

# Conventional Journalism Versus Citizen Journalism: between Confrontation and Collaboration, the Emergence of New Perspectives

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**Abstract:** This article continues the reflection begun in 2016 with the publication of the once entitled “Normativity and the Problem of Look in the Emergence of Citizen Journalism”. In this publication, citizen journalism is understood as journalism practiced on the Internet, by the public of conventional media (the readership, the audience, or the viewers). On a theoretical level, the emergence of such a practice can be likened to a kind of revolution, in which the public invests the strong positions occupied, until then, by conventional journalists.

As revealing the dysfunction of a system (the media information system), the intrusion of Internet users seemed to sound the death knell for an established profession, that of conventional journalism. However, if revolutions aim to overthrow the established order, they often fail or, sometimes, are co-opted by the contested power. Talking about the “citizen journalism revolution”, what happened to conventional journalism taken as an establish power? This appears to be the central question to which we propose to provide an answer in this article. Drawing inspiration from the theory of revolutions, we assume that, far from overthrowing conventional journalism, citizen journalism has rather opened new perspectives for it.

From a methodological point of view, we returned to the corpus of 60 reactions of African Internet users to twelve articles from the French press published on Yahoo in March 2014, which were used to analyze the first work carried out in 2016. The newspapers selected on this occasion were: *Le NouvelObservateur*, *Le Point* and *L'Express*. The subject dealt with was that of the war in Syria. To these 60 reactions we have added 60 others, published by African Internet users. Contrary to the principle of the first draft, we have drawn, in series of 12 online articles, addressing the Russian-Ukrainian war, at the rate of five first reactions per article. The final corpus thus constituted is 120 reactions.

As main results, the analysis of these reactions allowed us to confirm that: “like the established powers seeking, most often, to recover the revolutionary movements, conventional journalism, through the framing of citizen journalism and by its deployment in the Net which is the liberal space of expression of the citizen journalism, found the new methods of expression and diffusion, allowing him to find a new breath”.

**Keywords:** Citizen journalism, conventional journalism, revolution, social networks, social media, Internet, audiences.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of *citizen journalism* as we heard in the work carried out in 2016 (Messanga Obama, 2016 Op. cit.) is journalism practiced particularly on the Internet by the public (the readership, the audience, or the viewers) of the conventional media. We maintain the exclusion of this field, the reactions of Internet users to journalistic articles considered as feedback to these articles. Indeed, the reactions of the public are specific and relate, not to the facts, but to the relation which is made of them. We will take *citizen journalism* in the strict aspect of writing press articles, blogs and other site animations that are part of permanence and regularity. In this sense, a blog hosted by a journalist will be considered as a new modality of conventional journalism, because of its tendency to respect professional standards. Indeed, what makes “journalism” (conventional journalism) on the Internet is the permanence in the activity and the tendency to respect professional standards. However, a blog run by a non-journalist will be part of citizen journalism

Compared to the classic Shannonian schema of information, *citizen journalism* can be assimilated to a kind of revolution, a seizure of power by the base, in which the public-receivers invest the strong positions occupied until then by the conventional journalist-transmitters. If, in the previous work (Op. cit.), we tried to show what explains why the "public-citizens" decide to upset the professional order, starting from their position as receivers to assume the status of transmitters, the concern in this article is to understand what happens to conventional journalism after more than a decade of confrontation with *citizen journalism*. Such appears the question to which we propose to find answers in this article. As a working hypothesis, we retain that, far from overturning classic journalism, citizen journalism has opened up new perspectives for it.

From the theoretical point of view, we will keep our position on the theories of revolutions. These postulate that revolutions draw their resources from the accumulation of dissatisfaction with the established order. *Citizen journalism* being considered as another form of journalism, an alter-journalism, we will opt for the concept of "conventional journalism" to designate the classic and ancient activity rather than that of "professional journalism". The concept of "conventional journalism", on the one hand, makes it possible to underline the normative and conventional character of journalism as it has been practiced up to now and, on the other hand, avoids the debate on professionalism, *citizen journalism* posing as an emerging profession. Moreover, this concept highlights more clearly the unconventional nature of *citizen journalism*.

