

Perceptions of Censorship on Taiwan's Popular Music in the Post-Martial Law Era

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore censorship on popular music in Taiwan and how the practices have influenced the consumption and production of music in the post-martial law period.

Design/methodology/approach – Through adopting grounded theory with snowball sampling and ethnographic methods, this paper will interview music audiences and musicians as well as analyze recent censorship cases to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Findings – Institutional and corporate self-censorship has a noteworthy influence on popular music in post-marital law Taiwan. Cross-strait relations still are a key tension that triggers censorship but the form has been shifting.

Originality/value – This study draws on both the complexity of censorship by case studies and the audience's perception of music in everyday life.

Keywords Music censorship, Taiwan, Popular Music, Martial Law, Cross-Straits Relations

Paper type Research paper

Music censorship is often considered as a discriminatory act that advocates or allows the control or banning of music (Nuzum, 2001). For recorded music, it can take place at several levels, including restrictions before publication, restrictions regarding specific audiences, and suppression based on claims of illegal distribution (Cloonan, 2004). Other than the state, music censorship can also be implemented by institutions such as record companies, distributors, or even the artists themselves on a worldwide scale (Nielsen and Krogh, 2017; Freemuse, 2018). Apart from banning particular songs, requested or voluntary revisions of music also constitute censorship. Self-censorship practiced by the artists — voluntarily withholding information — is complex and hard to detect. The motivations that lead to self-censorship practices could range from the need to avoid personal sanctions, to gaining personal rewards. It could also arise from a concern for the collective well-being of the ingroup (Bar-Tal, 2017).

Censorship of popular music in Taiwan has gone through various forms and stages. After World War II, the Kuomintang-led Republic of China government retreated to Taiwan, after the defeat of the civil war against the Communist Party of China, where it reinforced martial law from 1949 to 1987. The martial law had a significant impact on society as it prohibited free speech and publication as well as the formation of new political parties. At the time, music censorship was implemented, first, by the Taiwan Garrison Command, and then by the Government Information Office (GIO). Music censorship has continued even after the lifting of martial law, although its presence has transformed into practices of self or institutional censorship. The most common type of censorship in post-martial law Taiwan involves the market-based restriction of content, such as music not being broadcasted, or artists being asked to change the content.

Focusing on Mandarin popular music (Mandopop) in the post-martial law era, this article examines how music audiences and industry workers engage with music censorship that changes over time. To discover if, and how, music censorship has impacted on the audience's consumption and perception of music, this article employs a grounded theory approach, aiming to develop a theory grounded in systematically analyzed data¹ (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Firstly, snowball sampling and ethnographic methods are employed for the collection of data. Secondly, the examination of this data would help find out interrelated concepts. This, in turn, results in the construction and development of theory.

Drawing on different forms and cases of music censorship, the article will start by outlining a brief history of music censorship in Taiwan. Then, it will explore how audiences and musicians have engaged with these censorship practices during and after the lifting of martial law. Through the analysis of interviews, issues surrounding the impact of technology and transnational cultural flows will be highlighted; particular forms of music censorship in Taiwan that require additional theorization will be identified.

¹ Two sets of data will be analyzed: the first was collected for my research on music censorship on Taiwanese music in the PRC conducted in 2013, including two interviews with music industry workers and 31 interviews with music audience members; the second is from interviews conducted in 2017. Five in-depth interviews with informants who were born between 1965 and the 1980s, including one with a music producer, Jutoupi, who provided industry-derived insights. For both sets of data collection, an overt approach was taken in that the identity of the researcher was disclosed and explained to all participants. An information sheet and a consent sheet were given to each interviewee which highlights that they can withdraw from the study anytime. The researcher obtained full informed consent in written form from each interviewee prior to conducting their respective interviews. Some chose to remain anonymous.

Taiwan Under Martial Law, 1949-1987

While state censorship on music in Taiwan can be traced back to the Japanese colonial era, what was distinctive about cultural policy of the KMT government under martial law was its pursuit for a Chinese identity while aiming to “overcome the remains of Japanese colonial culture as well as to weaken Taiwanese local traditions” (Ho, 2007, p.467). In this process, music censorship was employed to construct a cultural authenticity. Songs in non-Mandarin local languages, such as Taiwanese-Hokkien or those considered to have “pro-Japan” sentiments were often banned. Later on, when the PRC went through the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the KMT framed its culture as “undamaged” by Communism and preserving an authentic “Chineseness”. These notions were promoted through nationalistic education alongside media control. At the time, Peking opera was promoted as the “national opera” (Guy, 2005), while Taiwanese opera (*Gezaixi*) had to be adapted into Mandarin language versions to be broadcast on television.

