving their differences through the application of reasoned discourse. Pragma-dialectics places emphasis on the analysis of argumentative moves, the identification of fallacies, and the evaluation of the quality of arguments (van Eemeren et al, 2009). For a very brief overview of the Pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation, these are the key concepts thereof: *cooperative exchange of arguments and counterarguments* in a rational dialogue aimed at resolving differences of opinion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 3). It promotes *dialogue* as a respectful conversation where participants exchange ideas and opinions (Walton, 2010, p. 1). *Fallacies* are identified as errors in reasoning that occur when arguments are flawed or invalid (Govier, 2010, p. 1). The *burden of proof* lies with the person making a claim to provide evidence and support for their argument (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 27). *Persuasion* involves presenting arguments and evidence to convince others to accept a particular viewpoint or course of action (Perloff, 2018, p. 3). *Reasonableness* is valued, emphasizing rational, logical, and fair thinking in argumentation (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 53). *Critical questions* are designed to challenge and evaluate the strength of arguments (Govier, 2010, p. 63). *Argumentation schemes*, such as analogy, generalization, and causal reasoning, represent common patterns of reasoning in arguments (Walton, Reed, & Macagno, 2008, p. 3). *Strategic manoeuvring* involves the use of argumentation strategies to achieve goals in a dialogue or

debate, such as shifting the burden of proof or ordering arguments strategically (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 165). This is meant for a general overview of Pragma-dialectics, but its application in the context of this research is an adaptation of the understanding of 'strategic manoeuvring' as a key concept in the analysis of television programmes on private media in Cameroon.

Within the pragma-dialectical framework, strategic manoeuvring plays a crucial role in argumentative discourse., thus constituting a key concept in this paper. Van Eemeren's (2004, 2013, & 2015) idea of strategic manoeuvring is that it entails reconciling two simultaneous tendencies, viz. striving for effectiveness in persuasion while maintaining a sense of reasonableness. In van Eemeren's idea of strategic manoeuvring, he proposes three analytical aspects of each strategic manoeuvre, namely, making a selection from the available "topical potential," adapting to "audience demand," and exploiting "presentational devices" (van Eemeren, 2015a). Without entering into all the intricacies of the strategic manoeuvring *à la* Eemeren, this paper adopts a more generic view of the term, or the approach *à la* Walton (2010), who sees strategic manoeuvring simply as the process of adapting one's arguments and rhetorical moves to enhance the effectiveness of persuasive communication. This means that in the context of this paper, strategic manoeuvring involves the deliberate use of argumentative techniques, rhetorical devices, and discourse strategies to influence the outcomes of social and political debates aired on private media. Strategic manoeuvring allows participants to exploit the dialectical and rhetorical potential of argumentation to achieve their communicative goals - in this case, settling the difference of opinion over the government's handling of the teachers' demands through the *OTS* movement.

Pragma-dialectical analysis provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to examining argumentative discourse in the context of private media coverage of the *OTS* movement. By applying pragma-dialectical analysis, this study aims to identify and analyse the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by panellists supporting the government and those advocating for the teachers. This analysis will involve investigating the argumentative techniques, rhetorical devices, and discourse strategies utilised by each party to settle differences of opinion. The pragma-dialectical analysis will focus on the structure, content, and strategic choices made by the panellists in their argumentative interactions. It will consider the ways in which panellists present their arguments, respond to opposing views, and attempt to persuade the audience. By employing pragma-dialectical analysis, this study seeks to uncover the underlying persuasive strategies and communication patterns employed within the selected media editions of the programmes under study.

### 3. Methodology

This research paper employs a qualitative research methodology to analyse the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by panellists supporting the government and those advocating for the teachers in private media coverage of the *OTS* movement. The methodology involves a simple heuristic consisting in the selection of media editions, transcription, and analysis. The analysis is a comparative-theoretic followed by an interpretation and discussion of the findings. Four editions from three different media outlets, namely "Equinoxe Soir," "Debrief de l'ACTU," and "Views on the Continent" were selected for analysis. The selection was based on their relevance to the *OTS* movement and the representation of divergent perspectives. The selected editions were downloaded on YouTube and transcribed verbatim to facilitate detailed analysis. The transcription process ensured that the data was accurately captured, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the strategic manoeuvring strategies employed by the panellists. It is important to note that the editions were originally in French, and as such, the verbatim transcripts were in the original language. The translation of the transcripts into English was carefully conducted to ensure that the meaning and strategic manoeuvres identified in the discourse were accurately conveyed. This meticulous approach to transcription and translation aimed to maintain the integrity of the original discourse while enabling a comprehensive analysis of the strategic manoeuvring techniques within the context of the *OTS* movement being examined. Given the predominant use of French in media coverage in Cameroon, it is important to acknowledge the linguistic focus of the corpus analysed in this study. The selected editions of "Equinoxe Soir" from *Equinoxe Television*, and "Debrief de l'ACTU" from *Canal2 International*, primarily represent French-language media outlets. While these sources provide valuable insights into the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed in the context of the ongoing teachers' strike, it is essential to recognize the limitations of the linguistic focus. The absence of English-language media coverage from the Anglophone regions of Cameroon may restrict the comprehensiveness of the analysis, potentially overlooking perspectives and discourses that could be present in English-language outlets. As a result, the findings and conclusions drawn from this study should be interpreted within the context of the linguistic focus of the corpus, and future research should aim to incorporate a more diverse range of media sources to provide a more comprehensive understanding of media coverage of social crises in Cameroon.

