Twitter as a Social Network Tool for Journalists: The Case of Journalistic Practices at the Cameroon Tribune Newspaper

Dr. Njikam Musa

Department of Corporate Communication and Social Sciences, Universities of Yaounde II Soa-Cameroon

*Corresponding Author: *Dr. Njikam Musa, Department of Corporate Communication and Social Sciences, Universities of Yaounde II Soa-Cameroon*

Abstract: *While the role of traditional media is still important for social mediation in Cameroon, the objective of this study is to analyze and explain how Twitter has transformed journalists' practices and how they have had to adapt to this change. The author interviewed four journalists from the Cameroon Tribune newspaper: two journalists who have worked their entire career in this medium and two journalists who joined this newsroom after an initial experience in other media. She addresses three themes: 1) how Twitter has changed the work dynamics of journalists, 2) the different uses of Twitter among Cameroon Tribune journalists, and 3) the modification of media agendas using Twitter.*

Keywords: *mediation, Twitter, practices, agenda, Cameroon*

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of social networks is one of the most important aspects of journalistic practice in the 21st century. If we want to define the dynamics of the work of a contemporary journalist, we cannot do so without a reference to the use of social networks, especially if it is Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These social networks allow journalists to report on their professional activities minute by minute, to post photos, to constantly animate a website, to get new sources of information, but also to find new topics to cover. To understand the usefulness of Twitter as a network and source of daily information, Florencia Guidobono (2013) mentions the case of a U.S. official who used his Twitter profile to let the world know about a fact of international interest: the death of Osama Bin Laden on May 1, 2011. This tweet was published before President Barack Obama's official statement. In the United States, the importance of Twitter as a means of news dissemination emerged in 2008, during the presidential election campaign (García-De-Torres et al., 2011). Another example regarding the usefulness of the network: the condolences of different heads of state around the world offered to countries that have been victims of terrorist attacks, such as France since 2015. We can also mention the expressions of solidarity through social media when some countries have been victims of natural disasters such as earthquakes, for example the earthquakes of 2 016 in Ecuador or the one of 2017 in Mexico.

In Algeria, in 2019, in the middle of a day of social protests (which almost turned into a coup d'état), the government had forced the dissemination of information on the media (television and radio), except in the official media. Newspaper information could still be found on the Internet, but the servers of the websites were overwhelmed. From that moment on, society became aware of the real power of social networks and their usefulness for journalism. Facebook and Twitter, especially the latter, were the most effective networks for publishing and sharing information produced by citizens and journalists about the course of the social protest and its consequences. We can even say that this event had a strong impact on journalism in Algeria, thanks to the informational efficiency of Twitter.

Our study focuses on the different social and professional uses of Twitter among journalists of the Cameroonian newspaper Cameroon Tribune as well as on the evolution of their journalistic practices. The particularity of these journalists is that they started their careers before the integration of Twitter into journalistic work and that most of them have been working as journalists for about 18 to 20 years, i.e., before the existence of the first social networks (LinkedIn was created in 2002 and TypePad and

WordPress, in 2003). The main objective is to determine how the expansion of social networks has changed these journalists' work practices and how they have had to adapt to this change. We chose this group of journalists to analyze the integration of social networks in the daily life of the profession, which does not affect younger journalists, whose work dynamics presuppose the socio-technical knowledge of networks and devices. These are therefore experienced journalists who have had to gradually integrate the use of Twitter into their work dynamics daily work. It was important to define how these journalists use the Twitter network and to understand how interaction on Twitter has changed the media agenda in the editorial office of the 'Cameroon Tribune.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE PHENOMENON UNDER STUDY

2.1. Twitter-Proofing Journalism

The course of the study allowed us to learn about the influence of Twitter in the new journalistic dynamics of the print media. We were able to understand how the expansion of social networks, particularly Twitter, has changed journalistic practices among Cameroon Tribune journalists and how journalists have been able to integrate the various uses of the network to serve journalism. These are journalists who are representative of a traditional media that is also representative of Cameroon.

Cameroon Tribune is one of the most important newspapers in Cameroon. It has its headquarters in Yaounde, the capital of the country. Created in January 1974 in Tabloid format, with a circulation of thousands of copies, this newspaper has a circulation that currently varies in terms of publication of thousands of copies, depending on the day (between Monday and Friday or weekends). The price of a copy is 400 FCFA, the digital version exceeds a hundred thousand visits per day.

The Cameroon Tribune website is one of the most visited sites in Cameroon. As for its structure, the newspaper is run by a managementteam, whose president and director of publications is Marie Claire NNana. The management is composed of a deputy director, a deputy director and a multimedia artistic director. Then there are four editors of the newsrooms, three editors-in-chief responsible for a local newspaper and two weeklies, various section editors and more than 100 journalists.