The object of study here is no longer the emergence of citizen journalism as in the 2016 article, but the methods of resistance of conventional journalism. In this sense, we will only very superficially address questions relating to its strengths and shortcomings, as much as we will not be interested in its operation and even less in its effects on the public. However, more than a decade after its emergence, and in line with our grounding in explanatory theories of revolutions, we will examine the reaction of conventional journalism. This is the main contribution of this publication, compared to the first version. Returning to the logic of revolutions, an article entitled "Les Révolutions", published in French by Sciences Po Toulouse affirms that, despite the difference in stakes and origins, there are three main points in common between different types of revolutions. These commonalities are as follows: situations of injustice (specific rules that constrain freedom, for example); the development of a new point of view and the triggers that lead to a reaction (the people, the State, the individuals, etc.). We will first examine how conventional journalism reacts to these three points. We will then analyze his "survival reactions".

From a methodological point of view, this article extending the reflection started in 2016, we will keep the qualitative logic of the analysis of a synthetic corpus composed of 60 reactions to twelve articles from the French press dealing with the war in Syria, published on Yahoo in March 2014. The Newspapers studied are : *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Le point*, *L'Express*. The choice of these newspapers is based on their large audience and the recurrence of their publications on Yahoo. To these 60 reactions, we have added 60 other reactions from African Internet users to 12 articles published on Phoenix, addressing the Russian-Ukrainian war in September 2022. Contrary to the principle of the first version, we obtained these last 60 reactions by pulling, in series, right and five first reactions per article. The final corpus of 120 reactions, thus constituted, allowed us to analyze the dynamics operated in conventional journalism between 2016 and 2022. We will complete our introductory remarks by asking ourselves about the future of conventional journalism in this revolutionary context.

## **2. SOME REMINDERS ON THE ELEMENTS OF CONFRONTATION**

The Sciences Po Toulouse article identifies, as triggers of revolutions: the State, the people (individuals, etc.) dissatisfaction. Related to the problem of media information, it is possible to identify these different categories. Indeed, the media system is deployed on audiences assimilated to peoples over which reign both a systemic power of the profession and state powers (the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary). The normative system that governs the functioning of the media is similar to the political system that governs a state. It is vested with powers: legislative (setting of professional standards), judicial (judgment of professional offences) and executive (diluted), responsible for the running of the profession. Because journalism is a social activity, it is also part of the general functioning of state politics. As such, it finds itself under the dual supervision of professional associations and state institutions. It should be noted that nuances are perceptible

between democratic states and alternative systems. Because professional standards are recognized by the profession, they are binding on the media, understood here as the organs of expression of journalism. In accordance with the theory of revolutions, it is this normative power, deemed iniquitous by dissatisfied publics, which is contested by publics who then attempt to overthrow it.

In this system, media audiences act as peoples, while opinion leaders (bloggers, influencers, and other stars) can, in the case of the current analysis, take on the status of individuals. It is not a question here of limiting the analysis to the scale of a medium and of circumscribing the idea of “people” only to the audiences of the latter. The idea of “people” borrowed from the revolutionary model corresponds to all the audiences of all media as actors in the same system of power (media power).

### **2.1. Difficulties Relating to the Nature of the Facts**

Information as a product of journalism derives from facts, understood as phenomena within the natural and social environments. According to Jürgen Habermas, the fact is “the state of things happening”. One could thus say that everything in life can be taken as a fact. As we noted, in an article published in 2017, because conventional journalism consists in reporting the facts, it comes up against a serious difficulty which is that of the innumerable nature of the latter. Moreover, the facts are fleeting, that is to say, that once they occur, they disappear. Facts are also composite, that is to say, they are composed of multiple sub-facts, themselves also called “facts” or “information”. The question of dissatisfaction, raised in relation to conventional journalism, in our hypothesis arises both quantitatively, in relation to the selection of the constituent facts of the news (where do they come from and how are they taken?) and qualitatively, in relation to the processing (methods and restitution) and dissemination of the information collected. These two major axes appear to be those that are likely to more easily reveal the main sources of discord between conventional journalism and “rebellious publics” constituted as citizen journalists.