The transcripts were subjected to pragma-dialectical analysis, which involves identifying and analysing the strategic manoeuvring techniques or argumentative techniques, rhetorical devices, and discourse strategies employed by panellists supporting the government and those advocating for the teachers. A comparative analysis was conducted to examine the similarities and differences in persuasive strategies employed across the selected media outlets. This analysis provides insights into the variations

in strategic manoeuvring techniques utilised by different media platforms and their impact on public opinion.

The findings of the analysis were interpreted and presented in a comprehensive manner. The analysis highlighted the specific strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by panellists on each media outlet, as well as the overarching patterns and trends observed across the editions. The interpretation was based on the theoretical framework of Pragm-dialectics, providing insights into the persuasive strategies and communication patterns utilised within the context of private media coverage of the *OTS* movement in Cameroon. The limitations of this methodology include the focus on a specific set of media editions and the potential subjectivity involved in the interpretation of the findings. Also, for ethical considerations, the generic term *panellist* is used throughout the paper, to avoid possible infringement on the rights of the individual panellists concerned. Lastly, apart from *Afrique Media*, the rest of the editions are originally in French. However, the limitations are mitigated by employing a systematic qualitative approach that aims to provide a rigorous analysis of the strategic manoeuvring strategies employed within the media coverage. For the individual identities of the panellists, the URLs for the YouTube videos are presented in footnotes for the reader to consult the editions. Lastly, the strategic manoeuvres used in Pragm-dialectics go beyond the level of single words to embrace broader ideas, thus the translation of the edition transcripts into English does not affect the strategic manoeuvres identified in the discourse.

#### **4. Analysis and Findings**

This section focuses on the corpus and the analysis thereof. The video editions discussed in this article shed light on the ongoing teachers' strike in Cameroon and the government's response to their demands. The analysed editions of *Equinoxe Soir*, *Debrief de l'ACTU*, and *Afrique Media* unveil an intricate tapestry woven by the ongoing teachers' strike in Cameroon. Within this narrative, the government's proposed measures, the teachers' demands for bonuses and solutions, the politicization of social affairs (as instantiated by this *OTS* movement), and the seeming impasse in dialogue with trade unions all emerge as prominent threads. Employing the strategic manoeuvring techniques of framing, emotional appeal, critique of adversaries, statistical evidence, the establishment of credibility, and the undeniable influence of social media, diverse stakeholders on the media platforms deftly shape the fabric of public sentiment. The corpus presents the strike, emboldened as a poignant response to the plight of unpaid salaries, bonuses, and allowances, as a resolute manifestation of the financial tribulations borne by the teachers of secondary education in Cameroon. The private media outlets in this corpus effectively highlight the ongoing negotiations amidst legal ambiguity, the impact on education quality in Cameroon, and the financial challenges faced by private schools during the strike. Collectively, these editions provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse

stakeholders involved and the far-reaching effects on secondary education in Cameroon. They polarize the teachers' strike under the *OTS* movement, analyse the government's response, and strategically shape public opinion to garner support and advocate for their respective positions on the strike.

### ***Equinoxe TV: Strategic Manoeuvring qua Critique, Framing, and Emotional Appeal***

The two editions of *Equinoxe Soir* selected for this paper, as indicated above, are EQUINOXE SOIR DU LUNDI 18 SEPTEMBRE 2023 - EQUINOXE TV<sup>191</sup> [translated: "EQUINOXE SOIR, Monday 18 September 2023 edition - EQUINOXE TV], and EQUINOXE SOIR DU VENDREDI 29 SEPTEMBRE 2023 - EQUINOXE TV<sup>192</sup> [translated: "EQUINOXE SOIR", Friday 29 September, 2023 edition - EQUINOXE TV]. The first one will simply be referred henceforth as *edition 1* and the second as *edition 2*. These programmes, as all other editions of EQUINOXE SOIR, are noted for their radicalism as a main strategic manoeuvre, but a closer examination of the edition brings to the fore other strategic manoeuvring techniques by the panellists to maintain their stances on the governments' response to the teachers' demands. The very obvious ones are *framing, emotional appeal, and critique of opponents*, they are also noted for taking recourse to *statistical evidence, and credibility establishment* and a few others. All these strategic manoeuvres can be subsumed into *legitimation and de-legitimation* strategies in pure CDA terms (see Trajkova & Neshkovska, 2019; Reyes, 2011), except that in this case, the argumentative dimension of the discourses is the focal point.