For the journalists interviewed in this study, the social network analyzed is central to the practice of journalism today, both in the monitoring of daily news and in the production and dissemination of information, and even in the visibility and promotion of print journalists. However, we will also see that this aspect is not a view shared by all interviewees. The literature on journalistic practices and network issues in the digital age, particularly Arnaud Mercier and Nathalie Pignard-Cheynel's (2014) study on changes in digital skills, reveals the importance of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter in the construction of new journalistic practices as well as in the way journalists have adapted the professional use of the Twitter network. On the other hand, studies of the roles of new actors in the online public space may prove useful, although they are not necessarily related to contemporary journalism practices, including the use of social networks it implements, but rather to citizen practices of social participation.

The evolution of journalistic practices is linked to the evolution of social practices and public space. The information (their own and that of their colleagues) that journalists publish and share online is the result of the actions of interest groups on the socio-digital network.We will first examine the exchanges that characterize the digital age and the presence of new actors and new communication spaces. Then, we will focus on the journalistic practices that have been transformed by the arrival of social networks. We will present the results of the study according to four themes that emerged from our analyses: the profiles of the journalists interviewed the changing dynamics of journalistic work before and after Twitter, the different uses of Twitter among Cameroon Tribune journalists, and the modification of media agendas from Twitter.Finally, we will clarify our contribution to the knowledge of journalism as a profession of social engagement by examining the strengths and limitations of our study.

Framing refers to different ways information can be presented and the potentially varying effects on the recipient based on these different presentations (Chong and Druckman, 2007; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). Studies using this concept examined which words were used in messages commenting on Election Dayonthetwocandidatesinthe2012AmericanPresidential election and showed that on that day

most messages contained no partisan framing (Groshek and Al-Rawi, 2013). Another study showed that messages by politicians containing personalized information led to different effects in political learning of recipients when compared to depersonalized messages (Lee and Oh, 2012). One of the oldest theories of communication research is selective exposure, the tendency of people to expose themselves to information in accordance with opinions already held by them. Media environments that allow audiences a lot of choice seem to foster this tendency (Frey, 1986; Prior, 2007). This theory is one of the building blocks of communication research and has received a lot of attention in the context of news gathering on the internet, as this seems to be the media environment with the largest opportunities to choose different sources of information yet (Garrett, 2009; Scheufele and Nisbet, 2013; Tewksbury and Rittberg, 2012). In this theoretical context, researchers have discussed the tendency of Twitter users to follow accounts of politicians belonging to parties they support and generallytousesocialnetworkingservicestofindinformationinaccordancewith their political views (Gainous and Wagner, 2014; Parmelee and Bichard, 2012). Contributions to a number of political theories can also be found in the literature on the political uses of Twitter. These include political deliberation, normalizing or transformative aspects of Twitter for the political system, political polarization and social capital.

The role of the internet as an arena fostering or hindering deliberative discourses on politics has been discussed in many studies and for manystages of the internet's technological development (Chadwick, 2006; Neuman, Bimber and Hindman, 2011; Wilhelm, 2000). Some researchers have analyzed the interactions of politicians and the public on Twitter from this perspective. These studies analyzed whether politicians interacted with normal users on Twitter. Since these interactions were very rare the authors tend to conclude that Twitter is a tool not used by politicians for deliberative discourses (Kim and Park, 2012; Thimm, Einspänner and Dang-Anh, 2012). Early discussion on the effect of the internet focused on the question whether the internet would lead to a transformation of politicswith new political actors rising to power, enabled through new opportunities of information distribution, political coordination and new communication practices or if the internet would become a normalized information environment, where the same political actors would dominate the political sphere on and offline and follow the same communication practices onand offline (Davis, 1999; Margolis and Resnick, 2000; Neuman, 1991; Schweitzer, 2011). Various studies have analyzed if prominence for political actors in the traditional political environment would also lead to prominence on Twitter (Jürgens and Jungherr, 2011, 2014; Klinger, 2013) and if politicians used similar communication practices on Twitter as they did offline (Bode, Lassen, Kim, Shah, Fowler, Ridout and Franz, 2011; Mirer and Bode, 2013). These studies tend to show that in most countries the actors who are powerful offline tend also to dominate the political discourse on Twitter.

A notable exception hereto is Germany where the Pirate Party, a party with no seats in the national parliament, is by far the most dominating party online. With regard to communication practices, the findings are more mixed. There, it appears as if political actors do not radically break with their communication practices online but adopt them somewhat for Twitter. Especially in the USA, political scientists are discussing whether the political process has become more polarized over time. Researchers cite a number of reasons that might lead to an increasingly polarized electorate: polarizing cues from political elites, an increasingly atomized social structures might lead to people predominantly interacting with other people like them and a media environment with dedicated channels for partisan coverage (Fiorina and Abrams, 2008; Prior, 2013). Most studies addressing political polarization on Twitter map the interactions of political vocal Twitter users and try to determine whether users tend to interact more strongly with users who share their political conviction. These studies are in the tradition of similar approaches in which researchers mapped linking practices between political blogs and found that political blogs tended to link to others sharing the same partisan convictions (Adamic and Glance, 2005). The evidence with regard to Twitter appears to be mixed.