The development of the Internet appears as this opaque space in the eyes of state power, like the maquis or populous neighborhoods, in relation to political revolutions. It is a space for the emergence and structuring of the dissidence of *citizen journalism*. The arrival of this space is the main trigger of the revolution. Indeed, the many possibilities offered to individuals as Internet users, to obtain information and disseminate information, paved the way for *citizen journalism* and later for social networks and other blogs. In this (opaque) space, individuals (bloggers, influencers, etc.) among these “internet-guerrillas”, construct dissident discourses, which the article in the journal *Sciences Po Toulouse* (Op. cit.), means “a new point of view”.

In reference to the theories of revolutions, conventional journalism is facing a real revolution, which has let emerge a new information and communication system that tries to free itself from the standards and constraints of the profession. However, as the observation of revolutions reveals, the established (political) order cannot be overthrown without a fight. In this regard, conventional journalism seems to have been caught unawares, unarmed, in its defense. Indeed, faced with the many criticisms of the selection of facts, conventional journalism has not brought any improvement. To understand the conflict between conventional journalism and its audiences, it is necessary to revisit some points of this discord.

### **2.2. Difficulties Relating to the Media Agenda**

The constructivist approach to which we subscribe, moreover, makes it possible to better understand the revolution of “citizen journalism” from the activity of conventional journalism. If we consider like Jürgen Habermas (Op. cit.) that the fact is “the state of things that happen”, it becomes logical to note that lots of things happen in life to the point that we can say that “all is done”. With regard to the selection, it should be noted, a priori, that any fact is likely to be the subject of media treatment. However, in their activity, journalists have limited time (the duration of an audiovisual program) and space (the page in written form or on a computer or television screen). To manage these constraints of time and space, faced with the plurality of facts, they must make choices. However, in principle, any choice can lend itself to controversy and become a subject of dissatisfaction. Indeed, the analysis of the reactions of Internet users in our corpus shows that the “unchosen” facts are the basis of 40% of public dissatisfaction (39.6% in relation to the war in Syria and 40.5% by relation to the war in Ukraine).

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict is developing while old foci such as Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and even that of Palestine are not yet extinguished and Internet users are constantly drawing parallels. With regard more specifically to African Internet users, they wonder why the media to which they are most exposed (Western media) favor the conflict in Ukraine to the detriment of those taking place on their continent (Sudan, Ethiopia, DRC, Cameroon, etc.). Observing the reactions of African Internet users to the war in Ukraine more generally disputes the choice of facts by the Western media. Indeed, the majority, i.e. 73.7% of those who contest the treatment of the war in Ukraine in relation to African problems, also condemn the silence of the Western media in the face of the various popular demonstrations (Bulgaria (April 2022) France, Italy ( May 22, 2022) Germany (April 18, 2022), Great Britain) against military support for Ukraine or against sanctions against Russia (Austria September 11, 2022), Czech Republic (September 28, 2022), Great Britain beginning of October 2022 etc. These Internet users draw a parallel between, on the one hand, the geopolitical action of the Western bloc (Europe and the United States) and, on the other hand, the choices of the facts by their media.

This reveals the whole problem of the management of the abundance of facts by the media. A problem that has prompted professionals in the field to establish a number of criteria aimed at reducing public dissatisfaction and giving an objective character to the selection of facts. (See Messanga Obama 2009). These include novelty (unusual nature of the fact); news (the choice of the most recent events); geographical and socio-emotional proximity, controversy (events marked by controversy); notoriety (facts relating to the life or activity of well-known personalities); timeliness (the appropriateness or relevance of a fact to the context); the impact (number of people concerned). It appeared to us, in this first work, that the choice of subjects treated in the conventional press remains one of the main causes of public dissatisfaction. This observation is confirmed with the analysis of the new corpus. Indeed, each of the articles at the base of the reactions analyzed, both in the old and in the new corpus, is open to debate.

The selection of facts indirectly poses the problem of the media agenda. Maxwell Mc Combs and Donald Shaw, in their theory of agenda setting, reveal that by putting a certain amount of information on the agenda ("the agenda"), the media dictate to the public what they want to do. must think, even if it is true that they do not always manage to impose on the latter what to think of them. The freedom of judgment that is reflected in the reactions of Internet users analyzed corroborates this agenda setting formula.