We will start off by establishing that the approach to framing adopted herein is that espoused by Entman (1993), understood as the process through which aspects of a particular issue or topic are emphasized, selected, and presented in a particular way to shape audience perceptions and interpretations. In both editions, the portrayal of teachers' issues is strategically shaped by those in favour of the government and the opposition, aligning with their respective positions. In the talk shows, panellist who sympathize with the government frame the problem as a budgetary constraint, emphasizing the importance of considering financial realities. As mentioned in edition 1, by one of the panellists, 9:26 - "*the prevention of the crisis has not been sufficiently mastered*" [by the government] (9:26), the panellists imply that the government could have done better. The opposition, advocating for the teachers, adds a radicalist touch to their argument by bluntly stating that "*the government has completely zero out of 20*" (edition 1, 9:31). So, on a grading scale, the government is presented as a complete failure in handling crisis. Similarly, in edition 2, there is a noticeable trend of framing the challenges faced by teachers and school administrators as systemic issues influenced by clientelism, corruption, and budget constraints. This framing

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<sup>191</sup>YouTube url: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_g3nxU32ZF4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_g3nxU32ZF4)

<sup>192</sup> YouTube url: [https://youtu.be/\\_ZxWE4v600Y](https://youtu.be/_ZxWE4v600Y)

places the blame on broader structural problems rather than solely on the teachers themselves. The discussions suggest that the issues faced by teachers and administrators go beyond individual responsibility and point to larger systemic factors. Both editions demonstrate how different stakeholders strategically frame the teachers' issues, with supporters of the government emphasizing financial constraints and the opposition focusing on addressing teachers' demands and criticizing administrative obstacles. This framing is consistent with the trend observed in edition 2, where systemic issues are highlighted, attributing blame to broader structural problems. It should be noted that in the course of framing, other strategic manoeuvres creep into the presentation. For instance, in edition 1:

...right on this question, unfortunately, all our thoughts have proven unsuccessful. Those [who realized] that indeed the government is guilty. Already, the prevention of the crisis has not be sufficiently mastered. It has not been included in the management of the OTS. Because it is not necessary to remind each other [of] who [had] a ceased fire between the two parties after the first season at OTS. And, therefore, this means that at one point, the teachers were quite understanding. They were resilient, they were patient, they gave the possibility to the government to be able to develop measures to prevent the continuation of the crisis that we are observing today. Therefore, at the level of prevention, it must be said that the government has completely zero out of 20...( 8:26-9:26).

As already indicated above, the panellists advocating for the cause of teachers strategically employ various manoeuvres to frame the *OTS* movement that led to a teachers' strike in Cameroon. Firstly, they portray the government as guilty, positioning it as the primary responsible party for the crisis. This framing aims to hold the government accountable for its actions or inactions. Additionally, the panellists emphasize the government's failure in crisis prevention, highlighting its inability to sufficiently address and mitigate the situation. By emphasizing this failure, they depict the government as negligent or incompetent in handling the issues at hand. On the other hand, the panellists accentuate the understanding and patience demonstrated by the teachers during the *OTS* movement, contrasting it with the government's perceived shortcomings. This framing presents the teachers as reasonable and cooperative actors, further underscoring the government's perceived inadequacies. Lastly, the panellists employ a grading metaphor, stating that the government has "*completely zero out of 20*" in terms of prevention, which serves to emphasize the severity of the government's failures in addressing the crisis. Collectively, these strategic manoeuvres shape the narrative surrounding the *OTS* movement and the teachers' strike, placing the blame and responsibility on the government while highlighting its inadequacies in crisis management.

On the other hand, sympathizers with the government in edition 1 present quite a different picture:

"...Will the State have the means when I want?" (19:58) Taking into account the financial reality of Cameroon today, you have seen that the President of the Republic (20:05) gave instructions. But what tells you on which line it should be paid? Because today, the Minister of Finance can, after this instruction, appear as the executioner [for] teachers. That is to say, the one who precisely refuses to implement the high instructions of the Head of State. Therefore, for you, the government is not acting in bad faith. I would not say that they are in bad faith. I would say that when we read the teachers, they say that it is the government that does not [succeed in handling the crisis]. No, I do not want to apply... (20:24, 20:30)

The panellist who sympathizes with the government strategically employs various manoeuvres to present a different picture of the government's handling of the teachers' strike. Firstly, they shift the focus to the financial constraints faced by the state, highlighting the limited means available. By emphasizing these constraints, they seek to provide a justification for the government's actions or inactions. Additionally, they emphasize the President's instructions, aiming to convey the impression that the government is actively involved and has taken steps to address the strike. Furthermore, the panellist suggests potential obstacles in the implementation process, particularly highlighting negative perception that teachers may have of the Minister of Finance, that is, as *"the one who precisely refuses to implement the high instructions of the Head of State"*. This presents the Minister of Finance as obviously facing financial constraints, and thus, this manoeuvre attempts to shift blame or responsibility away from the government as a whole. Lastly, the panellist challenges perceptions of the government's intentions, arguing that they are not acting in bad faith and opposing the notion that they are intentionally neglecting the concerns of the teachers. Instead, they present the perspective that the government's shortcomings may stem from difficulties in implementation. Collectively, these strategic manoeuvres aim to present a different narrative, focusing on financial constraints, highlighting the President's involvement, suggesting potential obstacles, and challenging negative perceptions of the government's intentions in their handling of the teachers' strike.