While there is evidence that users in the USA do indeed tend to retweet predominantly messages of users who appear to share their political convictions users also tend to interact through messages across partisan lines (Conover et al., 2011; Hanna et al., 2013; Mustafaraj and Metaxas, 2010; Smith et al., 2014). It will be interesting to see if these findings hold also for other political contexts. Also, it is not at all clear if these findingstrue for specific interactions of users on a specific online servicedo

indeed speak to the polarization debate as understood in political science. Political uses of Twitter have also been discussed in the context of social capital as understood by Robert Putnam. The basic idea being that social networks between people enable and foster political engagement (Putnam, 2000). Although this concept and its use in political science has been disputed (Jackman and Miller, 1998; Woolcock, 2010), it has proven popular with researchers focusing on the power of the internet to foster civic and political engagement (Rainie and Wellman, 2012). Following the same logic digital tools enable new and meaningful interactions between people whichinturnmightleadtocivicorpolitical participation someresearchers expect Twitter to have similar effects (Gainous and Wagner, 2014). Another set of studies addressed the use of Twitter from a psychological perspective. The focus of these studies are the motives that lead people to interact with politicians online. In this, they connect with the Uses and Gratification approach to media use (Rubin, 2009) and recent work on psychological mechanisms in the emergence of public opinion and political cognition (Lodge and Taber, 2013; Zaller, 1992). Also, studies focus on the effects exposure to tweets has on audiences with regard to political learning and the evaluation of political candidates and issues (Dimitrova et al., 2014; Gainous and Wagner, 2014; Hong, 2013; Lee and Jang, 2013; LeeandOh,2012; LeeandShin,2012; Parmeleeand Bichard, 2012; Vaccari et al., 2013).

While the studies discussed above share the theoretical discussion they address in their research, there are also studies that approach the use of Twitter in politics with shared methods using rich data collected on Twitter to perform quantitative analyses. Two popular approaches are network analysisandautomatedsentimentanalysis. Studiesusingtheseapproaches are listed in Methods in research on the use of Twitter in politics. In studies interested in the analysis of social networks, the use of Twitter conventions–such as following and follower relationships and interactions between users through messages, mentions or retweets–are used to construct a social network in which users form nodes and their interactions edges. Studies, using social network analysis usually focus on questions of who interacts with whom, be it political actors or the public (Ausserhofer and Maireder, 2013; Bode, Hanna, Sayre, Yang and Shah, 2011; Boutet, Kim and Yoneki, 2013; Bruns and Burgess, 2011; Bruns and Highfield, 2013; Burgess and Bruns, 2012; Conover et al., 2012, 2011; Feller et al., 2011; Groshek and Al-Rawi, 2013; Hanna et al., 2011, 2013; Jürgens andJungherr, 2011, 2014; Jürgens, Jungherr and Schoen, 2011; Kim and Park, 2012; Larsson and Moe, 2012; Lin, Keegan, Margolin and Lazer, 2013; Maireder and Ausserhofer, 2013; Mascaro and Goggins, 2012; Mustafaraj and Metaxas, 2010; Mustafaraj et al., 2011; Plotkowiak and Stanoevska Slabeva, 2013; Shamma, Kennedy and Churchill, 2009).

2.2. Description of the Methodology

In reviewing the available literature on the use of Twitter in Journalism, it becomes quickly apparent that most research is data centered and focuses on thedescriptionofempiricalevidence. Only aminority of studies tries to situate their findings explicitly in the context of larger theoretical discussions. Still, some of the most popular theories the workhorses, if you like of communication research and political science have been used by researchers to analyze the Journalism uses of Twitter. In Theoretical discourses on the use of Twitter in Journalism and Methods in research on the use of Twitter in Journalism, I list studies that situate their findings in the context of specific theories or methods. The theories are used according to the scientific fields they emerged fromcommunication research and theoryand their focusbe it on the identification of psychological effects or the use of specific methods. It is important to note that I only included these studies which explicitly referred to the theories and approaches listed. There is an argument to be made that many of the studies, examining the use of Twitter in communication, contribute with their findings implicitly to some of these theoretical discourses. Still, for the sake of clarity, I only discuss studies that explicitly anchored their findings in the respective theoretical discussions.

Let us start by looking at research that situates itself in the context of communicationresearch. Researchersuseconceptsdealingwiththeagenda setting and agenda building processes of media coverage., the framing of messages referring to political candidates and the selective exposure of audience members to opinions concurring with their own. The sources of the media agenda have been a focus of communication research for long (Reese, 1991; Shoemaker and Reese, 2014). With regard to Twitter's use in politics, researchers examine the way how Twitter messages might influence the

media agenda. The studies included in this review that explicitly referred to agenda setting research showed that journalists increasingly incorporate Twitter messages by politicians and sometimes also those of other users in their coverage of political topics, be it as topic of a story, sources for quotes or as background information on ongoing stories (Broersma and Graham, 2012; Parmelee, 2013; Wallsten, 2014).