In 1973, after Article 41 was added to the Publication Law, the GIO not only acquired the power to revoke publications that committed or encouraged acts of treason but also formed a consultancy group and took over the work of the Taiwan Garrison Command (Jiang, 2015; Scheihagen, 2015).² This group, firstly, actively promoted “purifying songs”—songs provided a “healthy”, “educational” and “uplifting” image. Secondly, it listed guidelines with various attributes of songs that should be banned, including presenting “incorrect reactions to current time”, “against national strategies”, “mellow and sad”, “providing propaganda for the communist bandits” and so on (Jiang, 2015).

However, state censorship and the founding of the GIO's consultancy group has been described as “reactionary” by Guo, a former secretary in the audio products division (cited in Government Information Office, n.d.). He suggested that radio and television stations at the time found the standards for censorship unpredictable and ambiguous, which made it difficult for them to avoid fines. Therefore, the consultancy group aimed to respond to the industries. This comment reflects the complexity of music censorship, an arena in which negotiations take place,

² The Taiwan Garrison Command (1945-1992) had the authority to arrest political offenders and censor media autonomously according to the general guidelines provided by the KMT (Roy, 2003).

including between different government agencies, broadcast media, record labels, and musicians. The fear of the consequences of violating unwritten rules played a part in the development of the rules. Forms and channels of censorship vary, but the “fear of censorship” remains as a powerful catalyst.

Recollections of Music Censorship Under Martial Law

Our interviewees' recollections indicate a control of information under martial law and a growing understanding of the existence of censorship after 1987:

For the general audience, unless you try very hard to find information, otherwise, what opinions could we have about the songs we hadn't heard on the radio? It was because the DJs just do not play the songs. (Ken)³

Looking back on music censorship during the martial law period, there were particular themes that the interviewees reflected on the most: the use of languages other than Mandarin Chinese-*Guoyu*, literally meaning the national language – or songs that reflected any ideological connections to the PRC:

Martial law was lifted when I was 9. I knew later on that many songs in Taiyu (Taiwanese-Hokkien) were banned (...). I knew that the government promoted some popular songs for propaganda, such as “The Wound of History” after the Tiananmen incident. We knew the government was behind it. (Hank)⁴

Anti-communism and anti-independence were the two ideologies promoted by KMT to promote its nation-building agenda. The former was to defend against an external threat; the latter was to suppress any bottom-up localisation movement. Somehow, these two fundamentally different principles are perceived as similar taboos that walked hand-in-hand based on our interviewees' reflection on their sentiments at the time:

Back at the time, we were told the Democratic Progressive Party (DDP) supports Taiwanese independence, but somehow we felt they can be put in the same category as

³ Ken (pseudonym). Interview in Taipei by Chen, Yun-Siou, Translated by Lin, 18 January 2017.

⁴ Hank (pseudonym). Interview in Taipei by Chen, Yun-Siou, translated by Lin, 19 January 2017.

the Communist Party. They were all bad. [...] At the time, we were brainwashed by western music and Mandarin pop music, so when we first listened to something different, we did not know how to react. (Yeh⁵)

Similar narratives were also noticeable in an interview with the music producer, Jutoupi (Zhu Yuexin),⁶ musician and activist who was born in 1966 and considered as a major voice of musical dissent and who specialized in political and social satire (Guy, 2018). He remarked:

In my time studying in university, the two most sung songs were “Beautiful Island” and the “International Song”. We students at the time thought whatever was banned by the KMT was good. Why did we sing them? Mostly because they were banned.