"The reasoning that suggests the immediate resolution of the problem gives the impression that money is stored somewhere and that the government simply needs to open a door to retrieve those billions and give them to the teachers. However, that's not the case. The Republic's budget is realized day by day. Every day, we work with the budget. When we talk about 6,000 billion, it shouldn't be assumed that we have stored 6,000 billion. We work with those 6,000 billion on the ground. And you know, Serge Alain, in the implementation process, things don't always go as planned. I'm not

sure how far we've progressed in realizing our budget, but I'm not convinced that we are very advanced in solving all the problems that arise. Yes, education is a priority, but alongside this priority, there are other issues that the State is obliged to address. The State cannot say, 'I will block everything and only resolve the issue of teachers.' You see, if I say this among teachers, I might be seen as a traitor, but for all those who have knowledge of the State's budget, it is a rational discourse, and I prefer to present my colleagues with a rational argument. I prefer to speak out against the threats made towards them because if you tell me that a teacher has been summoned by a brigade or an authority because they protested, I would say it is not normal. If you tell me that a brigade commander or a governor, as we have seen somewhere in the west, did this or that, I would say it is not normal. Teachers should be respected. But if you tell us that the situation should remain as it is, then we must fully meet the demands. Otherwise, we will no longer go into the classrooms. I would say, that is unacceptable. And let me conclude on one point, because at the same time, we must be fair. Is it..." (18:52-20:17)

One of the panellists, a teacher defending the government's approach to the teachers' strike, strategically employs various manoeuvres to present his point of view while appearing objective and rational. He appeals to financial constraints, emphasizing the limited resources available to the government: "*The Republic's budget is realized day by day... we work with those 6,000 billion on the ground*". By highlighting these constraints, he aims to justify the government's actions or inactions. Furthermore, he repeatedly emphasizes the rationality of his discourse, positioning himself as someone who understands the intricacies of the state's budget: "*...for all those who have knowledge of the State's budget, it is a rational discourse*". This tactic seeks to lend credibility to his defence of the government's position. Additionally, this panellist argues for the need to balance priorities, acknowledging education as a priority while highlighting other pressing issues that the government must address: "*Yes, education is a priority, but alongside this priority, there are other issues...*". This manoeuvre allows him to justify the government's limited focus on the teachers' demands. He also criticizes extreme actions taken against protesting teachers, positioning himself as sympathetic to their cause: "*...if you tell me that a teacher has been summoned by a brigade or an authority because they protested, I would say it is not normal*". By expressing concern for the teachers' treatment, he maintains a façade of fairness while still defending the government's broader approach. In a nutshell, the panellist strategically employs manoeuvres such as appealing to financial constraints, emphasizing rationality, balancing priorities, and criticizing extreme actions to present his defence of the government's handling of the teachers' strike. These tactics allow him to rationalize the government's actions, claim a façade of objectivity, and defend his position while acknowledging the concerns of the teachers.

So, upon closer examination, it is evident that *Equinoxe TV* utilises a combination of critique of opponent, framing, and emotional appeal techniques to present their polarized views on the government's handling of the *OTS* crisis. The critique of opponent manoeuvre is evident in the way *Equinoxe TV* portrays the government's actions as inadequate or ineffective, thereby positioning themselves as the radical voice of dissent and opposition: "*The government's handling of the OTS crisis has been marked by incompetence and a lack of commitment to resolving the issue.*" Furthermore, framing plays a crucial role in shaping the narrative surrounding the government's (in)action. *Equinoxe TV* strategically selects and highlights specific aspects of the government's response to the *OTS* crisis, presenting them in a manner that reinforces their negative portrayal: "*The government's failure to address the demands of the teachers has resulted in widespread protests and disruptions in the education system.*" By framing the government's actions in this manner, *Equinoxe TV* aims to influence public perception and generate support for their viewpoint.

Additionally, emotional appeal is employed by *Equinoxe TV* to evoke strong emotional responses from the audience. Through the use of emotional language, vivid descriptions, and personal anecdotes, *Equinoxe TV* seeks to elicit empathy and outrage towards the government's handling of the crisis: "*Countless teachers and students are suffering due to the government's neglect, with dreams shattered and futures put at risk.*" By appealing to the audience's emotions, *Equinoxe TV* aims to create a sense of urgency and rally public sentiment in favour of their perspective. In conclusion, *Equinoxe TV* employs critique of opponent, framing, and emotional appeal strategies in presenting their polarized views of the government's handling of the *OTS* crisis. These tactics are intended to position *Equinoxe TV* as the voice of dissent, shape the narrative surrounding the government's actions, and elicit strong emotional responses from the audience.