We started this study with the idea of targeting journalists whose careers exceeded 15 years in order to analyze the gradual integration of social network use into daily work practice. However, we decided to include the participation of a journalist with only 14 years of experience, in order to examine the particular engagement of his professional practices with Twitter. We also note the relevance of his exclusive experience at Cameroon Tribune, as an intern, reporter, and currently editor of the politics section.

Using an interview guide, we interviewed eight journalists from the Cameroon Tribune newspaper. This guide took into account their professional trajectories, the reasons that led the journalists to create an account on Twitter, the routines that they mobilized before and after the creation of this account, the different uses they made of the network, the appropriation of the network and the interaction on Twitter. We divided these journalists into two groups, equal in number of participants: 1) four journalists who have worked their entire career in this medium and 2) four journalists who joined this newsroom after an initial experience in other media. These testimonies allowed us to gather a general overview of their use of social networks and their adaptation to this change in their work dynamics.

2.3. The Digital Age

The Internet is not just a new medium for Peter Dahlgren (2000), as it encompasses several modes of communication. As a "multimodal medium," it makes possible multidimensional communication patterns, including a communicative space. It also offers the possibility of one-to-many communication, as a practice already used by governments, political actors and activists; and we can add the possibility of communication that networks such as Twitter offer to some journalists, such as those in the print media. For example, when journalists use their personal profiles to communicate with their news sources or followers. Interactive modes of communication also include many-to-many communication, which allows for a plural and diverse exchange. It is necessary to include in the same way more traditional forms of communication, such as e-mail, but noting its evolution in form (from the epistolary to the telephone conversation). This implies at the same time a "redefinition of situations, of social relations, of communicative practices and perhaps of subjectivity" (ibid. 173).

It is clear that the Internet offers vast communication spaces to encourage participation. In the case of journalists, it has allowed the production of new spaces such as news websites, groups and newsgroups. We can say, in this last case, that some actors can find a space for participation and production online. For Dahlgren, online participation reinforces the plurality of public space and multiplies (specialized and alternative) spaces, which is seen as a positive aspect for democracy. He explains that some public spaces (such as newsgroups) encourage the grouping of individuals who hold similar opinions, but we can also say that they defend similar interests. The Net allows people to have their own space with their own word, but also to have a collective opinion when they identify with a specific group. It thus gives the possibility to move from thought to public (and real) action.

The Internet and its different platforms can broaden participation in the online public space. Compared to television journalists (who have a clear visibility in front of the public), for example, Twitter makes visible print journalists, who were almost anonymous before, but who on Twitter become new actors of the digital age, important actors in the online space. The creation of profiles on this network, in particular, gives them a real opportunity to show the readership their work, their conception of the profession and even their thoughts on professional and personal aspects.

But, at the same time, the creation of profiles has allowed journalists to expand their peer-to-peer interactions and sociability with informants and audience, as Josiane Jouët and Rémy Rieffel (2015) found in a survey of 23 French journalists, as part of work by the French Press Institute. In this study,

professional sociability refers to the way journalists appropriate social networks and how they "weave links" on Twitter to exchange, but also to obtain information and make themselves known.

Twitter has influenced the rhythm of journalistic activity: for example, their work begins and ends with constant monitoring of media and other journalists' accounts as well as those of news sources. In the case of interactions, the main change - according to Jouët and Rieffel (ibid.) - concerns the temporality of exchanges characterized by the fact that journalists would make themselves "potentially permanently accessible". As much as Facebook, Twitter has led to a renewal of social interactions "between producers of information.

This is the first time that a social network has been used to create "information and citizens" through comments, shares and hashtags around an event or a specific theme (Mercier and Pignard-Cheynel, op. cit.).Journalistic practices in the age of social networks. All over the world, the arrival of social networks has changed the modality of communication, social and political participation in the public space, different work dynamics as well as interpersonal relationships.

In the case of online political participation, Dominique Cardon (2013) explains that Internet practices make visible the possibility of "changing society without taking power". These practices make possible new modes of organizing collective action, a new space for expression, and even diversity in the production of content. In this context, the ideal of participation is concretized by a symbolic and horizontal action, while the role of digital technologies is essential to encourage this participation (ibid.). For Eric George (2008), it is about a less hierarchical collective participation and more egalitarian exchanges. However, after a certain amount of time of online participation, those who would manage to have more visibility in the Internet space - through blogs for example - would be those who have social capital and certain technical capacities to participate (ibid.).

In the case of journalism, Facebook and Twitter have changed not only the way journalists communicate with their news sources and the public, but also journalistic practices.In addition, these social networks have changed the daily lives of journalists and the way they demonstrate their skills in the profession. Journalists have integrated social and digital networks that have become essential tools for journalism. Both in the United States (Cision, 2015) and in Europe (González-Molina and Ramos del Cano, 2014), Twitter and Facebook are the networks most used by journalists, as is the case in Ibero-America (García-De-Torres et al., op. cit.).