It already appeared, through the first corpus of our study, that, in the relation of the constituent facts of the Syrian crisis, the agenda of the media studied did not coincide with the expectations of the protesting Internet users. Indeed, the Syrian crisis is breaking out in a troubled global and regional climate. The impossibility of the Western media (the most listened to in Africa) to satisfy the various expectations, opens the way to the problematization of their agenda, by the dissatisfied public, the latter not always explaining the withdrawal of the agenda, the concerns about their environment. This problem was accentuated, later, with the Russian-Ukrainian war. More specifically, African Internet users believe that because of this war, conflicts and health problems in Africa are forgotten. The problem raised by African Internet users is not, however, specific to Western media. The Russian-Ukrainian war has brought to light the same recriminations of Western audiences with regard to the information delivered by the Russian media and those of the countries which support Russia. It is in this logic that, from the first days of the conflict, the Russian media were banned in Western Europe (Russia will do the same as a retaliatory measure). The question of the agenda takes on greater importance with agency journalism, this common source, which has become the true prescriber of the agenda of all media. Indeed, the main transnational media, despite the wide network of correspondents at their disposal, draw their waters from the sources of the press agencies. The result is a sort of unique media agenda that contributes to reinforcing the feeling of dissatisfaction among the public.

It is revealed here that for the public, the media are more generally the expression of the political powers that govern them. The reality could be more complex, the powers which exert a constraint on the media being more diverse and often more discreet (Powers, social powers, religious powers, economic powers, cultural powers, etc.). We find here all the relevance of the theory of selective exposure developed by Paul Lazarsfeld and alii., according to which, people expose themselves to the media based on their prior opinions.



The difficulties noted above give rise to the emergence of discordant voices. These discrepancies feed into the attic of the gaze (The editorial line) and that of conventional constraints. The selection of facts and their programming in the media broadcast are therefore not the only aspects that pose problems in the media narrative, the treatment, that is to say, the way in which journalists proceed to construct these narratives, is also an important controversial subject.

### **3. DIFFICULTIES RELATING TO THE PROCESSING OF THE FACTS**

In their activity, journalists face a set of multifaceted constraints tending to influence their stories. While some are external (political, cultural environment, etc.), others, on the other hand, are more internal and relate to the particular way in which the profession perceives the phenomena it reports on.

#### **3.1. Difficulties Relating to the Universe of Environmental Constraints**

We have emphasized that the problem of journalism is woven into the relationship between the (represented) reality that journalists produce through their articles and the (factual) reality of reference (Messanga Obama, 2017, Op. cit.). An intellectual tendency considers journalistic productions (press articles, radio and television programs) as a reflection of factual reality. Analyzes from this perspective tend to assess the conformity or, conversely, the gap between the basic facts and the accounts produced by journalists. In this perspective, stories (articles) deemed "not in conformity with factual reality" will be accused of false (Fake news) or lies. It follows that the media that constitute the framework for the publication of journalistic productions will be classified either as "truthful media" or as "liar media". This Manichean perspective is at the root of the problem posed by the role of journalists in society.

It is important to note here that journalism (the media) is generally called the fourth estate. This name suggests that there are three others, placed well before, and therefore above him. Indeed, this designation classifies conventional journalism after the powers: executive, legislative and judicial which we can group under the concept of "political powers". However, faced with the first three, journalism generally poses as a counter-power. Such opposition makes him a target of others and reduces his room for maneuver. Indeed, it is the first three powers that set its framework of exercise and determine the consequences in the event of crossing the limits. Respect for framing or normality therefore places conventional journalism in an environment of political constraints.

Beyond political constraints, journalism also operates under economic constraints. These are more discreet but just as heavy as the political constraints. An adage says: "Who pays owns", to say that the tone of the media (its editorial line is set by the economic and financial powers. The weight of advertising in the media economy is well known today. Indeed, beyond official contracts, advertisers, who are the main sources of funding for the media, impose hidden conditions on them, aimed at influencing the content in their favour. In the same vein, the media benefit from various subsidies. The sources of these subsidies exercise the same type of constraints as advertisers. The articles thus "manipulated" end up creating a break with the expectations of the public and arousing reactions aimed at "rebalancing" the information. Citizen journalism proceeds from this type of reaction.