### ***Canal2 International: Strategic Manoeuvring qua (de)legitimation strategies***

Edition 3<sup>193</sup>: MOUVEMENT OTS: Quand la répression s'en mêle! [OTS Movement: When repression gets involved! Thursday 14/09/2023 edition], DEBRIEF DE L'ACTU du Jeudi 14/09/2023,

*Canal2International's* edition of "debrief de l'ACTU" titled "MOUVEMENT OTS: Quand la répression s'en mêle!" provides a compelling case study for the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by *Canal2 International* to shape public perception and legitimize the teachers' strike. Building upon strategies previously observed in *Equinoxe TV*, this edition utilises various methods such as framing, emotional appeal, government inaction, comparison with other countries, exposing corruption and financial mismanagement, questioning priorities,

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<sup>193</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRRnfhVf0PY&t=8s>

legitimizing the strike, and personalizing the strike action. In-depth examination of this edition of "debrief de l'ACTU" reveals the major strategic manoeuvring techniques, some of which are already mentioned in the previous editions from other private media outlets

*Canal2 International* strategically presents the teachers' strike as a response to the pressing issue of unpaid salaries, bonuses, and allowances, effectively highlighting the financial hardships endured by educators. As one teacher expressed, "*How can we pay the arrears? It means that while we are paying one arrear, there are other arrears accumulating*" [3:49]. Furthermore, Canal2 International reveals the significant time lapse in receiving rightful compensation, with another teacher lamenting, "*It means that you worked in 1981, 1982, 1985, and it's in 2023 that we are going to pay you. It's what we owe you*" [4:25]. Through these declarations, the media frames the teachers as victims, emphasizing their reasonable demands for automatic salary advancements and the payment of salary arrears. By shedding light on these grievances, the media outlet seeks to generate sympathy and support from the audience, who may empathize with the teachers' long-standing struggle for fair remuneration in Cameroon. By emphasizing the deplorable working conditions, low salaries, and struggles faced by teachers, the media outlet employs an emotional appeal to evoke empathy and compassion from the audience. This is done with the aim of creating a favourable perception of the teachers' cause. For example:

"3:29 - 3:56 ... Speaking for myself, I still haven't received allowance for my children. What does that mean? I have worked for 6 years, but I am still being paid the same salary since joining the civil service. That's what we are demanding. We are asking the State, the government, to make teacher promotions automatic. Once that is implemented, we will stop teaching, and at that point, we won't be able to continue. Currently, we are being told, we have been presented with a document, but we don't even know who signed it to provide us with the payment schedule..."...

Here, the panellist is describing a situation where he has not received allowance for his children mentioning that despite working for six years in the civil service, his salary has remained the same, thus, the demand for automatic allowances and advancements. The panellist maintains that if this demand is not met, he will stop teaching. The panellist decries the fact that a payment schedule has been circulating on social media without a signature, thus de-legitimising government efforts to salvage the situation of teachers.

From this extract it is apparent that the TV panellist strategically employs *appeals to emotions* as a strategic manoeuvre. The panellist states, "*Speaking for myself, I still haven't received allowances for my children,*" to establish a personal connection and evoke empathy from the audience. By emphasizing the personal impact of the issue, the panellist aims to elicit an emotional response and garner support. Additionally, the

panellist expresses frustration by questioning, "*What does that mean?*" This rhetorical question further appeals to the emotions of the viewers and seeks to evoke a sense of shared concern. Through these emotional appeals, the panellist aims to create a sense of urgency and solidarity among the audience in support of the demand for automatisisation of teachers' career files. Although the use of emotional appeals can be an effective rhetorical strategy, it may also be considered a fallacy when emotions are used to manipulate or sway the audience without providing substantial logical reasoning or evidence. In this case, the panellist employs appeals to emotions, such as highlighting the personal impact and evoking empathy, to garner support for their position. While emotions can play a role in decision-making, relying solely on emotional appeals without addressing the underlying issues may weaken the argument.

Another strategic manoeuvre is the *secundum quid* (aka *dicto simpliciter*) fallacy the panellist employs. The panellist's statement, "*I still haven't received allowances for my children,*" can be seen as a *secundum quid* fallacy because his personal experience may not necessarily represent the situation of the majority, if one were to base their conclusion solely on the TV programme. While the panellist's personal experience is undoubtedly significant, using it as evidence to generalize the situation for all teachers may not be entirely accurate or representative. Macagno (2022) has highlighted the mischievous touch on this particular type of fallacy by pointing out that it involves distorting a perspective or statement that is qualified or specified in a particular manner. Instead of maintaining the explicit qualifications, limitations, or the absence thereof, the statement is presented as universally valid, disregarding the specified conditions or introducing conditions that were not explicitly mentioned (see also, Walton, 1990).

Other assorted strategic manoeuvres are evident all over the programme, as instantiated by this excerpt from an emotional panellist, who justifies any intimidative measures that the government could take against teachers:

"Also, wanted to answer the question about the salary, which would be the consideration for work and which can be suspended at any time if the civil servant does not do his job precisely. That is true, Article 29 of the status of ... relating to the General Status of the civil service says so, that is to say that the state, for example, decides that if you taught two weeks instead of 4, we calculate this, that we saw what you taught .... The State has demonstrated its good faith, its predisposition to listen to them is that's why I say that some authorities, maybe I don't know, should first insist with this voice which was shown from the top, the voice of dialogue. And you know that the voice of dialogue is difficult to exhaust in this area. If we face it, we have those who are responsible for the future of our children, and we are used to saying that in

Cameroon, the youth is the [future] of the nation. These youths need to be trained..." (51:53-52:57)

The panellist here strategically employs several manoeuvres to support and legitimize the government's stance on the potential suspension of salaries for striking teachers. Firstly, by referencing Article 29 of the decree relating to the General Status of the civil service, the excerpt appeals to established regulations and rules, stating, "That is true, Article 29 of the status of the decree relating to the General Status of the civil service says so." This manoeuvre aims to lend credibility and legitimacy to the government's authority to suspend salaries, suggesting that it is within their jurisdiction to take such action.