On the subject of journalism in the Web age, Mercier and Pignard-Cheynel (op. cit.) highlight new skills in journalism, profound transformations, "mutations", in a series of works around online journalism launched in the 1990s. In their analysis, they note the importance of new technologies in newsrooms and their influence on them. As for the socio-digital networks, Mercier and Pignard-Cheynel emphasize their use as "an additional means of obtaining information, producing information or disseminating it" (ibid.: 9). The studies carried out by different authors in Ibero-America support this observation and note their usefulness in the search and reception of information as well as in obtaining documents and photographs (García-De-Torres et al., op. cit.). From this perspective, we would like to identify the adaptation of journalistic practices to the digital environment in the context of specialized journalism and other journalistic genres, that is, to understand whether the integration of these new activities in the daily work of journalists (the production, search and dissemination of information) can explain the evolution of journalistic practices in the traditional press, especially in the print media.

While journalists used to inform themselves through traditional means before the arrival of social networks, today it is Twitter and Facebook, mainly, but especially Twitter, that represent their sources and their additional means of information. However, this is an innovative appropriation on the part of journalists since, according to Mercier and Pignard-Cheynel, "neither the creator of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google + or even Pinterest or Instagram originally designed their socio-technical device for news and the press" (op. cit.: 9). Therefore, it is an adaptation of journalists to the changes brought about by social networks, but above all, the integration of these networks in the dynamics of work, where journalists have been protagonists in adapting the different uses of socio-digital networks to the production and dissemination of information. In her studies on the sociology of techniques and uses, Madeleine Akrich explains this dynamic as a co-construction, that is, what she calls "the

involvement of a plurality of actors in the elaboration and implementation of a project or an action" (2013). She recognizes this involvement in the fields of language sciences, education sciences, psychology, sociology as well as of political science, without excluding that the concept exists in other disciplines. In the case of journalism, the co-construction of the Twitter device is remarkable since it involves the participation of journalists and users (subscribers) by articulating different techniques and different types of uses.

As early as 2009, studies noted the role of Twitter in British and American newsrooms; two years later, a survey highlighted the importance of Facebook and Twitter for American journalists as a tool for disseminating and sharing information, for example, while a 2012 survey of French journalists showed that they preferred Twitter to Facebook (Mercier and Pignard-Cheynel, op. cit.). In the specific case of the regional daily press, journalists use Twitter to assert their good professional practice, their critical spirit and their independence (Bousquet and Smyrnaios, 2012).

We can see that the appropriation of Twitter by journalists as well as the adaptation to its use multiply the publication gestures in the journalist's daily life: a strong advertising use for the editorial staff's productions or pertaining to the self-promotion of the journalist's own productions, a place for interpellation between colleagues in the manner of a "journalists' club", a space to mock colleagues and a space for the construction of public opinion. In short, for Mercier and Pignard-Cheynel, these are the "dominant" uses of Twitter by journalists, which we consider to constitute new routines in current journalism practices.

In these uses, we can also include those which, according to Jouët and Rieffel, are assets of the network. Since Twitter is a strategic tool for developing a network of contacts, the online application is also an instrument that facilitates visibility in the journalistic milieu. It provides access to a space for practices such as information retrieval and entertainment among colleagues. Finally, the network is seen as a "collective good" that promotes interprofessional solidarity (Jouët and Rieffel, op. cit.).These are aspects that are well identified among Cameroon Tribune journalists, who strategically use Twitter in their daily work practices.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

3.1. The General Profile of the Journalists Interviewed

As mentioned at the beginning, we conducted eight interviews with Cameroon Tribune journalists.

Table1. *Profile of Journalists Interviewed*

Interview Professional experience in journalism
Journalist 1 20 years or more
Journalist 2 14 years
Journalist 3 23 years
Journalist 4 18 years; previous experience in two newspapers
Journalist 5 20 years chew Publi-Expansion, a newspaper of Cameroon Tribune
Journalist 6 19 years
Journalist 7 25 years, including more than 17 years at Cameroon Tribune
Journalist 8 0 years, including 8 years as a radio journalist and 12 years at Cameroon Tribune

3.2. The Change in Work Dynamics before and after Twitter, among Cameroon Tribune Journalists

The use of visual tools has become important in the web era in the daily journalistic techniques and practices of newspapers in Cameroon. (Rivera and Rosero, 2017). For example, in addition to photographs that enrich and complete the information, the other mechanisms most used in Cameroon Tribune are tables, drawings and maps when it comes to techniques to present information. Other tools integrated by this media are videos, interviews and hypertexts. The integration of these tools has been well described by Diana Rivera and Dominique Rosero (op. cit.) in a study conducted in 2016 in three representative media in Ecuador, Latin America. The authors note the importance for traditional media to adapt to different information and communication technologies to communicate well with the public, quickly.