In this article (Messanga Obama, 2017, Op. cit.) we have shown that despite the proclamation of the sanctity of facts, journalism, by its standards and principles, is an activity of systematic desacralization of facts and therefore a discursive construction which must be analyzed as such. Indeed, taking into account, on the one hand, the complex nature of media facts and, on the other hand, the editorial subjectivity of the apprehension of the phenomena of which journalists (or the media) speak, bring to light, an even more complex reality of journalism. It is in this sense that Jean-Pierre Esquenazi considers it an error to postulate that "the media could only disguise or distort the facts they report". Rather, it highlights an important fact: the discursive nature of any media product. EliséoVéron goes further when he says: "Social events are not objects that would all be found somewhere in reality and whose properties and avatars would be known to us after the fact with more or less fidelity. They exist only insofar as these media shape them" (1981, 7-8). The concept of event used by EliséoVéron here is synonymous with "fact", understood as a phenomenon. In practice and beyond the principles, conventional journalism is faced with various constraints that push it to constantly violate its ethical principles and to aggravate the conflict with its audiences.

### **3.2. The Problem of Gaze**

The look is what, in the profession, we designate by the editorial line. An event is empirically perceived through the senses. In the operation of reconstruction carried out by journalistic discourse, particular importance is given to hearing and sight. Only, a fact is not seen in the same way everywhere, by everyone, and with the same acuity. The object seen depends on the point from which it is seen, and we then speak of a point of view (single position from which we see). The viewpoint is not simply a geographical point; it is also a mental posture or better, the unique cultural device of the one who sees.

The notion of point of view poses a double problem. On the one hand, it highlights the impossibility, for an observer (including the journalist), to fully perceive a fact. In journalism this difficulty is circumvented by the choice of an angle, that is to say, an aspect of the problem. However, by speaking only of one aspect, the journalistic account gives the impression of speaking of the totality of the fact. Even without a stated intention, such an operation is manipulative. The gaze is both physical and cultural. It follows that the fact perceived, and the relation made of it, are linked to subjectivity to all that the observer has that is personal in relation to the context and his culture). On the other hand, the observer of the journalistic story also has his own subjectivity, and this can coincide or contradict that of the journalist-editor. Indeed, because the "sight" or the perception of objects, depends on the subjectivity of the viewer, the discourse on the facts is often problematic, the cultural glasses of the journalist not always corresponding with those of all its audiences. The analysis of our corpus shows that the dissatisfaction most strongly expressed by Internet users stems from the difference in perception between the stories read and their own. These differences appear as a major aspect of the "revolutionary" reaction of Internet users.

The cultural constraints which relate to all the extra-professional considerations, linked to the journalist's social background and with which he exercises, also have an influence on the journalist's activity. This may be the ethnic, professional, religious or political group. Although the principle of neutrality enacted by the profession tends to avoid it, the perception of the facts in practice, what professionals will call "the angle of approach", is very often marked by cultural influence. The angle of approach reflects the ways of thinking, feeling and acting of the group. It is quite easy to unseal how, regularly, journalists find themselves culturally implicated by certain media events. An empirical observation of the reports on the one hand of the European media (*EuronewsFrance24*) and of RT on the other hand on the Russian-Ukrainian war, reveals this phenomenon wonderfully. While the first two, like Western politicians hammer the term "invasion of Ukraine", RT avoids it and speaks in accordance with the preferred term of the Russian authorities of "special operations of the Russian army in Ukraine". The same is true of the facts related in one camp as in the other. It shows "different wars" to say different representations of the same war. The report, made in such a context, necessarily arouses reactions of disapproval from the public, in one case as in the other, and gives way to citizen journalism and, by extension, to social networks and blogs.

It should be noted that, the news production process associates journalists and the public on the basis of shared representations and values. In this process, journalists seek to determine the form of these values and representations. They therefore pose as opinion leaders, a role which gives them a great responsibility with regard to peace and social harmony. The question of the responsibility of journalists thus arises on an ethical level and is operationalized in the profession by the concept of ethics. If it is true that Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and William N. Mc Phee (Op. cit.) relativize the influence of the media by asserting that most people have their opinions and only expose themselves to media that correspond to their previous opinions, they nevertheless recognize that this influence exists, even if it is weak and relative. Indeed, as we noted above, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, in their theory of agenda-setting, highlight the influence of the media on audiences through the prescription in their agenda of this to what audiences should think. Moreover, it is recognized that the redundancy of media messages has a certain influence on opinions. This question of influence puts conventional journalism in the sphere of influence.