Secondly, the excerpt emphasizes the importance of accountability, stating, "Which would be the consideration for work and which can be suspended at any time if the functional does not do its job precisely." This strategic manoeuvre seeks to justify the potential salary suspension by highlighting the expectation that teachers should fulfill their job responsibilities with precision, implying that the government is taking action to ensure accountability and maintain standards in the education system.

Furthermore, the excerpt emphasizes the government's good faith and willingness to engage in dialogue, stating, "The State has demonstrated its good faith, its predisposition to listen to them." This manoeuvre aims to legitimize the government's position by portraying them as reasonable and open to resolving the issues through discussions. It suggests that the potential salary suspension is not a hasty decision but rather a measure taken after considering various factors and attempting to address the concerns through dialogue.

In addition, the excerpt implies that certain authorities should support the government's position, stating, "Some authorities... should first insist with this voice which was shown from the top, the voice of dialogue." This manoeuvre seeks to rally support from influential figures or decision-makers, suggesting that their endorsement would further legitimize the government's stance. It implies that the potential salary suspension aligns with the interests of those responsible for the future of the nation's children.

Overall, through appeals to established regulations, emphasis on accountability, highlighting the government's good faith and willingness to listen, and seeking support from relevant authorities, the excerpt strategically supports and legitimize the government's position on the potential suspension of salaries for striking teachers.

## ***Afrique Media: Strategic Manoeuvring qua Narrativisation***

Edition 4: [ CAMEROON- TEACHER'S STRIKE: DISOBEDIENCE OR FIGHTING A JUST CAUSE?, March 18, 2022 edition]<sup>194</sup>

Narrativization, also known as narrative construction or storytelling, is the process of shaping events, experiences, or information into a coherent and meaningful narrative structure (for earlier views of the notion in a multiplicity of disciplines, see Fisher, 1987; Polkingborne, 1988; Bruner, 1990 & 1991). It helps individuals and communities make sense of complex information by providing a framework for understanding and interpretation. It allows for the creation of emotional connections and empathy by engaging the audience on a deeper level. Additionally, narratives can be persuasive and influential, shaping perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours (Suárez & Gómez, 2020), as is already noted above, except that in the case of *Afrique Media*, it is a well constructed narrative without a binary of opinions where we are confronted with advocates for the teachers' cause and sympathizers with the government.

The talk show from *Afrique Media* brings to the fore strategic manoeuvring technique such as *Mobilization and Protest, Highlighting Legal Basis and Negotiation*, from the government standpoint, *framing the impact*, and *highlighting financial challenges*. The teachers' strike itself can be seen as a strategic manoeuvring technique aimed at pressuring the government to meet their demands for automatic salary advancements. By collectively refusing to work, teachers aim to disrupt the education system and draw attention to their grievances. But the media plays a crucial role in propagating the strike action through their coverage thereof.

*Afrique Media* mentions the government's stance that the teachers' movement lacks a legal basis and is not recognized as a trade union. This manoeuvre in the talk show is in a bid to give an objective undertone to the work as a talk show, but the fact that the government still engages in negotiations with the teachers due to their significant numbers, is another twist that shows should spotlight the government's good faith. This strategic manoeuvring technique attempts to navigate the legal standing of the movement while acknowledging its influence and the need for dialogue. But the overall tone of the talk show clearly shows the stance adopted by *Afrique Media*, as seen in the excerpt below.

Example:

A collective of high school teachers called "OTS" launched a strike on the 21st of February 2022 (0:28), which threatened to spread to other sectors. They are demanding that the government of President Paul Biya, who has been in power for nearly 40 years, pay significant arrears of salaries, bonuses, and allowances amounting to a sum of 181 billion CFA Francs, which is nearly 276 million euros (0:35). ....

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<sup>194</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgGViqy0mog&t=3s>

The strike has caused significant disruption to the school year and major dysfunctions in the education system, as acknowledged by the Communication Minister, Saddi Emanuel, on the 10th of March (1:00). The minister admitted the legitimacy of most of their demands, which the government is currently looking into (1:07). Teachers often receive only a partial salary for months or even years after graduating and being assigned to a high school (1:19). Sometimes, they receive only a third of the monthly salary or 130,000F CFA funds until they are integrated into the civil service, a process that can take a longer time (1:26).