As for the use of social networks, Facebook and Twitter have become important in the integration of professional practices among journalists, particularly among the Cameroon Tribune journalists interviewed in this study.Creating profiles on Twitter is therefore becoming important for those who do not have an account. Their first use begins to give them a digital identity, and thus professional visibility on the network. They animate their accounts with tweets from their publications and begin to acquire an online presence and, thus, professional recognition. While for politicians Twitter is a way to do their political activity, a way to avoid the press and communicate directly with the people [subscribers], for the press, for us journalists it's a way of professional self-promotion. As much Twitter as Facebook (interviewee 2).

But how did Cameroonian journalists work before they took to Twitter? From the interviews with journalists, we were able to see that the network was gradually integrated into the daily life of journalism, into the work dynamics of Cameroon Tribune journalists.As we mentioned in the introduction, all the journalists interviewed began their careers before the first social digital networks appeared, especially before Twitter was considered a tool for journalistic work.At that time, around the 2000s and even before, journalists started their work routine by listening to the news on the radio, reading newspapers and watching TV news. This was the first activity of the day, before going to the newspaper office. Then they would attend the editorial meeting to determine what stories to cover, what interviews to do and what sources to follow. After that, it was time to go get the news. To get access to the latest news, the editor of the Judiciary section explained that they had to go to the newsroom. There, they received information from news agencies and some by e-mail. Another source of information was the radio. Before the advent of social digital networks, this was probably the most up-to-date medium for news. "We used to listen to front page reports. It was the most immediate information" and the most useful to be informed, explains the editor.

The editor of the newspaper's digital section points out that there was another way to get information and start the work routine: going to direct sources. For his part, he used to go to the communications department of the institutions where he had to cover events to ask for the information needed for his work and even the newspapers, so as to be up to date.With the arrival of social digital networks and their integration into the journalistic profession, the day can start by reading the tweets of journalists' accounts and sources of information:

At that time [early in my career], you also got news or press conference invitations on beeper. You had to wear the beeper to find out about press calls. After that, we used cell phones, emails, and now Twitter is one more source to watch. I say it's one more source because the journalist always has to go to people's homes, talk to people, go to the different communities, to the neighborhoods; there you have the real contact, a real interpersonal relationship (interviewee 5). And, although there are still traditional ways of looking for and knowing information (going to sources, requesting information or interviews with information sources, reading and synthesizing documents), Twitter facilitates access to certain official sources of information, for example the accounts of ministers and public officials. What they post can be additional information and can determine whether the journalist's work will begin by attending a press conference or by gathering reactions to what was posted on the president's Twitter account, for example. For the journalists interviewed, the network has become an additional and indispensable way to access media information, but also new sources of information:

'Me, I'm not always on Twitter because I don't have time, but when I go, I look for new sources of information. Even if you don't know the people, it's good to find those who know about specific topics and have different thoughts (interviewee 6).

Other changes involve the immediacy of information dissemination. While journalists used to have to wait until the next day to read the publication of their work (news, features, and all sorts of journalistic genres), the web age has allowed them to gradually appropriate social-digital networks, especially Twitter, as a tool to disseminate the newspaper's news and their own articles.But social and digital networks also require a lot of time from journalists, especially when it comes to mobile apps. When the Data Journalism editor talks about the beginning of her career, for example, she remembers that she didn't spend as much time on her laptop as she does now. The explanation for this massive investment of time, she says, is the fact that one can access different networks, including Twitter,

where it is possible to have different interactions: on Facebook, personal interactions; on Twitter, professional interactions; and on Instagram, LinkedIn, and Google Maps, both types of interactions.

However, when it comes to journalistic information, for example, Twitter allows for a better investment of time when it is possible to obtain press releases, documents from official sources or even audiovisual material produced by news outlets. "We can find summaries of interviews done on radio or TV, whereas before we used to spend hours listening to them" (interviewee 3). In terms of time, Twitter also facilitates direct contact with certain information sources. "The barriers we used to have to access information, verify data or interview an official source no longer exist" (interviewee 7), "we can access information sources directly and we can also access new sources" (interviewee 2). It is clear that Twitter facilitates contact between journalists and sources, but the network itself is one of the additional sources of media information.

Twitter has thus changed the routines and dynamics of work in journalism, as much as these journalistic practices have changed this network, which is not at all conceived as a tool for journalism. It is also the journalists who have made their practices evolve through a particular adaptation, depending on the case. For example, there are those who have been able to easily manage the network, animate their accounts and use them to inform themselves and to produce information. But there are also those who, at the beginning, did not want to create a Twitter account and wanted to remain anonymous.

For the journalists in the first group, managing Twitter was not difficult because they integrated it at the same time as using email. "The adaptation was not difficult. It has meant that everything people used to say to me by email, they now say to me on Twitter. The difference is that before I was yelled at in private and now I am yelled at in public" (interviewee 4). On the other hand, those for whom creating a Twitter profile was a professional need were slow to recognize the importance of Twitter to the new dynamics of journalism. For the editor of the newspaper's digital section, one group of journalists' decision not to subscribe to Twitter was because they wanted to remain anonymous, "they wanted to stick with the historical idea of print journalists not becoming protagonists of the facts." This editor believes that journalists, without wanting to be protagonists until now, can become "a credible voice" on Twitter, but he considers that his colleagues were slow to understand this. It was difficult at first to understand the contribution of Twitter to journalism, not only for the possibility of becoming a credible voice, but also for the possibility that the network gave to tell stories and information in real time. While for some journalists, adapting to twitter has not always been easy, it has certainly changed the dynamic of journalistic work at Cameroon Tribune.