Jutoupi's work, while witty, often straightforwardly criticized the ROC government and the KMT in his music, which was considered controversial even after 1987. His song “Republic of China in Taiwan” (1995) underlined the frictions between a Taiwanese and a ROC identity. He sings slowly to the 4/4 marching rhythm which is synchronized with a track rapping the same lyrics simultaneously:

One two three, to Taiwan, there is no Republic of China in Taiwan

One two three, to Taiwan, the Republic of China is like Taiwan

One two three, to Taiwan, the Republic of China is Taiwan

One two three, to Taiwan, the Republic of China in Taiwan.⁷

The Chineseness of the Republic of China was actively promoted and established as authentic in all cultural policies at the time. Music was also controlled according to this logic. While asking the interviewees to name the songs which they knew were banned, “International Song”, “Descendants of Dragon”, “A Full Cup of Bitter Wine” were often mentioned. Other than songs being banned, the interviewees also reflected on how the KMT's promotion of certain

⁵ Yeh, Chia-Hua. Interview in Taipei by Chen, Yun-Siou, translated by Lin, 17 January 2017.

⁶ Starting from releasing albums produced by the iconic indie record in Taiwan, Crystal Records (Ho, 2003), Jutoupi joined Rock Records and released the album *I Am An Idiot* in 1994, which was the first album for the Funny Rap series which was followed by two other albums. He often sings and raps in a mix of Mandarin with a Hoklo accent, Taiwanese-Hokkien, and occasionally Japanese and other languages.

⁷ 一 二 三 到台灣 中華民國沒台灣
一 二 三 到台灣 中華民國像台灣
一 二 三 到台灣 中華民國是台灣
一 二 三 到台灣 中華民國在台灣

types of music was noticeable given that “purifying” or patriotic songs were found in music textbooks. Songs like “National Anthem”, “National Flag Anthem”, “Father of the Nation Commemorates Song”, and “Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Song” were taught in schools.

As the experiences and influences of the music censorship of the martial law period can only be traced retrospectively, memories play a significant role in their reconstruction. Through memories, the interviewees made sense of both their collective and personal histories. These reflections highlight that what generated music censorship at the time was not just the divide and ideological conflict between the ROC and PRC regimes, but also a top-down national branding that sought to oppress the local and democratic movements.

Post-1987 Music Censorship

After gradual democratisation and the abolition of martial law, censorship decreased, and Taiwan's music industries grew dramatically from the 1970s through to the 1990s. A “Taiwanese democratic taste” (Ho, 2003, p.520) emerged; artistic expression with less political interference brought popular music from Taiwan to a broader audience base. After 1987, apart from Mandopop, other music styles in Taiwan emerged, including popular music in the Hakka and Taiwanese-Hokkien languages that produced a multiplicity of cultural values and sounds. In post-martial law Taiwan, popular music in Taiwanese- Hokkien has employed various musical elements and addressed a local identity as opposed to a Chinese one. Music acts such as Blacklist Workshop, Wubai & China Blue and Lim Giong introduced exciting new sounds into the music scene.

However, the process of loosening control is gradual. The lifting of martial law could be seen as the end of the state-motivated mechanism for music censorship, but the latter exists in different forms. Jutoupi has spoken of how radio stations still played a role in censorship:

There were no official nor systematic state censorship of music anymore. In 1994, my album *I Am An Idiot* was released. I [had] just entered the mainstream music scene. There were no written laws for censorship, however, when the record label sent my CD albums to the radio stations, including one to Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC), it was taped from the outside by someone before it went into their archive. [...] A friend

who worked in BCC told me about this. [...] I could not go on BCC shows to promote my music. There were no written rules but I just could not go. The record label always took me to the underground radio stations in central or southern Taiwan.

It highlights the difficulties of identifying censorship cases as well as a typology-driven theorisation of music censorship, which is intertwined and difficult to trace. The decision to tape the music could be made out of fear of state censorship or commercial loss. It could also be implemented by staff from different levels in the institution. Even in democracies, it is common that “the daily, market-informed operation of the music industry acts as forms of censorship” (Cloonan, 2003, p.14). Jutoupi also experienced his music being prohibited while being regarded as pirated. In an annual press conference designed to crack down on pirated music during the 1990s, his CD albums were crushed and destroyed by a bulldozer along with pirated albums. The power of both the industry and the state is exercised over the content as well as the materials of pirated and subversive music, which potentially prohibits the democratisation of the sound concerned.

In the discussion of how music has been consumed, our interviewees' involvement in music is not just an audio experience but also a material one. While radio stations were repeatedly mentioned in pre-1987 descriptions of finding new music, cassettes and CDs, MP3 and YouTube were mentioned during discussion of the post-martial law period while many of our audience interviewees remarked that CDs were too expensive.



Figure 1. Hank showed us his cassette collection.