### **4. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW POINT OF VIEW**

The reactions of internet users protesting media stories reveal the contradictory perceptions of the press articles analysed. They carry what we have considered to be a new discourse in the theory of revolutions. It is this new discourse that is carried by citizen journalism through social networks and

social media, even if it is not formally structured there. While it is true that the concepts of "social networks" and "social media" are often used as synonyms, we will try to keep in mind a nuance relating to their functionality, in one case as in the other. In this vein, a social network will designate a website whose primary purpose is to connect users with each other, whereas under the concept of social media, we will bring together a heterogeneous set of websites and web applications intended to disseminate information. In this last category, we include blogs, discussion forums and wikis, understood as "Collaborative websites, in the development of which visitors can participate by writing web pages and creating links, and whose permanence is based on the identification of authors, the archiving of versions and the tracking of changes." We will thus distinguish three groups of social media:

- Social media broadcast or publication

They generally reach a large community of readers and include blogs and participatory sites such as wikis.

- Social media sharing or networking.

Their purpose is to offer content intended to be shared by a given community or by social networks. The desire of Internet users who connect to it is to interact with their circles of acquaintances based on personal, professional or community objectives.

- Social discussion media include discussion forums and instant messaging in their ranks. Conversations are generally organized around personal affinities or for professional purposes.

The new revolutionary discourse of Internet users comes in terms of contestation and parallels between the subjects of the media agenda and those hoped for but not broadcast. We have noted above that dissatisfaction due to the selection of facts, as well as the difference in points of view, can explain the "revolutionary" reaction of Internet users, and explain the emergence of citizen journalism and its development through social networks and social media. Indeed, in our initial corpus, the reactions of Internet users draw parallels between the war in Syria and those that preceded it in Iraq and Libya to establish a "complicity" between the "Western media" and the policies of these countries. Protesting Internet users denounce the fact that only the point of view of the Syrian rebels was reported and not that of the Syrian authorities in place. The same remarks are made about the reports of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Parallels are thus drawn in media discourse (Western press) between the wars in Iraq, Libya and Syria on the one hand and that between Russia and Ukraine on the other. The Western media, for these Internet users, being once again considered as the spokespersons of their governments. The criticisms, formulated on the treatment of these events, added to that which stipulates that, certain phenomena worthy of interest, for Africans, are regularly hidden, can be considered as a new discourse.

This discourse is one that argues that, despite the norms, conventional journalism, in its practice, does not depart from ideology. This observation, made in the political field, can extend to the cultural and religious fields. Here we find the whole controversy over journalism in its power relations, between politics, economics, culture and religion. In the article entitled Truth and Lie in the Media: Analysis of Principles and Practices of Journalism Faced with the Postulate of Sacredness of Facts, we showed that, facts, at least as they appear from media accounts, are a construction. As this comes under the blinkers of each media, we also understand that, by the same token, we can have divergent perceptions. As much as such diversity opens up possibilities of meeting the support of certain audiences, it also encounters the disapproval of many others. Conventional journalism ultimately finds itself at an impasse.

However, if in politics the revolution is the exclusive fact of the governed classes, in the field of information, the situation is quite complex. Indeed, although considered as a power (the fourth), conventional journalism is in reality a power in the hands of the powers, a stake for the latter. However, it often happens that he escapes from time to time from some of these "guardians" to the point of becoming a real adversary. US President Donald Trump, by opting for communication via social networks (Twitter), is the first to make this phenomenon more visible when he was in full exercise of executive power (the first among the others). Like other average Internet users, the

American president found that the American press during his mandate was not objective towards him. It will be followed by others around the world, giving some notoriety to social media and social networks. However, based on the principle of notoriety, political leaders are sources of information for journalists. Such a deployment of political actors to social networks pushes journalism to anchor itself to this new niche. There has thus appeared a shift in journalism from traditional niches (print media, radio, television) to social networks, which were initially considered as a space for non-journalism, a source of non-credible information.