Our study shows that Twitter is gradually becoming a tool in the dynamics of journalistic work in Cameroon. It facilitates communication between journalists and sources, while making it possible to identify and contact new sources of information and to create new journalistic formats.

It was a very good journalistic experience and a motivating way to exchange on Twitter. It was interesting, we didn't get a lot of hits, but there was positive interaction and people [Twitter account subscribers] were thanking us for the information (interviewee 8).

Digital convergence has changed everything. Now, journalists who started out years ago in print are only doing print journalism. "We do radio, we do networks on all platforms, and we do TV, too," said one editor, who was able to better identify the usefulness of Twitter in a as part of a journalism course in the United States. He explains, "I noticed how journalists were handling Twitter and how the way they were communicating with their audience was more direct. Especially in the case of reporting, doing news coverage using Twitter." Now, even if he is not very active on Twitter since he remains in the editorial office, he notes the importance for journalists to be present on the network.

3.3. Ethics and Current uses of Twitter among Cameroon Tribune journalists

A new means of communication, an additional source of information, a channel that makes one's profile and professional work visible: Twitter is all this for journalists.The multiplication of its uses has led the media to encourage journalists to adhere to network usage charters to avoid misunderstandings, even if journalists know the ethical and deontological codes of their profession. Mercier and Pignard-Cheynel (op. cit.) explain that the speed with which information and rumors

circulate on social and digital networks has led editorial offices to produce charters for the proper use of these tools. The authors also noted the regulations and self-regulations put in place by journalists in their Twitter profiles with regard to ethical issues. These include the use of formulas such as "my tweets only commit me", which reveal the difficulties encountered in analyzing these regulations.

With regard to the use of personal accounts, although the charter gives journalists the freedom to publish information and comments, it commits the journalists and the social recognition of the media. It explains that attention must be paid to the professional status of the journalists as well as that of the media.The charter also gives advice and recommendations for journalists to be aware of the implications of these new publishing practices: for example, a retweet implies sharing the views of the person who wrote the tweet. The charter also emphasizes that the network should not be used exclusively for self-promotion.

The advice, standards and recommendations for the proper use of networks have allowed for an evolution of this use, as a communication tool, for journalists. Whereas journalists used to use Twitter to explore, to follow media news and to meet their need for information, the network has now become a media monitoring tool, a channel for disseminating information as well as for promoting journalists' professional profiles. It is also a space where it is possible to access official information from reliable sources.The following table shows the different uses of Twitter and how Cameroon Tribune journalists use it today, compared to the time before its widespread use. The dissemination of information and access to new sources of information are common to both periods.

Table2. *The different uses of Twitter*

Why using *TWITTER*, at the beginning?	Why using *TWITTER*, actually?
Curiosity, need to explore its usefulness.	To share news and information found and wrote by the journalists.
Being in touch with the information from the information sources, journalists and medias.	To share the information concerning the activities of the journalists (thoughts, reflexions)
Need to be well informed than to only sharing the information.	Publishing the information about the covering at the front page.
	To collect the reliable and current information.
	Do the watch of the recent information or the specialized one.
	Acceding to the reliable information without passing through the press in chargers.
	To have a professional promotion channel.
	Exchanging with the readers, the users, the journalists.
	To have access to the sharing information not only by the journalists but also by the public, because the journalists cannot be found everywhere.
	It is an era whereby discussions are made for the public interest. Because during the numerical era, places are virtual.

On the other hand, it should be noted that there are uses that journalists prefer to avoid. These include using the network to give their opinion. Most of the journalists interviewed say that they prefer to inform and be informed rather than opine, even though Twitter sometimes also represents a free space where it is possible to share personal thoughts.

3.4. Media Agendas from Twitter

Interaction on Twitter is also an important aspect, according to interviews with Cameroon Tribune journalists. The ability to access information published on the network facilitates coverage of certain topics. The editor of the newspaper's digital section recalls the case of the missing persons. He remembers how useful Twitter was when he received information from people looking for family members who had disappeared without a trace. "That information would give us clues to do our research and to go get more information from official sources." This kind of story allowed journalists to both build community and become useful to the families and, thus, to society.