Moving from the martial law period to the gradual democratization of Taiwan, the music industry is becoming more fragmented post-digitalization. More music choices are available to

audiences at lower prices, or even for free considering C2C music sharing or illegal downloading. The development of technologies made it possible to bypass the efforts of record companies and potentially the state. One crucial question is whether the growing democratization of music production and consumption that came with digitalization will lead to a lessening of the impact of various forms of censorship; Jutoupi pointed out this also came with the risk of artists leaving digital traces of their words, opinions and actions. The artists have developed a natural detector that whenever a controversial thing comes up in their writing.

What Jutoupi described was a type of censorship that has become more prevalent after 1987. As the Internet has given the audience more options, self and institutional censorship resulting from populist backlashes have also grown. Music censorship was predominantly top-down, centralised and led by state or corporates in pre-1987 Taiwan, but this changed substantially after the lifting of martial law. Indeed, populist backlashes could be the reason leading to music censorship.

Circulation and Censorship of Taiwanese Popular Music in China Post-1987

An extension of Tu Wei-Ming's proposed Cultural China' symbolic system (1991), Chua's concept of Pop Culture China (2001) provides us with a framework which indicates that pop culture products are circulated in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore while this exchange flow is not necessarily based on a shared socio-political culture, to begin with, but rather is influenced by a profitable market. Political or cultural identities can be fragmented, but pop culture can be shared. Taiwan's popular music exports to the rest of the Chinese-speaking world, especially the PRC, is evidenced not only in this circulation, and how it could lead to music censorship cases due to market-related priorities, which eventually has an impact on music production.

Taiwan's music, especially Mandopop, started to be influential among PRC audiences after the growth of Taiwan's music industry during the 1970s and 1980s (Moskowitz, 2010; de Kloet, 2010). Music was a powerful symbolic good which was being shipped into an opposing ideological system. Teresa Teng (1953-1995) was the singer who best exemplified such influence. As a musician who was an advocate of the ROC government born and raised in Taiwan, her music was banned by the PRC government. However, the underground distribution

of her music in the PRC was widespread (Lin, 2017). Moskowitz (2010) writes that pop music from Taiwan and Hong Kong – usually called *Gangtai* pop (de Kloet, 2005) – is scrutinised more thoroughly than domestic products because it is considered 'foreign' and must be licensed. He also uses the term “counter-invasion” to describe the popularity of Taiwan's music in the PRC.

In the face of globalisation, democratisation in Taiwan and the profitability of the PRC market, mainstream Taiwanese popular music has its own restraints. Such restraints originate with the music industry, which is intended to reach the masses. Thus, music that is critical of the PRC government or with explicit political statements may be excluded from the mainstream production market. Non-governmental institutions, such as record companies, Chinese publishers and the media have contributed to the mechanism of music censorship. Taiwanese music producer Ben,⁸ who has been working in both Taiwan and the PRC for more than 20 years, implied that mainstream music must be pre-examined by the company based on knowledge of an “audience's taste”. He mentioned a case in 2012 when a song had to be deleted from an album he produced for the release of Chinese import version in China while it stayed on the Taiwanese version. He said that fans in China can still access products through VPNs or other means; personally, he takes this lightly and instead sees it as a form of free publicity. This again emphasises the possibility that digitalisation might enhance the knowledge of censored content and the ability to bypass the censorship of consumers.

Although cases of censorship will be experienced – mostly by the PRC audience and Taiwanese musicians– the complex network that circulates popular music and information transnationally, de-territorially and immediately has drawn these markets closer than ever before. The growing importance of the PRC market is under constant negotiation, given the formation of this democratic taste (Ho, 2003). It could be argued that the censorship of Taiwan's music in the PRC could be one (post-1987) reason for the music industry modulating its product from the inside. The following section discusses three forms of censorship of Taiwan's popular music concerning the PRC market with case studies provided.

1. Direct bans on performances, sales, or radio broadcasts

⁸ Ben (pseudonym). Interview and translation by Lin, [voice call] 23 July 2013.

In 2000, A-Mei Chang sang the national anthem at the inauguration of President Chen Shui-bian, the first ROC president drawn from the DDP. Subsequently, she was banned from performing and selling records in China. Furthermore, radio stations in Mainland China stopped broadcasting her music. As a consequence, the Coca-Cola Company was forced to drop a multi-million-dollar advertising campaign in China that featured A-Mei on marketing posters (Guy, 2018).