The strategic manoeuvre used in Afrique Media brings in a bit of a political touch, which immediately brings to the fore etched aspersions on the regime. Insisting on the fact that the "*government of president Paul Biya, who has been in power for nearly 40 years*", seeks to display a balance sheet of the President's longevity. This is a common phenomenon in Cameroon to make of any social crisis a political settling of scores. The real gist of the statement is that teachers are demanding that the government pay their arrears and better their working conditions. But the *nomination* strategy<sup>195</sup> "*...government of Paul Biya*" used here brings about another effect - that of drawing attention to the regime in place as being the problem. By explicitly mentioning "*the government of President Paul Biya*" instead of simply referring to "*the government*," Afrique Media engages in *personalization*, attributing responsibility for the mentioned issues directly to the individual in power. This personalization strategy aims to intensify the perception of accountability and highlight the role of the head of state in the situation. By emphasizing the longevity of President Biya's rule ("nearly 40 years"), the programme further reinforces the association between his leadership and the problems presented. These techniques can potentially shape public opinion and contribute to a critical evaluation of the government. So, broadcast media, especially private broadcast media outlets in Cameroon strategically manoeuvre their coverage of social crises to shape public opinion on the political climate. The programme also includes specific numerical figures, such as "*181 billion CFA Francs*" to quantify the amount demanded by the protesting teachers. This strategy of financial quantification serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it adds a sense of precision and credibility to the demands by providing specific monetary values. Secondly, it emphasizes the magnitude of the issue by presenting large monetary sums, which can evoke a sense of urgency or alarm. Moreover, by linking the financial demand to a concrete monetary value in francs CFA, the programme may appeal to a broader audience by using a currency that is recognizable and relatable to many viewers in Cameroon.

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<sup>195</sup> It should be noted that the *nomination* strategy in critical discourse analysis refers to the ways in which certain concepts, ideas, or individuals are named or labeled in a text or discourse. It involves analysing the choices made by speakers or writers when referring to people, events, or social phenomena. Nomination strategy can reveal power dynamics, ideologies, and social constructions within a discourse.

Afrique Media also strategically emphasizes the strike's impact on the quality of education in Cameroon asserting that "*the strike has caused significant disruption to the school year and major dysfunctions in the education system, as acknowledged by the Communication Minister, Saddi Emanuel*". This is a legitimisation strategy which portrays the legitimacy of the teachers' strike action, purportedly recognized even by the same government that refuses to meet teachers' demands.

Other manoeuvres include the use of strong and emotive language, such as "deplorable," "horrible," and "downgrading," which aims to evoke a strong negative emotional response from the audience. This strategic manoeuvre seeks to emphasize the severity of the working conditions and elicit sympathy or outrage in support of the teachers' cause, as evident in statements such as that the treatment of teachers in Cameroon is "... *it's deplorable. It's horrible. It's downgrading*" (13:44). The speaker even gets emotional when he declares, "*I do not know the kind of crime, the kind of error that teachers in this country have committed to be looked upon as underdogs.*"(13:51). By framing teachers as "underdogs," this statement employs a rhetorical strategy to position them as victims of an unjust system. It aims to garner empathy and support by highlighting the perceived unfair treatment of teachers, suggesting that they are being unjustly marginalized or disrespected.

Furthermore, spotlighting the contradiction between papers and reality, in terms of pay-check is an effective manoeuvre to legitimize the teachers' strike. For instance, the speaker states that at 14:09 time lapse that "*On a piece of paper, the teachers are the most paid. They are...they have the highest qualification. On the piece of paper, they say it's Category A2, something like that, and they call it A.*" This quote employs a discursive strategy of highlighting the contradiction between the official designation and the reality of teachers' compensation. By emphasizing the discrepancy between the teachers' qualifications and their actual pay, it seeks to challenge the legitimacy of the existing pay structure and portray teachers as undervalued and deserving of better compensation. The panellist pursues his argument at 14:14 time lapse that "*On a piece of paper, they have to be the highest paid. In reality, they have been mocked.*" By contrasting the idealized notion of teachers being the highest paid on paper with the reality of them being mocked, this statement employs a rhetorical strategy of highlighting the gap between expectations and actual treatment. It aims to generate a sense of injustice and rally support for the teachers' cause by portraying them as victims of disrespect and ridicule, which extends to the public. The panellist highlights the public perception of teachers when he declares that "*Teachers in Cameroon are treated so badly that even in beer parlours, you could hear people mock somebody as a teacher that you are giving teachers a round*" (14:31). This quote employs anecdotal evidence to illustrate the negative societal perception of teachers. By highlighting instances of mockery and disrespect toward teachers, it seeks to evoke sympathy and paint a picture of the widespread mistreatment faced by

teachers. This strategic manoeuvre aims to generate public empathy and support for improving teachers' working conditions.

In summary, these strategic manoeuvres aim to shape public opinion, generate sympathy, and rally support for the teachers' cause by highlighting the perceived injustices and challenging the existing power dynamics. The quotes from Afrique Media reveal several strategic manoeuvres employed in the discussion about the working conditions of teachers in Cameroon. The use of strong and emotive language, such as "deplorable," "horrible," and "downgrading," aims to evoke a strong negative emotional response from the audience, emphasizing the severity of the working conditions. Furthermore, framing teachers as "underdogs" positions them as victims of an unjust system, seeking empathy and support. The quotes also highlight the contradiction between the officially designated qualifications and the reality of teachers' compensation, challenging the legitimacy of the existing pay structure and portraying teachers as undervalued. By contrasting the idealized notion of teachers being highly paid on paper with the reality of them being mocked, the statements aim to generate a sense of injustice and rally support for their cause. Additionally, the anecdotal evidence of teachers being mocked even in social settings like beer parlours seeks to evoke sympathy and paint a picture of widespread mistreatment, strategically aiming to generate public empathy and support for improving teachers' working conditions.