> *I work with my own agenda and with specific, planned research. We can look at trends on Twitter, but that doesn't change everything I have planned, just that I can decide to work from an original point of view, that is, what happens on Twitter can be a reference, can lead to a new story, but it doesn't change my agenda (interviewee 5).*

Today's journalist is a multiplatform journalist. Before, we only thought about the paper version and nowadays there are times when I forget about the paper version of the newspaper... Today, the journalist can report for radio or TV in the morning and in the same day for the website. However, the most current version is still the Web version (interview 6).The editor of the local newspaper concludes that Twitter is only an additional source of information, but not the most important one. He always leaves space in the paper for what may happen, for unexpected things, but it's not necessarily what's happening on Twitter or Facebook that can change his planning; it's more what's happening on the street:

We have different sources of information, but for me, the sources that have the most useful information are not on Twitter or Facebook or WhatSapp. I think the networks don't have as much power to change the media agenda. Moreover, journalism and especially journalists are not the protagonists of the facts. The journalist is important for the job, but it is the service to the public that is most important, it is the people and their daily lives that are most important, the stories of people who are not necessarily on the networks (interviewee 5).

4. CONCLUSION

This study presents itself as a contribution to knowledge about the evolution and renewal of journalistic practices in the Internet age in a geographical context that can be considered peripheral, but where, despite its specificities, phenomena similar to those in industrialized countries are occurring. The study has some limitations, especially regarding the challenges of journalism in the face of the dissemination of fake news that is published and shared on the networks, without any control. This is one of the ethical issues related to the importance of deontological codes in the journalistic management of social-digital networks, in which the interactions between journalists-journalists and journalists-readership (subscribers in the case of Twitter) are decisive.

It is also important to affirm the role of journalists and their framework of activity in the process of appropriation of Twitter. The network is increasingly used as a tool for communicating, producing, sharing and disseminating journalistic information, as well as an additional means of locating new, more or less specialized sources. The ways in which Twitter can serve journalism are numerous. Contemporary journalistic practices have incorporated the creation of spaces for participation, production and dissemination of information. This usage has resulted in the public thinking that journalists can be replaced by users, by any kind of users. However, we can see that the contribution of journalists who integrate Twitter into their practices goes beyond the sole interest of publishing and disseminating information.

On the other hand, in their use of the network, journalists want to focus on the possibility of going deeper into topics of public interest, to explain to the readership the topics that are most useful for their daily lives, which brings us back to the principles of journalism: to serve the community, to become a mediator between citizen concerns and the response of the authorities, and to multiply the good uses of the networks by translating them into civic benefits. As mediators between news sources and audiences, journalists must cultivate not only credibility with people, but also commitment to the public interest and to strengthening democracy. This means that the commitment must be strong in the search for truth, as we integrate social networks as tools, mechanisms that allow us to contribute to the production and dissemination of verified and quality information. This aspect opens up the possibility of new research topics, such as the interactions between readers and journalists and the way in which these interactions may or may not mark media agendas. It is thus a renewal of interactions.

REFERENCES

AKRICH, Madeleine (2013), "Co-construction," Critical and Interdisciplinary Dictionary of Participation. [Online]. www.dicopart.fr/en/dico/co-construction. Page accessed July 31, 2018.

BOUSQUET, Frank and Nikos SMYRNAIOS (2012), "Media and local society, a shared construction," Sciences de la society, 84-85: 5-15.

CARDON, Dominique (2013), "Online participation," CNDP Economic and Social Ideas, 173(3):33-42.

CISION (2015), New research from Cession and Canterbury Christ Church University highlights social media's impact on journalism.

COBERTURA DIGITAL (2011), Twitter Ecuadorllega al nivel de visitas de El Comercio y El Universo.

DAHLGREN, Peter (2000), "Public space and the Internet. Structure, space and communication", Networks, 100(2): 157-186.

GARCÍA-DE-TORRES, Elvira et al (2011),

GEORGE, Éric (2008), " De la complexité des relations entre démocratie et TIC ", Nouvelles practiques sociales, 21(1) 38-51.

GONZÁLEZ-MOLINA, Sonia and Fátima RAMOS DEL CANO (2014),

GUIDOBONO, Florencia (2013), "Twitter, nuevafuente de información", Calidadinformativa. Escenariospostcrisis, Quito, Editorial la Crujía.

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICAS Y CENSOS (2017

JOUËT, Josiane and Rémy RIEFFEL (2015), "La sociabilité des journalistes sur Twitter : entre performativité, ambivalence et multi dimensionnalité", Sur le journalisme, 4(1): 18-33.

MERCIER, Arnaud and Nathalie PIGNARD-CHEYNEL (2014), "Mutations du journalisme à l'ère du numérique : un état des travaux," Revue française des sciences de l'information et de la communication, 5. [On line]. http://journals.openedition.org/rfsic/1097. Page accessed January 20, 2018.

MIÈGE, Bernard (2010), L'espace public contemporain : aproche info-communicationnelle, Grenoble, Presses universitaires de Grenoble, Coll. " Communication médias société ".

RIVERA, Diana and Dominique ROSERO (2017), "Análisis de las prácticas y técnicasperiodísticas en el periodismoecuatoriano. Casos de estudio: Ecuavisa, El Comercio y Ecuador en Vivo," Razón y Palabra, 21(2/97): 475-485.