2. Same album, different versions

In the Taiwanese rock band Mayday's second album *Viva Love* (2000), the title track was not included in the PRC "imported version"—potentially due to the explicit references to sex in the lyrics—which is different from the "original version" sold in Taiwan. The title track of Mayday's third album *People Life, Ocean Wild* (2001) was deleted as well. To obtain these tracks, fans were able to order albums from Taiwan or download MP3s; Pirated CDs usually include forbidden tracks too. After a change in publishing rights, *Viva Love* was re-released in 2009 with the title track intact. In 2012, Mayday also sang these songs during their concerts, underlining a lessening of restrictions.

3. An unofficial ban and a populist backlash

In recent years, some events were cancelled due to artists' political statements. In 2013, the Taiwanese singer Deserts Chang performed in Manchester, UK and received a ROC national flag on stage when a fan passed it to her. The young PRC audience complained immediately after. Later on, Mainland netizens protested against her behaviour and tried to start a boycott of her concerts in Beijing. Her three scheduled concerts were soon cancelled following this incident (BBC, 2013). In 2016, the Taiwanese singer Crowd Lu was "reported" by a pro-China entertainer Huang An for his post on social media showing that he supported the Sunflower Movement in 2014. Lu spoke to reporters afterwards and explained that many of his activities in the Mainland were put on hold and concerts cancelled due to "safety reasons" (SETN, 2016). This blurred line between bans and populist backlashes is becoming more common.

Lambe (2008) has defined censorship attitude as an outlook "about free expression" that reflects an individual's "willingness to endorse government restrictions on expression" (p.485). Interviews show that when censorship is known to particular acts' fan communities, this can

potentially strengthen support for free expression. A big Mayday fan from the PRC, Hsiao,⁹ carefully compares details of every song between the imported and original albums, and underlined how in live concerts the band replaces the term Xi Zang ('Tibet') in the lyrics with Xin Zang ('the heart') – the two terms sharing a similar pronunciation – while on the screen that projects all the lyrics for the audience to sing along. She attributed this to Tibet being a source of sensitivity for the PRC state:

As fans, we know all the small differences between the two versions. If you go on Weibo and see how the fans react, you'll see how we are unhappy about censorship. (...) We think it is ridiculous. Fans discuss the differences on the Internet, on Weibo. We know almost everything. These are the reasons why we will try group buying online or buying original albums while attending concerts. Sometimes during the tour, they bring CDs for sale.

Fans like Hsiao insist on appreciating the artists' original works; they seek out "authenticity" and view imported versions as compromised. Also, they believe that the censorship system devalues the music of their favourite artists, therefore, are willing to pay twice as much to purchase the imported versions (Taobao, 2013; Amazon, 2013). A market for the original albums from Taiwan have emerged over the years, but it has also aroused conflicts of interest between fans and publishers. This led to cases in which publishers reported group-buying websites as spam to prevent fans from purchasing original albums.¹⁰ Such actions have triggered fan anger.

The concept of Taiwan's Mandopop as a 'counter-invasion' in the PRC (Moskowitz, 2010) should be problematised. The increased demand from the PRC market has made musicians more vulnerable to censorship from within the industry. The study of the fans opens up another dimension as illustrated the observation repeatedly cited in much research on censorship, namely that 'all that is banned is desired' (Eickhof, 2016). Studying live music censorship cases as perceived by the community, although subtle, demonstrates how censored popular music from Taiwan in the PRC has indirectly shaped or reinforced outlooks about freedom of speech within a particular community. This provides an example of music which, without being

⁹ Hsiao (pseudonym). Interview conducted and transcribed by Lin, Liverpool, 15 October 2012.

¹⁰ Lynn. Interview by Lin, 15 July 2013.

explicitly political, has served as a vehicle for subversive interpretations and political statements.

Conclusions and Limitations

Music censorship in Taiwan has experienced the top-down approaches of the Japanese colonial and KMT governments (particularly under martial law) and has now entered a stage of an ambiguous and ubiquitous form of censorship. As Jutoupi and other interviewees pointed out, in the early years after the lifting of martial law, there were unwritten rules to follow; the mass media, including radio stations, still played a role in regulating what could be heard. At the same time, the audience's knowledge of what is censored and why increased as realised the existence of music censorship retrospectively and recollected times when references to Communism and Taiwan's independence in music were suppressed. In the words of our interviewee, Yeh, 'rumours about songs' can finally be revisited and investigated.