## **5. THE REACTIONS OF CONVENTIONAL JOURNALISM**

As in a political revolution, the intrusion of publics into the role of editors seemed to sound the death knell for conventional journalism. However, more than a decade after the emergence of citizen journalism, the profession remains alive. It should be noted that the problem of journalism is to report on social reality, in a manner consistent with the values and representations common to the different audiences, without offending the multiple and divergent sensibilities of the interpretative communities of the latter. To this end, Jean-Pierre Esquenazi affirms:

*“...but the exercise of this mission is not easy. One can even say that any journalist, as soon as he begins to work, immediately finds himself in a difficult position. It must indeed account for all sorts of differences and complications, with a single voice. For example, it explains both the demands of the strikers and the impossibility of the employers to satisfy them”* (Op. cit., p.14).

In its “revolution”, citizen journalism has not achieved this ambition either. Tom Grubisich, in *The Basics of Journalism: Real Content*, quoted in Wikipedia, says that many articles on these sites lack quality and content, despite the improvements noted. This is the point of view of conventional journalism professionals. However, it is precisely the practice of the latter that is called into question by dissatisfied audiences. Further, the oratorical art which consists in reporting all kinds of differences, in a monotone voice, cannot be naturally distributed to so many individuals as those recognized under the designation of journalists, even less to a multitude of others with varied profiles, now taking on the status of citizen journalists, bloggers or simply internet users. To achieve this, a good mastery of theoretical principles (the science) and know-how (the techniques) is necessary. Here arises the problem of training. Indeed, only learning allows such a distribution. Training in conventional journalism therefore appears to be the key to the longevity of this profession. Indeed, the training aims to provide learners with the principles and methodological tools that make it possible to overcome the difficulty of exercising the profession.

Tom Grubisich notes that many articles on citizen journalism sites are supervised by conventional journalists. Returning to the light of the theories of revolutions, such a framework can be perceived as a way of recovering the revolution by the established conventional powers. Indeed, by introducing into the liberal practices of citizen journalism, the problematic standards of conventional journalism, the professionals who supervise revolutionary Internet users communicate to them the contested principles. Indeed, if the revolution consists in the overthrow of the established power system, the latter can be brought either to oppose, in a frontal way, the movement in a counter-revolution, or to recover the movement and survive by transforming it. The supervision of Internet users by conventional journalists makes them partners and no longer adversaries.

However, if training is necessary for the exercise of the profession of journalist, it nevertheless constitutes a stumbling block with certain audiences due to a unique formatting of its practice. Indeed, although training tends to solve the qualitative problem of information, it contributes, by setting standards in this liberal space, to leaving unsatisfied the question of the quantity and perceptual diversity of reality. Such dissatisfaction introduces the same recriminations in social networks and blogs. As we noted above, following former US President Donald Trump, many political actors are increasingly opting to communicate via social networks, including *Twitter*, *Instagram*, etc. The latter appear on the one hand, as methods of exercising an activity that can make available to the public, heaps of information that conventional journalism cannot or does not want to disseminate. On the other hand, blogs and social networks appear to Internet users as sources of information that are both alternative and complementary. Consulting both types, contributes to the avoidance of Fake News.



If the use of blogs and social networks by the public appears as a way of circumventing the traditional information disseminated by the media, it happens that conventional journalists use them as sources of information, mainly, when the facts concern notoriety (Blogs of politicians or stars). By tapping into blogs and social networks, conventional journalism is breathing new life. Based on this model, conventional journalism, basing itself on the argument of the lack of quality and content and supported by the regulatory powers (political powers), tries to regain control over a movement which, like a cancer, is spreads after surgery.

Citizen journalism breaks with the training requirement. This observation tends to underline the importance of training in journalistic work. Other research on citizen journalism shows that most citizen journalism sites are staffed by mainstream journalists. It appears here that journalism as a profession cannot be improvised; prior training is required.