## **5. Discussion**

The findings of this study shed light on the strategic manoeuvring techniques employed by different parties involved in the ongoing teachers' strike in Cameroon, within the context of private media coverage. The analysis conducted using the pragma-dialectical framework revealed the persuasive strategies, argumentative techniques, rhetorical devices, and discourse strategies utilised by panellists aligned with the government and those advocating for the teachers' demands. These findings have important implications for understanding the dynamics of strategic manoeuvring in media discourse and its role in shaping public opinion and social movements in Cameroon. One key observation from the analysis is the polarized nature of the discourses surrounding the teachers' strike. Panellists aligned with the government often employed persuasive strategies aimed at defending the government's response to the teachers' demands. These strategies included emphasizing the challenges faced by the government in meeting the demands, highlighting the potential negative consequences of fulfilling all the demands, and framing the teachers' demands as unreasonable or infeasible. On the other hand, panellists advocating for the teachers utilised persuasive techniques aimed at garnering support for their cause. These strategies involved emphasizing the importance of quality education, highlighting the difficult working conditions faced by teachers, and framing the government's response as inadequate or unjust.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed the use of various rhetorical devices by both parties. Panellists supporting the government often employed appeals to authority, using quotes from government officials or experts to bolster their arguments. They also utilised emotional appeals, appealing to the public's sense of stability, economic concerns, and national unity. Panellists advocating for the teachers, on the other hand, utilised personal anecdotes, stories of hardship faced by teachers, and appeals to fairness and justice. The comparison of persuasive strategies employed by panellists across different media outlets also provided valuable insights. It was observed that each media outlet had its own unique discursive strategies and styles of presenting the arguments. "Equinoxe Soir" from *Equinoxe Television*, for example, had a more confrontational approach, with panellists engaging in heated debates and direct challenges. "Debrief de l'ACTU" from *Canal2 International*, on the other hand, adopted a more moderated and balanced approach, providing equal airtime to both sides of the argument. The talk show on *Afrique Media* took a more narrative-driven approach, incorporating personal stories and interviews to present a comprehensive view of the situation. The dynamics of strategic manoeuvring within the context of the *OTS* movement in Cameroon highlight the complex interplay between media, public opinion, and social change. The private media outlets played a significant role in shaping public perception and influencing the outcomes of the teachers' strike. The persuasive strategies employed by panellists had the potential to sway public opinion in favour of one side or the other, thereby impacting the trajectory of the movement.

Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of strategic manoeuvring in private media coverage of social crises, using the *OTS* movement in Cameroon as a case study. The findings provide valuable insights for media practitioners, policy-makers, trade unions, and stakeholders in the education sector, offering opportunities for improved communication, dialogue, and resolution of conflicts. By recognizing the persuasive techniques employed by different parties, stakeholders can develop more nuanced strategies to address the concerns of teachers and promote constructive engagement in the future.

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study has examined the strategic manoeuvring employed by private media outlets in their coverage of the ongoing teachers' strike in Cameroon, within the framework of the *OTS* movement. Through the application of the pragma-dialectical perspective, the analysis has provided insights into the persuasive strategies, argumentative techniques, rhetorical devices, and discourse strategies utilised by panellists aligned with the government and those advocating for the teachers' demands. The findings of this study highlight the polarized nature of the discourses surrounding the teachers' strike, with panellists presenting contrasting viewpoints and employing various persuasive strategies to advance their positions. The government-aligned panellists

emphasised the challenges faced by the government in meeting the demands, while those supporting the teachers highlighted the importance of quality education and the difficult working conditions faced by teachers. Moreover, the analysis revealed the use of rhetorical devices such as appeals to authority, emotional appeals, personal anecdotes, and appeals to fairness and justice. These devices were employed by panellists to reinforce their arguments and appeal to the emotions and values of the audience. The comparison of persuasive strategies across different media outlets demonstrated the diverse approaches taken by each outlet in presenting the arguments. From confrontational debates to moderated discussions and narrative-driven storytelling, each outlet had its own unique style and discursive strategies. The study underscores the significant role of private media outlets in shaping public opinion and influencing the outcomes of social crises. The persuasive strategies employed by panellists had the potential to sway public opinion and impact the trajectory of the teachers' strike. Recognizing the dynamics of strategic manoeuvring in media coverage is crucial for stakeholders, including media practitioners, policy-makers, trade unions, and education sector representatives, as it provides insights into effective communication, dialogue, and conflict resolution.

In a nutshell, this research contributes to the understanding of strategic manoeuvring in private media coverage of social crises, using the *OTS* movement in Cameroon as a case study. The findings have implications for fostering constructive engagement, addressing the concerns of teachers, and promoting dialogue and resolution of conflicts in the education sector. By recognizing and analysing the persuasive techniques employed in media discourse, stakeholders can work towards more informed and effective communication strategies to navigate social crises and promote positive social change.

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