The current stage is a somewhat bewildering one, but there are a few implications which the study can suggest. Firstly, in post-marital law Taiwan, corporate self-censorship has assumed a more ambiguous form, whether it is practiced by artists or industry workers in specific institutions. This type of censorship is more difficult to identify because the media already functions as a filter/promoter of information based on aesthetic and editorial guidelines. Such interpolations and interference can disguise underlying political and commercial concerns. Nevertheless, some cases can still be traced as the Mayday case presented. This was made possible by information provided to particular audiences via internet technology. Thus, while the possibility of theorizing music censorship by identifying the exact agents within given processes is sometimes precluded, Bunn's (2015) 'new censorship theory' sheds some light on this issue. Bunn's theory perceives censorship as ubiquitous and diffuse and, therefore, emphasises that there are various forms of censorship. Moreover, the theory further articulates that while there will be "generative effects" (p.25), these ubiquitous censorship practices will create new types of discourses and new genres of speech. This was evident in the aforementioned censorship cases, whereby new discourses about the importance of freedom of expression and artistic autonomy are generated in the fan communities while the experience of censorship leads to an unintended development of political awareness. Fans paying much attention to

censored lyrics, then actively searching for the original versions, is a bottom-up reaction to censorship and an example of subversion. It is important not to underestimate audiences and musicians' subjectivities and how these can create a space for a subversive culture to emerge.

Secondly, cross-strait relations were and still are a critical tension that triggers corporate self-censorship. To develop our understanding of music censorship in Taiwan, it is crucial to take the transnational flows of music industries into consideration alongside examining the impact of the PRC market. Although whether censorship due to escalating tensions will become stricter is an important question, what forms of censorship might emerge and what impact they will bring are questions worthy of further exploration. From the martial law period to the post-1987 era, the target and forms of music censorship have been changing, from a top-down approach that censors any perceived communist sentiment to a mainly institutional one that caters to the PRC market. The South African musician John Clegg has said that "censorship is based on fear"; Hall (2018) also argues that regardless of forms, "music censorship requires an agent capable of affecting negative outcomes on a musician" (p. 2), whether that means imprisonment, loss of income or receiving negative comments online. To systematically examine censorship practices and their outcomes, this 'fear' must be probed. Future research on music censorship in Taiwan could explore how artists develop strategies to respond to such a fear, particularly concerning cross-strait relations. The binary labels of true-to oneself/compromised for musicians, as well as political/apolitical for the audience, are inapplicable when bearing in mind the complexity and interrelatedness of contemporary music censorship in Taiwan.

Lastly, censorship resulting from populist backlashes has also been growing. Ironically, while the Internet can make censored content accessible, most of these 'battles' also take place online. Indeed, music censorship research should keep on problematizing the material dimension of this process. Even when a subscribed streaming service as an application on the phone is no longer as tangible as cassettes, it does not mean that the questions about power and structure are no longer relevant. In fact, timely questions about the ownership over these technologies and platforms, surveillance, and data protection, should be pursued more than ever.

This research has two main limitations. Firstly, the interviews were mostly conducted in Taipei. Through snowball sampling, we were able to find informants who were more open to sharing their thoughts on the topic. They share certain similarities in terms of their work, education, understanding of popular music and current socioeconomic status. They liked music and, to

some extent, could afford to participate in musical activities. However, this inevitably leaves out people from different socioeconomic categories, regions, or ethnicities. Therefore, it is clear that this article cannot and does not aim to represent a common experience shared by all. What ethnographic methods have to offer in this study are details of music censorship as a social practice through which we may understand the complex contexts. Instead, this article provides an insider's view of a smaller group engaged with censorship parallel to their musical experience.

Secondly, although this article focuses on the audience's perception of music censorship and their response to it, in the early stages of research, the researchers attempted to find primary government data, as there is a lack of literature about this subject featuring cited sources while most existing commentary is journalistic. The time spent searching for official documents proved frustrating, and it was reported that officials had destroyed some old documents in the past few years.¹¹ How and why these critical historical texts were disposed of are crucial questions to require answering. Music censorship is an indicator of freedom of expression. **Future research must keep providing a clearer picture of music censorship under martial law while raising questions regarding the preservation of related documents. This should, in turn, be viewed as an approach to transitional justice, while keeping track of newly emerging forms and cases of censorship.**

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