The training of journalists goes beyond the technical aspect of the profession. It also affects ethics, that is to say, the moral aspect of the profession. We have seen that; the job of journalists is to publish the facts of society. Some of these facts lie at the center of divergent interests. Professional ethics require journalists to be treated in a balanced way, which neither harms nor favors any party. It is not simply a question of the concern to reconcile the different positions but of the moral and justice problem, which postulates the equality of all before a judgment. The training therefore offers journalists not only the technical tools but also a line of moral demarcation which makes them the knife on which the balance of the social balance rests.

On the other hand, training makes it possible to standardize the practice of the profession in the face of the multiculturalism that characterizes the world. Such formatting, however, does not fail to create other problems, because of the standardization and normality it creates, as opposed to the perceptual diversity of the audiences exposed to journalistic productions. By delimiting space, the norm restricts it and arouses, contradictorily, the desire to violate it (cf. the biblical myth of the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden). A look at the comments of Internet users, at the articles of conventional journalism relating to the war in Ukraine, reveals not only a tendency to contradict the aspects mentioned above, but also, a clear desire to break the norms of the current world order. The different points of diffraction here relate, not only to the choice of facts and the points of view (angles of approach) of their treatment, but also to the supra-context which is that of the world order. Also caught in the trap of cultural influence, audiences submit journalistic accounts to their own grids. In such a context, the slightest contradictory meaning is dramatized to become a subject of rebellion. Citizen journalism, initially and social networks later, stem from this approach.

Far from creating a new less problematic and more consensual mode of dissemination, the intervention of Internet users, both in the context of alter-journalism (citizen journalism), and in social networks and blogs, has simply allowed the emergence of a plurality of possibilities for disseminating information. Conventional journalism, in seeking to accompany these Internet-dissidents, has found possibilities for a transformation. It is in this sense that it disseminates conventional content online (online media) and is deployed in the blogs of journalists who themselves are becoming kinds of media that could be called individual media. However, by doing so and thanks to the lack of control of cybernetic space, conventional journalism seems to lose more and more of its qualities (lack of mastery: writing techniques, language of expression, principles of neutrality, etc.). Indeed, an overview of the articles published by certain online newspapers or in certain blogs run by journalists, relating to the Russian-Ukrainian war, easily reveals language errors, failure to respect the hierarchy of information and above all an abundant use of qualifying adjectives, indicating a clear position (absence of neutrality) in the reporting of facts. It turns out here that what conventional journalism gains, in terms of possibilities of expression, and therefore of survival, it loses in quality.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Compared to the Shannonian schema of information, we considered citizen journalism as a kind of revolution, that is to say, a seizure of power in which the public-receivers invest the strong positions occupied until then by the conventional journalists-transmitters. If in the previous article (Messanga Obama, 2016, Op. cit.) we tried to show the conditions and modalities of the emergence of this revolution, the concern in this article was to understand what happens to conventional journalism, after more than a decade of confrontation with citizen journalism. Our working hypothesis postulated that, far from overturning classic journalism, citizen journalism has opened up new perspectives for it.

To verify our hypothesis, we examined 120 reactions from African Internet users, relating to 24 press articles published online and relating to the war in Syria for the first 60 and to the war in Ukraine for the other 60. In the light of the theories of the revolutions, it appeared to us that, conventional journalism through the framework of citizen journalism and by its deployment in the spaces marked out by Internet users-dissidents on the Net which is the liberal space of expression, has found new forms of expression and dissemination, allowing it to find new life. This observation reveals, however, that while conventional journalism has gained in terms of possibilities of expression and therefore of survival, it is beginning to lose in quality. Indeed, even a cursory reading of the articles published by certain online newspapers and certain blogs run by journalists, relating to the Russian-Ukrainian war, easily reveals language errors, failure to respect the hierarchy of information and an absence of neutrality resulting in an abundant use of qualifying adjectives, indicating a position taken in the relation of facts.

These various observations lead us to conclude that, far from overthrowing conventional journalism, citizen journalism has opened up new prospects for this profession which, however, faces another threat, which is that of quality and therefore of its credibility, a condition essential to its existence. The two systems seem more intended for a kind of complementarity which imposes adjustments from one to the other. Conventional journalism finds new means of expression in citizen journalism, while citizen journalism gains in quality, thanks to criticism and support from conventional journalism professionals.

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